

To the WNA Collegiate Journalist of the Year judges:

There are plenty of ways to be loud as a contemporary journalist, especially on social media. However, there's something special about reporters focused on doing thorough and compassionate work in their community rather than promoting themselves across the internet.

We can't think of anyone more humble or talented than Francesca Pica, better known as Frankie to those who work with her at *The Daily Cardinal*. She's patient, empathetic and dedicated, and we've never seen her miss a deadline.

Frankie's beat coverage is superb at both collegiate and professional levels. She's broken multiple stories before professional news outlets, including a string of coverage on union strikes at local Starbucks stores. During her summer 2023 internship at *The Capital Times*, a leading daily newspaper in Madison, Wisconsin, Frankie was a star at housing and development coverage. She produced quick turnaround and long-form stories on the beat, including a cover story exploring how the city's housing market sent rent prices soaring for students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

What's more, Frankie is a versatile reporter who regularly steps outside her comfort zone. This past year, Frankie at multiple points jumped into the messy world of Wisconsin politics to cover new legislation and help uncover a sweeping deal between university leaders and state lawmakers that sparked uproar on campuses across the state. She also produced meaningful stories about the Madison community, including a Ukrainian couple raising money to help others caught in a war zone and a feature piece exploring how Ho-Chunk practices could improve water quality in local lakes.

However, Frankie's most impressive skill is her leadership. As city news editor for the *Cardinal*, Frankie built up her writing corps from less than five writers to more than a dozen. She accomplished this feat through her management style — she brought her writers in for in-person edits and gave them detailed, constructive feedback. Her copy is immaculate and she always had a positive attitude, even when the news cycle got overwhelming.

We firmly believe Frankie's humble perseverance is the glue that holds our student newspaper together, and we are incredibly confident her work will leave a lasting, positive impact on her campus and community.

We are incredibly honored to nominate Francesca Pica for Collegiate Journalist of the Year.

Sincerely,

Drake White-Bergey
Editor-in-Chief, *The Daily Cardinal*

Tyler Katzenberger
Managing Editor, *The Daily Cardinal*