

Wagner Family Prize For Young Journalists

To honor the memory of Jay P. Wagner, a lifelong Iowa newspaper reporter and editor whose passions included encouraging young reporters and promoting great community journalism.

ABOUT THE AWARD



When Jay P. Wagner died in 2009 at the age of 45, his family and friends wanted to honor his commitment to young journalists and community newspapering.

Jay worked for several Iowa publications, including the Sheldon N'West Iowa REVIEW, which his family owns, The Des Moines Register, the Iowan magazine and the Des Moines Business Record. He loved telling the stories of Iowa and Iowans, and was a friend and mentor to countless young journalists.

Winners of the Wagner Family Prize for Young Journalists will receive \$500 and a plaque and be recognized at the 2026 INA Convention in February.

The INF Scholarship Committee will review applicants for the award and select the final recipients. Nominations not selected for 2026 will also be considered in 2027.

CRITERIA

The contest is open to any reporter, columnist, editorial writer or blogger working on a newspaper in Iowa.

All entrants must be 30 years old or younger as of Dec. 31, 2025.

TO ENTER

Submissions may include up to five examples of the journalist's best work, published between Sept. 1, 2024 and Aug. 31, 2025.

The entry can be varied – for example, three news stories, an editorial and a blog posting – but special emphasis will be given to entries that demonstrate keen story-telling ability and a deep appreciation for Iowa and its people, qualities that Jay Wagner exemplified.

Entries must be submitted electronically. Please submit original full-page tearsheets or PDFs of newspaper stories and blog postings. Please indicate run dates. A letter of nomination should be included with entry.

Entry Deadline: October 10, 2025



PLEASE SUBMIT ENTRIES TO:

Jana Shepherd
Iowa Newspaper Foundation
Foundation Director
jshepherd@inanews.com

