



National Federation of Press Women, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 12, 2021

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Texas Senator wins national sweepstakes award

A Texas Senator and communications business owner has won the overall sweepstakes award in the National Federation of Press Women's 2021 Professional Communications Contest.

Judith Zaffirini of Laredo was honored June 12, 2021, at an online NFPW awards ceremony. She won \$250 cash and a plaque for finishing in first place.

She is the first Hispanic woman elected to the Texas Senate, the second highest-ranking senator, and the highest-ranking woman and Hispanic senator. She was re-elected in 2020 in the tenth landslide victory.

She has received more than 1,100 awards and honors for her legislative, public service and professional work, including more than 400 in communication. Zaffirini has 13 years of teaching experience, including at college and university levels.

Press Women of Texas twice selected her as their Communicator of Achievement. She has won many awards from PWT and NFPW for her publications, speeches and public relations campaigns.

Through her business, Zaffirini Communications, she also provides professional communication services, including consulting, workshops and seminars, keynote addresses, and writing.

NFPW President Gwen Larson praised Zaffirini for her accomplishments. "Judith Zaffirini is a talented communication professional who understands the many different channels available to share one's message. Being able to adapt messages to a myriad of outlets is a special talent."

Mary Jane Skala of Kearney, Nebraska, a reporter for the *Kearney Hub*, finished in second place in the sweepstakes competition. She writes features and covers health issues for her newspaper. She also writes a weekly column about moving to the sometimes-quirky corn and cattle country after 40 years as a newspaper editor in Cleveland. She was the NFPW sweepstakes winner in 2020 and 1996. Skala is an accomplished writer and consistently finishes in the top three in the national contest. She receives a check for \$100 for finishing in second place.

Finishing in third place, Lori Potter, retired earlier this year after a writer and photographer for the *Kearney Hub*. Potter, also of Kearney, Nebraska, is a former NFPW national president and currently serves as treasurer of the

NFPW Education Fund, the 501(c)3 arm of the organization. Potter holds the NFPW record for most sweepstakes wins in the contest. She was the national winner in 2018, 2014, 2012 and 2008.

For the eighth consecutive year, Delaware Press Association captured the first place affiliate award. Delaware also won the top affiliate award in 2007 and 2011.

NFPW is a nationwide organization of women and men pursuing careers across the communications spectrum, including print and electronic journalism, freelancing, new media, books, public relations, marketing, graphic design, photography, advertising, radio, and television.

Recipients from across the country were honored for excellence in communications during virtual awards ceremonies this month. A distinguished group of professional journalists, communications specialists, and educators judged nearly 2,000 entries in a wide variety of categories. Only first-place winning entries at the state level are eligible to enter the national contest. All entries were published or broadcast between Jan. 1, 2020, and Dec. 31, 2020.