**Dave Pyle New Journalist Award**

Nomination letter for Annalise Braught – Managing Editor at the Bemidji Pioneer

By Dennis Doeden – Former Publisher at the Bemidji Pioneer

Annalise joined our newsroom staff on Jan. 2, 2019 as a part-time newsroom clerk. It was apparent from the start that she could contribute so much more than just typing briefs. Of course, she did that with aplomb and accuracy, but we quickly learned that she was an accomplished photographer, solid writer, skilled copy editor and, perhaps most importantly, a great team player.

Our veteran editor at the time, Matt Cory, began counting on Annalise to do way more than she was originally asked to do. He considered her a dream part-timer who rarely comes around in our business. She spent the year working hard and long hours doing anything that was asked of her, being a teacher to new additions to the team and pitching in wherever she was needed – usually without ever needing to be asked.

Near the end of 2019, when Matt was elevated to a corporate editing position, we began a search for a new editor, and were expecting to hire an experienced newsperson to lead the team. During the search, Annalise stepped up to fill in during the lapse and excelled in the position, making all of us in the office and others further up the food chain realize her full potential.

I sat her down on her and encouraged her to apply for the position. She was shocked to even be considered at her young age and with so little newsroom experience. But after some long conversations, decided to apply for the position. Our new publisher quickly dismissed her lack of experience and instead focused on her talents and organizational skills. He didn’t hesitate a bit in naming her to the managing editor post.

In her first year as newsroom leader, Annalise has been a total rock star. She has led by example, continuing to write stories and take photos. She is eager to learn and develop as an editor. She reaches out for guidance when she needs it. She handles questions and issues with the public with patience, and she understands the importance of good customer service and how far a smile can go. She brings joy and enthusiasm to our newsroom and drives us all to be our best.

Imagine being a rookie editor and learning that the President of the United States was coming to your town in just one week. That’s what happened at the Bemidji Pioneer in September. Though it was a shock, Annalise was more than up to the challenge. She rallied her team, worked with our corporate engagement team and crafted a coverage plan that resulted in record-breaking online traffic and a stunning print newspaper. Not only did she coordinate the coverage team throughout a chaotic day that included multiple protests prior to the president’s visit, she also was out in the field, writing and shooting photographs and videos all throughout the day. In what I consider to be the ultimate test for any editor, Annalise Braught has passed with honors.

I am pleased to nominate Annalise Braught for an award that is named for my longtime friend, Dave Pyle.