

Dear Judge,

If COVID reporting comes naturally to Alexandra Retter now, it makes sense. Nearly her entire career has been in the era of COVID. Reporting on the pandemic (not to mention surviving it) was a trial by fire for many veteran journalists, but Alexandra handled the stresses, risks, and the rollercoaster of breaking news with poise and professionalism. Keeping tabs on which schools were in-person or requiring masks from one week to the next became a full-time beat, and her hard work helped answer some of the most important questions for families in our community grappling with how to keep their kids safe and learning.

Two hours south of where George Floyd was murdered last summer and with a local school district that was the subject of a state-led discrimination investigation, race and equity was a major topic of reporting in the past year. The relationships Alexandra developed with community members of color long before last summer's events enabled us to get tips and interviews others couldn't. I've never had a young reporter I trusted more to handle sensitive subjects.

Alexandra is extremely scrupulous when it comes to accuracy and fairness. She is diligent and willing to put in long hours to do a story justice. Her empathy enables her to go deeper into open, meaningful conversations with sources because they feel truly heard. I'm extremely proud of her growth as a writer and photographer, and I'm grateful to you for considering her for the Dave Pyle New Journalist Award.

Sincerely,
Chris Rogers
Editor
Winona Post

