

 **National Federation of Press Women, Inc.**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 22, 2024

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**Texas communicator wins national sweepstakes award for third time**

A Texas Senator and communications business owner has won the overall sweepstakes award in the National Federation of Press Women’s 2024 Professional Communications Contest.

Judith Zaffirini of Laredo was announced as the top award winner on June 22, 2024, at NFPW awards dinner and ceremony in St. Louis, Mo. She won $250 cash and a plaque for finishing in first place.

Zaffirini is the first Hispanic woman elected to the Texas Senate. She became Dean of the Senate in December 2023, a title given to the longest-serving senator. She is the first woman to hold the title, which has been given to 24 men since 1909.

An award-winning Communication Specialist who has won more than 1,200 awards and honors for her legislative, public service, and professional work, she holds B.S., M.A., and PhD degrees from The University of Texas at Austin.

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. Zaffirini also was named the NFPW sweepstakes winner in 2021 and 2023.

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

“On behalf of the National Federation of Press Women, I send congratulations to Judith for winning our 2024 National Sweepstakes Award,” NFPW President Julie Campbell said. “I am in awe of her ability to craft such an impressive body of work, and of such high quality. She’s a role model for all of us, and especially for our members who are in the early stages of their communications careers.”

Lori Potter of Nebraska, a freelance writer-photographer since 2021 when she retired after a 43-year career at daily newspapers in Nebraska, placed second in the Sweepstakes competition. She receives a check for $100 for finishing in second place. Potter is a frequent contender for the top sweepstakes award, winning first-place in 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2018.

Dwain Hebda of Arkansas placed third in the Sweepstakes competition, his first appearance on the NFPW Sweepstakes list. Hebda is the founder and president of Ya!Mule Wordsmiths, editor-in-chief of AY Media Group, and lead writer for Wheelhouse Publishing. He receives a $50 check for finishing in third place.

Delaware wins the Affiliate Sweepstakes Award for the 13th time since 2001. The Affiliate Sweepstakes Award is given to the affiliate with the most points for winning entries in the NFPW Communications Contest. Arkansas finished in second place, with the Connecticut affiliate finishing third.

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 an awards ceremony in St. Louis, Mo. 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, 2023, and Dec. 31, 2023.