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**Prince George High School's Chris Waugaman Recognized as  
National Scholastic Press Association Pioneer Award Recipient**

PRINCE GEORGE, Va. - Prince George High School Journalism/Yearbook/Broadcast Advisor and educator Chris Waugaman has been named the recipient of the National Scholastic Press Association Pioneer Award, the organization's highest honor, in recognition of Waugaman's decades-long commitment to mentoring the next generation of journalists.

Recipients of the NSPA's Pioneer Award are individuals who make substantial contributions to high-school journalism programs and scholastic journalism education outside their primary employment.

"This year's class of Pioneers are veteran advisors who have made a notable difference," **NSPA Executive Director Laura Widmer said.** "They are educators who go above and beyond in the classroom and newsroom. They are not only great teachers, but also are amazing student media advisors. They also have earned the respect and admiration from students and colleagues nationwide. These Pioneers represent the best of the best in the country."

Candidates for the award are nominated by previous Pioneer winners and NSPA board members. In her nomination letter, Harrisburg High School's Val Kibler described Waugaman as a fair and hardworking teacher who goes above and beyond to teach his kids how to be top-level journalists.

Waugaman, who also serves as an AP Language teacher at Prince George High School, has been a leader in scholastic journalism at the school for years, acting as the catalyst for a series of publications that continue to operate today. In 2002, Waugaman started The Royal News newspaper with a small group of English students. Nearly 20 years later, The Royal News remains a publication that provides students with an engaging and hands-on introduction to the world of print journalism.

Over the course of his nearly 25 years of teaching, Waugaman has created the converged team of Royals Media and advises the online site [TRNWIRE.org](http://TRNWIRE.org), the broadcast PGTV NEWS, the literary magazine

Etcetera and the yearbook Peerage, as well as The Royal News newspaper. Through an environment of creativity and student expression fostered by Waugaman, his staffs have been awarded with National Scholastic Press Association Pacemakers and Columbia Scholastic Press Association Gold and Silver Crowns during his time as advisor.

Waugaman has taken his staffs to the Virginia General Assembly in Richmond to lobby in support of New Voices legislation, aimed at protecting student press freedom through state laws. He has also spent time working as the director of the Virginia Association of Journalism Teachers & Advisors, with the Southern Interscholastic Press Association, and is currently serving as the First Vice President for membership services with the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

The decorated Prince George educator was named a Lowell Milken Center Fellow where he began a project called “We Are Newspapermen,” which highlights the achievements of many of the unsung heroes of the Black press throughout the last 100 years. In 2014, Waugaman was named Dow Jones’ National High School Journalism Teacher of the Year.

“There is something very special about working with journalism students,” **Chris Waugaman said.** “No other group values the ideals of truth, accountability and empathy like journalism students. It may be labeled as a class where you are required to give grades for work, but honestly I think that is the last thing on the minds of a majority of my students. It is an honor to bear the responsibility of being their advisor. And despite the craziness of adjusting to virtual learning and moving your entire workflow to the cloud, advising has prepared me for this transition like no other teaching assignment could have.”

In addition to his classroom efforts, Waugaman presents sessions yearly at the NSPA/JEA National Conventions, the CSPA Fall & Spring Conferences, and at many summer camps, including camps in Virginia, North Carolina, New York and California, affording him the opportunity to work with students across the country.

“Prince George County Public Schools is proud to see Mr. Chris Waugaman recognized for this prestigious award,” **Division Superintendent Dr. Lisa Pennycuff said.** “While his achievements have been many, his greatest accomplishments are in the students he has inspired through his work. He is a well-loved teacher and advisor who former students often make a special trip to visit when they return home. Mr. Waugaman is the type of teacher that exemplifies excellence and helps make our schools the great place that it is for our students to learn.”

According to the NSPA, Waugaman will be recognized in-person at a future Journalism Education Association/National Scholastic Press Association Advisors Awards Luncheon.

To learn more about the National Scholastic Press Association, visit their website at <http://studentpress.org/nspa/>.