

For Immediate Release:

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West High's Yearbook honored as among the nation's best

CORNING, NY - West High School's 2011 Skjöld yearbook was among the 66 high school yearbooks nationwide that were named crown finalists by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. Crown Awards are the highest recognition given by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association for overall excellence. "It's an incredible honor for the staff," said co-adviser Mike Simons. "Of all the publications in the country, last year's book was recognized as one of the top 66. The staff worked really hard – they definitely earned it."

The 2011 book, "Your 24" was a 296 page, full-color content book, which included a spring supplement and a first-ever DVD supplement. "Your 24" was the program's first ever "chronological" book, meaning it was a study of the school community's experiences through different times of the day, months and seasons of the year. "I never knew how good it would feel to be recognized for all of our hard work that our staff had done," said Victoria Blaker, a student on the design staff.

The Skjöld receives outstanding support from local business owners and corporations in and around Corning. "It's extremely important to have the support of the community through ad sales with our local businesses," said Kortney Turner, business manager for the 2011 and 2012 books. "Without the community's support, we wouldn't be able to produce the book we have. Because our program likes to do new, innovative things, the cost goes up and the community is always supporting our program and our ideas."

The 50-student staff is advised by Mr. Simons and English teacher Terry Pruyne. Mr. Simons teaches at conferences, camps and workshops around the country, including the Gettysburg Yearbook Experience that some of the staff attends with him to get a jump-start on the coming year's book.

On January 9, Mr. Simons was recognized by the Journalism Education Association as a "Special Recognition" adviser in the annual Yearbook Adviser of the Year Awards. "His award was definitely well-deserved," said Emily Thomas, one of the photography editors on staff. "He is so dedicated to what he does and he is always there to help inside and outside of yearbook. We are all very thankful to have him as an adviser."

Mr. Simons has been West High's yearbook adviser since 2001 and is working on his 11th book. Mr. Simons is one of the top five winners who will be featured at the Spring Convention of the Journalism Education Association and National Scholastic Press Association held this coming April in Seattle, WA. Mr. Simons will present workshops on digital photography to the convention's over 4,000 student journalists.



Press Release, continued

The West High yearbook program has been consistently recognized among the best yearbook programs around the country in the past few years, earning All-American and Pacemaker Finalist awards from the National Scholastic Press Association and being featured as showcase publications by the book's publisher, Herff Jones.

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