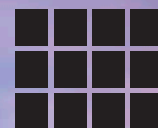


# the CONTACT SHEET

JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

2023 ANNUAL



## THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE DOME

Notre Dame Hosts a Record-Setting UPAA Symposium



# PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Change is not new, it will never be new, and we can rely on it to always be present. The organization is growing, it has influence on our institutions, and on all of us. A decade ago when newspapers began to see the effects of digital media on their operations we saw many former journalists move to higher ed, not only photographers but also writers and editors. This new view on marketing, communications, and photography has brought new ideas and perspectives to the UPAA.

The demand for video content has increased and UPAA has been working to provide more support for still photographers tasked with producing motion content and support for full-time video producers. We saw this initiative at the Symposium with more video content, more video producers, and an impromptu video roundtable one evening.



We are a much bigger organization than we have ever been. The membership rolls are approaching 500 and we had nearly 200 unique individuals attend the Symposium at any given point. This change has presented challenges and opportunities for the organization. Because of this we are always evaluating processes and procedures, looking for efficiencies, and providing support for the membership.

Artificial intelligence has been a part of our workflow for nearly 10 years, but only recently has it exploded in awareness and ease. This development has the potential to fundamentally change how and what we do. As we evaluate this new technology we must understand it, learn to control it, and use it in a responsible way. No doubt the variety of opinions will be diverse and strongly held, but we will find common ground, be leaders not only our corner of the photo world, but perhaps help shape the larger view on AI.

The coming year is full of change, embrace it, shape it, and use it to make your work, the world, and yourself better.

Glenn Carpenter, UPAA President  
Moraine Valley Community College

“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.” –William Arthur Ward

## the CONTACT SHEET

JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Contact Sheet is the annual journal of the University Photographers' Association of America. Founded in 1961, UPAA has sought to advance the profession of university photographer through networking and continuing education.

Editor: Matt Cashore, University of Notre Dame  
Design: Lotta Barnes

For more information on UPAA or The Contact Sheet, visit [www.upaa.org](http://www.upaa.org).

Samantha Blankenship of Ball State University made the cover photo of her co-worker Bobby Ellis on Notre Dame's Main Quad during the 2023 Symposium. It was the first UPAA Symposium for both.



A record attendance at the 2023 Symposium (Photo by Matt Cashore/University of Notre Dame)

## UPAA Board Directory Through Dec. 31, 2023

**Glenn Carpenter**  
President  
[president@upaa.org](mailto:president@upaa.org)

**Cydney Scott**  
Vice President  
[vicepresident@upaa.org](mailto:vicepresident@upaa.org)

**Nick Romanenko**  
Treasurer  
[treasurer@upaa.org](mailto:treasurer@upaa.org)

**Mark Carriveau**  
Secretary  
[secretary@upaa.org](mailto:secretary@upaa.org)

**Lyndsie Schlink**  
Membership Chair  
[membership@upaa.org](mailto:membership@upaa.org)

**Amanda Pitts**  
Corporate Relations Chair  
[corporate@upaa.org](mailto:corporate@upaa.org)

**Jason Halley**  
Communications Chair  
[communications@upaa.org](mailto:communications@upaa.org)

**Derek Eckenroth**  
Website Chair  
[deckenro@bjui.edu](mailto:deckenro@bjui.edu)

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 A Record Setting Group
- 6 Board Announcements & Sponsor News
- 8 UPAA Symposium
- 11 2023 Annual Awards
- 15 Photographer of the Year
- 18 Student Photographer of the Year
- 20 AI
- 23 Know Your Worth





# A RECORD- SETTING GROUP:

UPAA members and corporate partners gathered for the group photo in Notre Dame Stadium. The 2023 Symposium set the record for the largest number of registered attendees. Nearly 200 people participated in the Symposium at Notre Dame. (photo by Matt Cashore)



NEWS & NOTABLES

•Nick Romanenko of Rutgers University announced he is stepping down from the UPAA board after 20 years. He was honored at the 2023 Symposium by being designated a Fellow of the UPAA. (FUPAA)

•Nate Edwards of BYU was elected to the UPAA Board and Cydney Scott of Boston University was re-elected.

•UPAA membership is now over 500 members, a 23% increase from 2022. Video producers are the largest source of new members.

•UPAA.org has been overhauled. “After a lot of effort by the board and our development team, we have a stable, new, and simplified website that can be upgraded as needed much easier,” said UPAA President Glenn Carpenter.

•The Monthly Image Competition (MIC) scoring system has been changed to award points to all entrants, not just the top 5. This may make winning the overall MIC a bit more competitive, so be sure to enter, judge and see how the new system works.



Top left, Nate Edwards, BYU top right, Cydney Scott, Boston University bottom, Nick Romanenko honored at the 2023 Symposium (photo by Jay Ferchaud)

PHOTOSHELTER GRANT

Matt Stamey of Santa Fe College (FL) was awarded the 2023 Photoshelter Grant.

The UPAA / PhotoShelter grant was established in 2017 as a way to assist higher ed photographers in expanding their creative abilities whether through professional development and/or equipment purchases.

From Matt Stamey's entry:

*"After being diagnosed with cancer in late 2022, my focus and drive at work took a backseat to battling the disease. While going through chemo, I started a personal project to take a photo during my daily walks. This practice of both moving my body and photographing helped me both physically and spiritually. It also helped me stay motivated with my work at the*

*college. Since getting the all-clear from my oncologist, I've turned my attention to creating a new path for myself both personally and professionally. A big part of that path includes focusing more on what brings me joy. And that includes personal projects and travel. This grant would play a big role in helping me upgrade my gear, hit the road somewhere and make images that I want to make. And not just photograph whatever is assigned to me at work."*

Matt's daily Instagram posts as well as his UPAA / PhotoShelter grant entry provide inspiration to everyone. One of the judges this year said it perfectly - by awarding the grant to this individual, he won't be the only winner. We all will benefit.

Watch the UPAA Facebook group or contact a board member for information on how to apply for the 2024 Photoshelter Grant.



Matt Stamey is carried off the field at Notre Dame Stadium (photo by Jeff Gage)

THANK YOU CORPORATE PARTNERS!

Once again, UPAA's corporate partners were a big part of the success of the 2023 Symposium.

Did you enjoy the keynote speakers? Corporate partners' support makes it possible.

Did you get a free camera cleaning? You can thank a corporate partner for being able to stop down past 5.6 again!

Did you stop by the print show in the

Scholars Lounge? Saal Digital, one of UPAA's newest corporate partners, generously donated those unique metal prints.

Win a prize in a contest or raffle? Yep! Corporate partners made that possible.

In short, corporate partners make the Symposium as robust as it is, and they're a resource for UPAA members all year 'round. So

if you have a technical question or are looking to purchase some gear, seek out a corporate partner. They might be able to connect you to a discount program or at the very least you'll get some expert personal attention. Supporting them helps them support us. They are a resource but more importantly they are part of the UPAA family.



Saal Digital sponsored the print display in the Hesburgh Library Scholars Lounge (photo by Matt Casshore)



# TO MY UPAA COMMUNITY, THANK YOU!

By Meredith Forrest Kulwicki, University at Buffalo

I was one of the 65 first-time attendees at the UPAA 2023 Symposium at Notre Dame in June.

Attending the Symposium helped bring some focus to my thoughts on style, career goals, and so much more. I think this is something many of us hope to take away from conferences (and I've attended others) but UPAA has the special sauce.

**HOW IT STARTED**

"I remember my first symposium," said host Matt Cashore at the new attendee meeting on Monday evening. "I found my people. We hope you do too."

This statement of 'find your people' could be the subhead for all future UPAA Symposiums. I heard it everywhere and from nearly everyone. It speaks to the welcoming, encouraging and genuine environment UPAA has created for its membership.

"It was so nice to sit with peers that are coming from the same place I am," said Megan Swift, a video marketing specialist from Missouri State University. She said she tried to jump right into conversations to learn as much as possible. In particular, a video round table discussion stood out for her.

"To casually talk about what they're excited about, what they are working on and what they wish were different or what they wish they could do," Megan said.

Molly Glynn, photo manager at Villanova University, was excited to attend her first Symposium. Molly says she is 'extremely minimal' when it comes to making images, but she manages contractor photographers

who take on about 60 assignments annually at the school. Attending in person gave her the freedom to ask difficult questions.

"To ask the questions you don't want to put in writing," Molly said. For her, the topics included how to handle the emotional parts of the job, how to find a work-life balance that works well and who do you talk to about it.

"You really have to be here to be able to have some of those conversations."

**GETTING PERSONALIZED ADVICE**

The opportunity to show my work through the portfolio review and other follow up conversations is something that has immediately impacted my conversations back at the office.

The idea of the portfolio review may have been an off-the-cuff offering by the great communicator Jason Halley. But I think it met a need for many. Preparing for the review, many of us gathered saying, "What is my portfolio?"

I pulled together about 20 photos, mostly from recent MIC selections. At quick glance, they all seemed to be good examples of the style I would like to cultivate. On a deeper dive, I got a lot of ideas of how to move from 'good to great.'

Here were my key takeaways. Perhaps they resonate with you as well:

1. I included too many images from the same perspective and focal length. I need to stretch a little more.
2. I am not a great self-editor and should work with others to build my self-confidence.
3. Less is more. Remove the weaker photos and for the love of all –

don't get too attached to anything.

4. It's important to maintain a portfolio. It's THE way to share our work and can talk about how to get better.

(I digress for a moment here to again express my gratitude to those who looked at my work – Kristen Grace, Jesse Jones, Jeff Miller and Mark DiOrio. Your advice helped me connect my specific goals as I process everything from the speakers and breakout sessions.)

**VALUE OF RELATIONSHIPS**

Part of the magic of the Symposium is building relationships. Higher education visual communication is a niche field. Connecting with people who do what we do is invaluable.

A veteran of photo conferences, Johnny Andrews estimates he has attended between 50, "perhaps 80," conferences throughout his career as a photojournalist. But this was his first time joining the UPAA

Symposium. He joined the University of North Carolina six years ago as a multiplatform content manager (meaning photo and video).

Johnny says he gained a lot of new knowledge by talking to people about their work relationships and improving communication with a supervisor, who might not have a history of creating visuals themselves.

"I think that's what I'm learning more of anything here is how other visual people here help educate their managers and advocate for themselves," Johnny said.

Johnny said he also enjoyed the supportive atmosphere of the Symposium, something that was missing from other conferences he attended as the news industry began to decline.

"I haven't talked to a single person who's worried about their job. They're worried about what they're producing on their campuses and in their communities, and getting better as photographers or videographers."



Lindsay Adler, sponsored by Canon (photo by Derrick Turner)



Meredith Forrest Kulwicki asks a question at a keynote presentation (photo by Matt Cashore)



Kristen Grace and John H. White (photo by Jon Gardiner)



Deanne Fitzmaurice, sponsored by Nikon



UPAA enjoyed a visit to Notre Dame Stadium (photos by John Griffin)



WHAT'S NEXT

Translating what we learned and experienced at the Symposium is difficult and very individualized. Several people have shared their ideas on the Facebook group, a great resource if you need ideas or to share your own perspectives.

For me, I found a supportive and creative community that would help keep me accountable. This works because many of us share similar goals – obtaining a drone license, asking for new gear, trying new lighting techniques, etc. We support each other through emails and social media to make sure the busy office days don't continue to fly by with inaction.

*"The more you do for you, the more you can do for others."* – John H. White

*"Sometimes, it's not the thing you were looking for that becomes most valuable."* – Ben Moon

*"Who thought we would be photographing a hand sanitizer in nice light?"* – Adam Glanzman

And my personal favorite - *"A lot of my work is figuring out how to turn a no into a yes."* – Deanne Fitzmaurice

I took inspiration from Michael P. King's Facebook group post on June 28, 2023. In part: "After attending my first Symposium this year at Notre Dame, I now realize the value... that everything I thought I understood

This community also encourages all of us to stay engaged and motivated. Living in Buffalo, I feel the lull of creativity especially in the winter months. The energy from the Symposium has to last a while. Thus, I'm excited to get more involved with UPAA and continue with my theme of accountability, I will share this openly. My hope is to find ways to update aspects of the Monthly Image Competition to make it feel more accessible. And look at that... one Symposium and I'm already volunteering for more responsibility.

In closing, I share with you some of my favorite quotes from the presenters:

*"The better listener you are, the better story you are able to tell."* – Nina Robinson

*"You now have permission to go buy new gear, because Lindsay says so."* – Lindsay Adler

*"No clear answers here. There are lots of different ways to think about this."* – Michael Wells on AI

just scratched the surface... It will push me to be a better version of myself. This is my tribe. I'm invested. Let's gooooooooo....."

# 2024 SYMPOSIUM WHEN AND WHERE?

The 2024 Utah Symposium will feature the efforts of photographers from five Utah institutions of higher learning. Locations for the June 24-28 co-hosted (UVU/BYU) event will include days on two campuses as well as a visit to the famed Bonneville Salt Flats.

Watch the UPAA website and Facebook group for more details.

# 2023 Annual Awards

## Fellow of the UPAA (FUPAA)

Nick Romanenko – Rutgers University

## President's Award

Roger Hart – University of Michigan

## Chris Hughes Distinguished Service Award

Kristen Grace - University of Florida

Serge Petchenyi - Cornell University

## Board Appreciation Award

Clare Briner – Moraine Valley Community College

## Master of the Profession

Matt Cashore - University of Notre Dame

## Nikon Shootout Winner

Mark DiOrio – Colgate University

## B&H Video Shootout Winner

Jon Hendricks - University of Notre Dame



✧ 2022-2023 ✧

# MIC

Monthly Image Competition

by the numbers:



"Best In Show" winners  
by camera brand

Canon



Nikon





Publications Competition

General Publication

- 1st Place - Loyola University Chicago
- 2nd Place - Towson University
- 3rd Place - St. Edward's University
- Honorable Mention - Auburn University
- Honorable Mention - Bates College

Covers

- 1st Place - University of Tennessee
- 2nd Place - Auburn University
- 3rd Place - University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Honorable Mention - California State University-Chico
- Honorable Mention - University of Georgia

Viewbook

- 1st Place - Towson University
- 2nd Place - St. Edward's University
- 3rd Place - University of Nebraska Omaha
- Honorable Mention - NC State College of Veterinary Medicine
- Honorable Mention - Elgin Community College

Poster

- 1st Place - Wake Forest University
- 2nd Place - Central Washington University
- 3rd Place - Towson University
- Honorable Mention - Elgin Community College

Advertisement

- 1st Place - University of Nebraska Omaha

Specialty Books

- 1st Place - University of Florida
- 2nd Place - University of Georgia

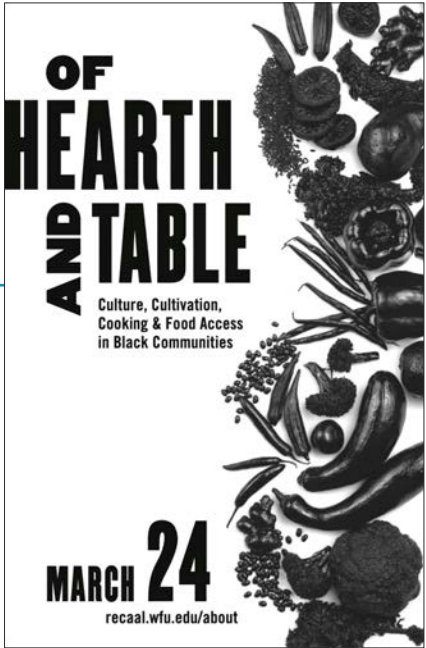
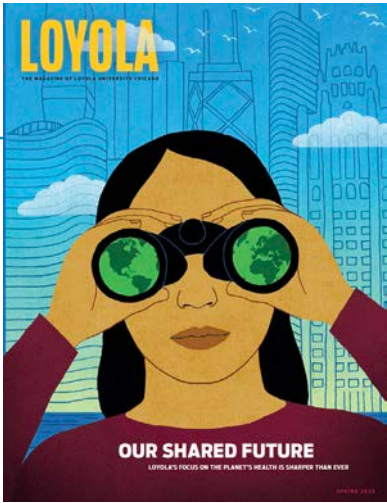
Annual Photo Competition

BEST IN SHOW

- Jaren Wilkey - Brigham Young University

Science and Research

- 1st Place - Michael Pierce - Missouri S&T
- 2nd Place - Matt Cashore - University of Notre Dame
- 3rd Place - John Joyner - North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine
- Honorable Mention - Ryan Riley - Iowa State University
- Honorable Mention - Craig Chandler - University of Nebraska-Lincoln



Campus Environment

- 1st place - Ryan Riley - Iowa State University
- 2nd place - Craig Chandler - University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- 3rd place - Ryan Riley - Iowa State University
- Honorable Mention - Ryan Riley - Iowa State University
- Honorable Mention - Matt Cashore - University of Notre Dame

Sport Features & Illustrations

- 1st place - Steven Bridges - University of Tennessee
- 2nd place - Matt Cashore - University of Notre Dame
- 3rd place - Nate Edwards - Brigham Young University
- Honorable Mention - Chamberlain Smith - University of Georgia
- Honorable Mention - Alexander Wright - Towson University

People & Portraits

- 1st place - Steven Bridges - University of Tennessee
- 2nd place - Michael Pierce - Missouri S&T
- 3rd place - Jaren Wilkey - Brigham Young University
- Honorable Mention - Steven Bridges - University of Tennessee
- Honorable Mention - Craig Chandler - University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Student and Associate

- 1st place - Donovan Kelly - Brigham Young University
- 1st place - Luke Hales - University of Michigan
- 2nd place - Brooklynn Jarvis Kelson - Brigham Young University
- 3rd place - Brooklynn Jarvis Kelson - Brigham Young University
- Honorable Mention - Matthew Norton - Brigham Young University
- Honorable Mention - Matthew Norton - Brigham Young University

Sports Action

- 1st place - Steven Bridges - University of Tennessee
- 2nd place - Matt Cashore - University of Notre Dame
- 3rd place - Nate Edwards - Brigham Young University
- 3rd place - Jaren Wilkey - Brigham Young University
- Honorable Mention - Isaac Hale - Utah Valley University
- Honorable Mention - Chris Meyer - Indiana University

News and College Life

- 1st place - Matt Cashore - University of Notre Dame
- 2nd place - Sam O'Keefe - University of Missouri
- 3rd place - Nate Edwards - Brigham Young University
- Honorable Mention - A.J. Olnes - University of Nebraska at Omaha
- Honorable Mention - John Griffin - Stony Brook University

General Features and Illustrations

- 1st Place - Matt Cashore - University of Notre Dame
- 2nd Place - Nate Edwards - Brigham Young University
- 3rd Place - Nate Edwards -- Brigham Young University
- Honorable Mention - Sam O'Keefe - University of Missouri
- Honorable Mention - Kendra Stanley-Mills - Grand Valley State University





Photo Essay

**1st Place** - Matthew Modoono - Northeastern University  
**2nd Place** - Nate Edwards -- Brigham Young University  
**3rd Place** - Chamberlain Smith - University of Georgia  
**Honorable Mention** - Alyssa Stone - Northeastern University  
**Honorable Mention** - Lukas Keapproth - Loyola University Chicago

Personal Vision

**1st Place** - Tim Schoon - University of Iowa  
**2nd Place** - Matt Stamey - Santa Fe College  
**3rd Place** - Douglas Dugas - University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
**Honorable Mention** - Chamberlain Smith - University of Georgia  
**Honorable Mention** - Matt Stamey - Santa Fe College

Narrative Series Competition

Video/Cine

**1st Place** - Ryan Riley - Iowa State University  
**2nd Place** - James Anger - Texas Christian University  
**3rd Place** - James Anger - Texas Christian University  
**Honorable Mention** - Jon Hendricks - University of Notre Dame  
**Honorable Mention** - Alfred Greenbaum - Lafayette College

Online Photo Essay

**1st Place** - Kendra Stanley-Mills - Grand Valley State University  
**2nd Place** - Amanda Pitts - Grand Valley State University  
**3rd Place** - Matthew Yung - Kennesaw State University  
**Honorable Mention** - Kendra Stanley-Mills - Grand Valley State University  
**Honorable Mention** - James Brosher - Indiana University

Social Media

**1st Place** - Darren Van Dyke - Virginia Tech University  
**2nd Place** - James Anger - Texas Christian University  
**3rd Place** - Alfred Greenbaum - Lafayette College  
**Honorable Mention** - Brendan Sullivan - Bellarmine University  
**Honorable Mention** - Chelsea Purgahn - St. Edward's University

ADDITIONAL AWARDS

Photoshelter Grant

Matt Stamey - Santa Fe College

Student Photographer of the Year

Brooklynn Jarvis Kelson - Brigham Young University

Monthly Image Contest - Overall Winner

Matt Cashore - University of Notre Dame

Annual Photo Competition Overall Winner

Matt Cashore - University of Notre Dame

Mark Philbrick Photographer of the Year

Matt Cashore - University of Notre Dame



# LUCK OF THE IRISH

By Jason Halley - Cal State Chico

A common perception is that if you do everything, you won't be good at anything. But for Matt Cashore, he rested on his luck and became Monthly Image Competition Overall Winner, Annual Photo Competition Overall Winner, Mark Philbrick Photographer of the Year, Master of the Profession Award and hosted the 2023 Annual Symposium this last year.

Matt grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska and as a grade-schooler wanted to go to the Air Force Academy and be a pilot. Getting glasses in 6th grade ended his Air Force pilot ambitions but his love for aviation never went away and he eventually took flying lessons to become a pilot. With 25 years of flying experience, it may have been his luck, that acquiring a drone license for his job as senior university photographer at the University of Notre Dame was very easy.





Being the host made it possible for Matt's wife Maria to attend the awards banquet (photo by Jay Ferchaud) All other photos by Matt Cashore, part of his APC-winning portfolio.



It may have been his luck that photography entered Matt's life due to a fine arts requirement in high school. Matt joined the school newspaper and was intrigued by the adjacent darkroom. "I figured photography would check off the fine arts requirement and be useful for the newspaper. My dad bought me a used Minolta SRT101. I got some good feedback from teachers and peers and pretty much knew immediately I wanted to do photography for a career." Matt graduated high school in 1990, and headed to Notre Dame – not exactly known for its photojournalism program, but because that's where everyone in his family went.

At Notre Dame, Matt went right to work on the yearbook. It may have been his luck, that his cousin was the editor. With Notre Dame not having a photography or journalism major, Matt had to find out about professional organizations and internships on his own. The closest career option was an internship with the on-campus TV station WNDU. "I figured a news internship at a TV station was better than no news internship at all. Even back then I could see the convergence of stills & video so I thought video experience would be useful. Good call on that one!"

Matt earned a degree in Communications with a concentration in film studies from Notre Dame in 1994. (Film studies may be the source of the various movie quotes you'll hear him saying.) After college, Matt did two full-time newspaper internships, but they didn't offer a full-time job. WNDU offered an early-morning photographer/editor job that he reluctantly took on. Matt also picked up part-time work at the Michigan City, IN News-Dispatch and did freelance jobs for Notre Dame. While he had hoped to find a full-time newspaper job, it may have been his

luck that a different photography career was being set up for him. "My freelancing grew to the point it was better income than I could possibly get at an entry-level newspaper job. In fact, Notre Dame realized it would be cheaper to hire me as full-time employee and in 2007 I became a full-time university photographer."

Though he was quite familiar with his alma mater, being a full-time employee photographer was surprisingly and substantially different than being a freelancer. "Archiving was just one of many examples. I could adequately archive my own photos for myself but as an employee and the sole photographer at the time, I suddenly had to figure out a digital asset management strategy for the entire university."

With all these new considerations to support the legacy for the university, Matt had to find solutions to complex problems. "I was all alone, and I'd only get feedback if it was a complaint. Made me wonder if I was making the best decisions. I knew Martin Vloet--at that time a Michigan staffer and UPAA board member--and he recommended joining UPAA. I joined and attended my first Symposium at Jamestown Community College in 2009. Immediately I knew I'd found my people...dozens of photographers who had nearly the exact same tasks and challenges that I did. That Symposium gave me much-needed confidence that I was on the right track."

At first, Matt didn't enter UPAA contests, but it may have been his luck that Notre Dame has a mandatory performance management program where staff must set goals for themselves. Matt decided in 2013 to make entering UPAA contests a goal. "Like my photo class in high school, something in my brain went "click" and I was all in. The MIC provided ongoing relevant feedback and motivation that I wasn't getting in my



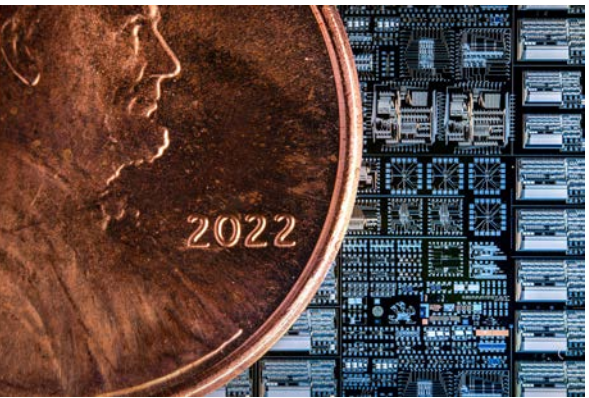
work environment. And photographers are competitive. I like to joke that the two things photographers do most consistently are 1) being competitive and 2) pretending that they're not competitive. Winning contests doesn't get me a promotion, raise or bonus, but it's rewarding to put your best work on display with everyone else's best work and have your peers say you did a good job."

Matt's goals were quickly achieved after winning the overall Monthly Image Competition (MIC) in 2014. Two years later in 2016, Matt considered it to have been dumb luck to win the Photographer of the Year (POY). "I won it in 2016 kind of on accident, because that was the first year that they factored MIC points into the POY. I think (8-time POY) Mark Philbrick had forgotten

to enter one of the monthly contests. Nate (Edwards) had only been member for a few months and Steven (Bridges) wasn't a member yet. So I didn't win the APC or overall MIC that year but squeaked out a POY anyway.

Matt set a new personal goal to win one more POY. "I had to prove to myself that I could do it intentionally. But the talent level in UPAA contests just rocketed upward. Winning contests became much tougher!"

"A second POY looked less and less likely but thanks mainly to a strong December MIC I realized I had a chance this year. That said, Nate and Jaren were, as always, consistently winning and Steven Bridges had a very strong last couple of months. By the time of the APC any one of us had a mathematical possibility of winning POY. I knew that to win I would



have to have all six of my APC entries not just place but place highly. That's like a track and field runner knowing that to win the gold medal he must not only set a personal record but a world record, too. Luckily, I managed to pull off the APC of my dreams. The fact that it happened at a Symposium I was hosting was a bonus."

Matt's skills continued to develop as university photographer for Notre Dame, but he still considers half of his images are just luck. It may be his luck that Matt lives near the campus, so that when the perfect sunset or moonrise or rainbow is occurring, it's easy for him to get to campus to capture the image. "98% of the time, you get absolutely nothing, but those two times out of 100 you get something is all the motivation you need to get over the hump because those two times felt so good."

What's next? Matt's department just reorganized and he's looking forward to the opportunities that brings. "Most of my UPAA contest entries weren't actual assignments, they were discretionary extras. I had to be billable for my job and I tried to be excellent for myself. Now being excellent can be my job. I want to use this new freedom from busywork to challenge myself creatively. That might not translate to winning MIC points, but...maybe with a little luck..."



# STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR: BROOKLYNN JARVIS KELSON, BYU



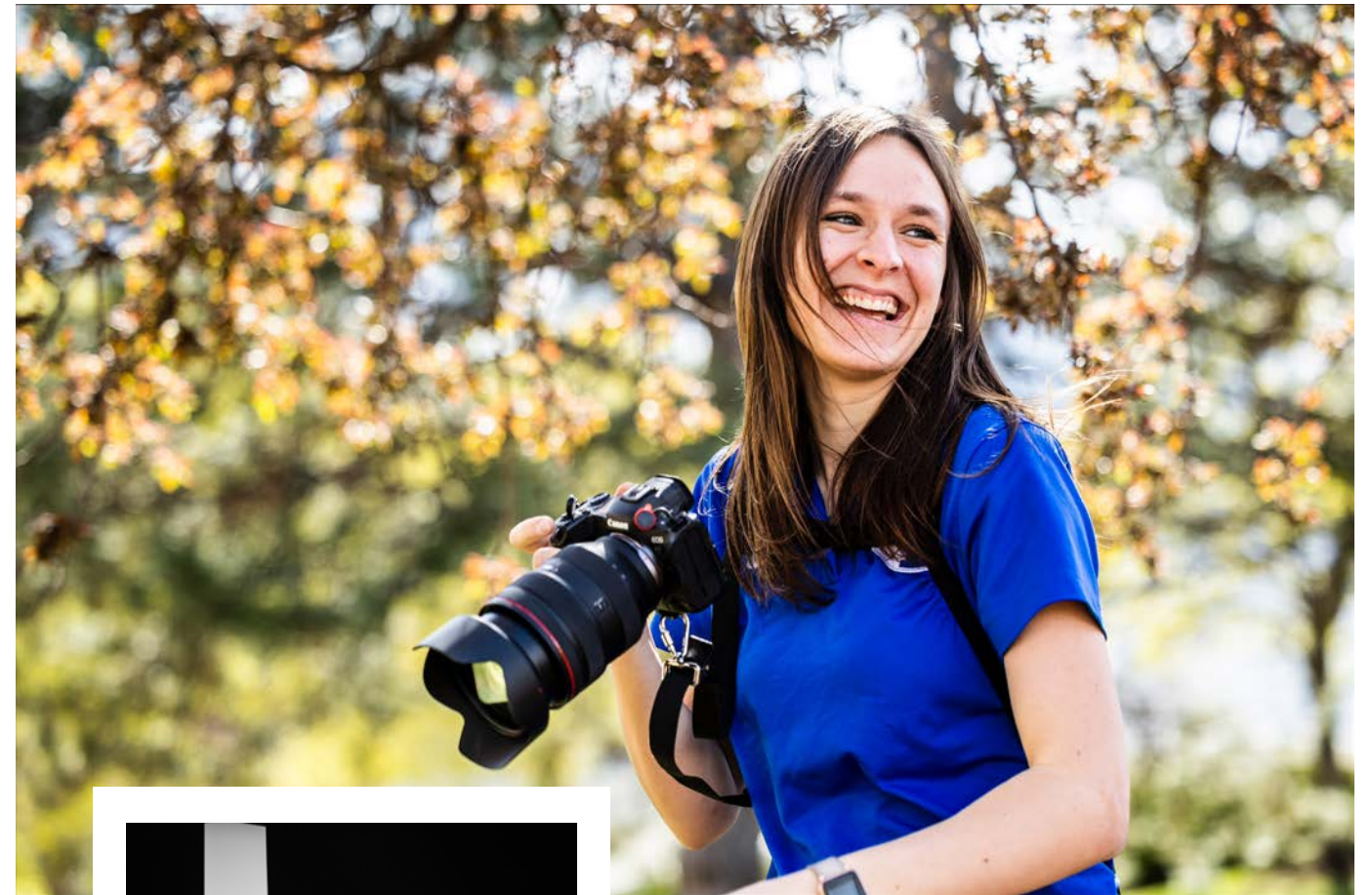
Brooklynn Jarvis Kelson of Brigham Young University was named the inaugural Student Photographer of the Year at the 2023 UPAA Symposium.

"Winning was a special experience for me," she said. "When I walked up to the front to shake Glenn's hand, and everyone gave me a standing ovation, I definitely got teary-eyed. It was wonderful seeing all the hard work I'd put into photography be recognized, and I am still in disbelief that it all happened the way it did."

Brooklynn has been a quick study, having been with BYU photo for only two years. "When I was first hired by Nate (Edwards) and Jaren (Wilkey), I did not realize that I would be working with some of the best mentors I've ever had. They have taught me almost everything I know about the studio, event photography, sports photography, landscapes, portraits, you name it. They've taught me how to be more intentional

with my shots and how to think through each step of a photoshoot so that I don't get overwhelmed. They've taught me how to edit photos and that it's OK to make mistakes. They've even taught me life lessons that don't directly pertain to photography that I'll remember for the rest of my life. I also love being creative with the other student photographers here and learning new things from them. We are like a family that I feel super blessed to be a part of."

Brooklynn also led a breakout session at the Symposium, and she hopes to make leadership and teaching a part of her career journey once she graduates BYU in 2024. "As of right now, I am exploring options to pursue a photography career because I can't imagine myself doing anything other than that professionally after I graduate. I hope to work for a company so that I can spend less time freelancing and more time building my team up, if possible."



*Brooklynn Jarvis Kelson at work (photo by Donovan Kelly)  
All other photos by Brooklynn Jarvis Kelson*



# AI IS (PROBABLY?) NOT GOING TO TAKE OUR JOBS

By Matt Cashore

First off, if I could predict the future I'd be too busy being a billionaire adventurer to write an article for the UPAA annual magazine...so take my predictions with several grains of salt.

Setting aside the existential question of whether AI is the best thing civilization ever created or it's biggest threat, what impact might it have on photo/video and specifically higher ed visual communication?

In the infancy of the automobile, who could have imagined traffic jams, pollution, or road rage? Yet we can already see many potential dangers and misuses of AI in the context of photography, and it's only the tip of the iceberg. Everypixel Journal, an AI-focused blog, published a much-linked-to article that estimated over 15 billion AI-generated images had been created in just over a year. As many images, the article claimed, as photographers created in the entirety of the first 150 years

of photography. In Spring of 2023, Boris Eldagsen refused a Sony World Photography Award for an AI-generated image, saying ominously, "Just as photography replaced painting in the reproduction of reality, AI will replace photography."

"We've enabled this technology faster than we can keep up with it," said Michael Wells, a Cambridge, England-based expert on AI and Photoshelter's Vice President of Strategic Products, during his presentation at the 2023 UPAA Symposium. "We're at an inflection point, but it feels double exponential."

But despite the very bumpy-looking road ahead, I believe universities and colleges are unlikely to encourage the use of AI in marketing and communications photography and video.

## WHY?

• Higher education is rooted in intellectual honesty. AI is, essentially, the world's most skilled plagiarist, and such things are discouraged in academia.

• AI can't fully understand or replicate the subtle emotional connections of alumni and fans to an institution. "Generalised or insincere generated content will always rank low," says Michael Wells.

• While there is not a universal photojournalism-like set of ethics that applies across-the-board to all higher ed photographers, it does seem to be universally accepted that we don't use technology to create visuals that didn't exist. We might engineer or stage scenes for ideal representation, for example, but we all seem to agree that Photoshopping diversity is a line we don't cross.

• Colleges and universities are risk-averse. In January 2023, Getty Images sued Stability AI for using millions of copyrighted Getty images as source material for its AI content. In February 2023, at its launch event, Google's AI chatbot-known as Bard-incorrectly stated that the James Webb Space Telescope "took the very first pictures of a planet outside of our own solar system." That easily knowable factual error was likely the main reason Google's stock lost \$100 billion in market value that same day. "Any prestigious brand - edu or otherwise - has a lot more on the line if an AI solution does something embarrassing," said Michael Wells.

How might AI help?

• Be a labor-saving tool. AI-assisted image searching, or AI-generated metadata might make our image archives more robust.

• Be a creative inspiration. Lindsay Adler spoke at the 2023 Symposium about how she uses AI to spark ideas for images she then creates live.

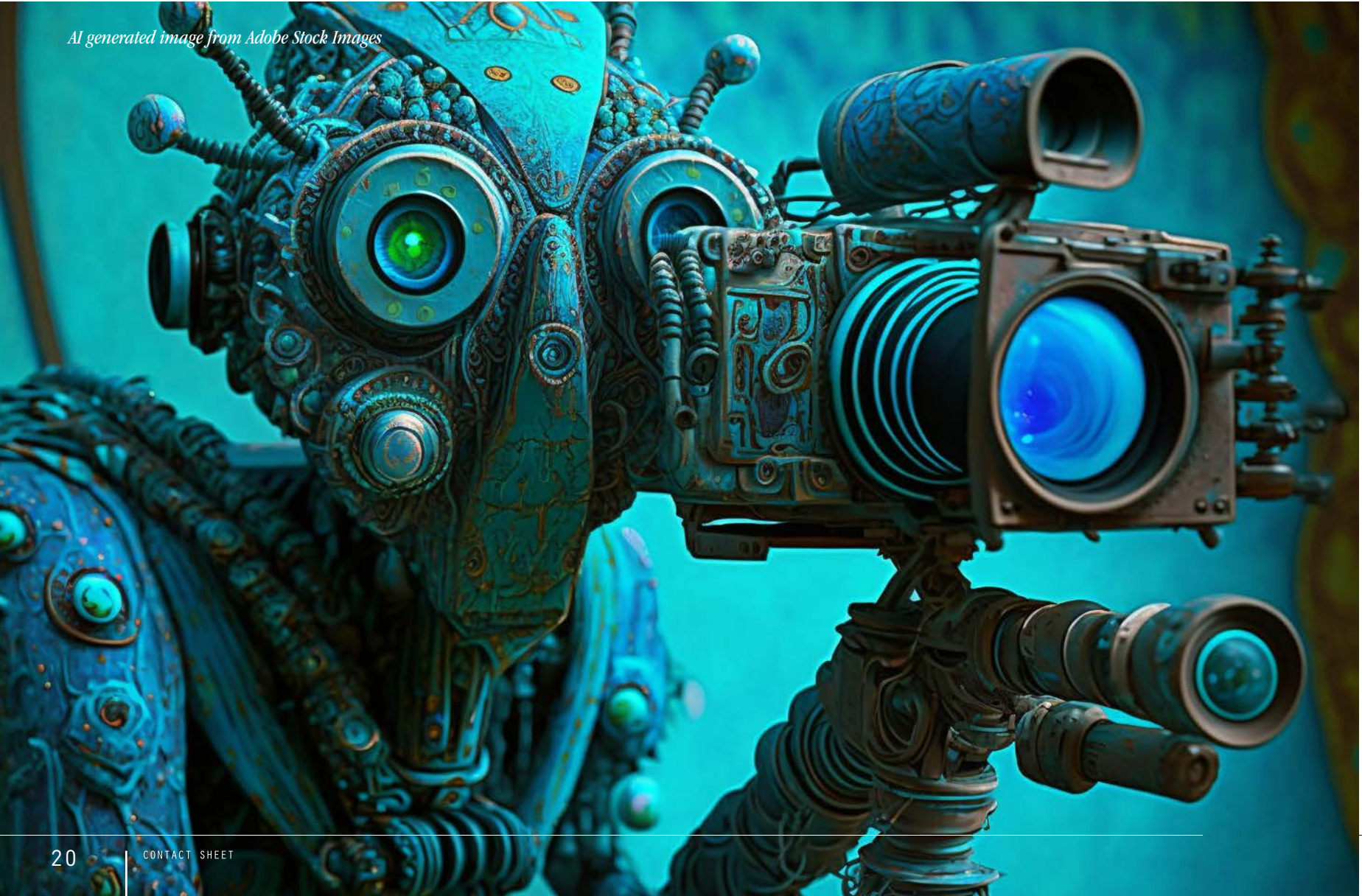
• Better compression for images and video to make more efficient use of storage.

"It does seem true so far that universities are holding true to their values," said Michael Wells, "Although budgetary pressures might tempt a few. I think that when the hype is extracted around generative tools, what you can also see are some less dazzling, but really much more useful technologies arriving. I'd draw attention to (Photoshelter's) own release of AI Visual Search (a vision-backed AI model which understands image content and makes it searchable without tags). To my mind this is an example of AI that does no harm, hugely improves search and helps people thrive - provided it has guardrails on what it has learned during training."

So don't worry too much about AI taking over higher ed visual communication, but instead look for ways AI can make your job easier...but, uh, maybe don't watch Battlestar Galactica.

## HOW?

AI generated image from Adobe Stock Images



This photo was made by Adobe Firefly with the prompt: "University Photographer." There are several giveaways that it's not a legitimate or even competent photo. The photographer has two right hands?? But the technology is in its infancy.



# AI AT THE SYMPOSIUM

By Jon Hendricks, University of Notre Dame

There are many possibilities in a world full of Artificial Intelligence. Some people are hopeful, and some are fearful. I choose to have an optimistic perspective on what is to come with AI.

While deciding on my approach to the 2023 UPAA Symposium Video Shootout, I thought about the possibilities of pushing creativity in a controlled manner rather than squashing it with fear. I saw no rules against AI so I decided to experiment with it to very quickly develop a script and synthesize the text into a voiceover.

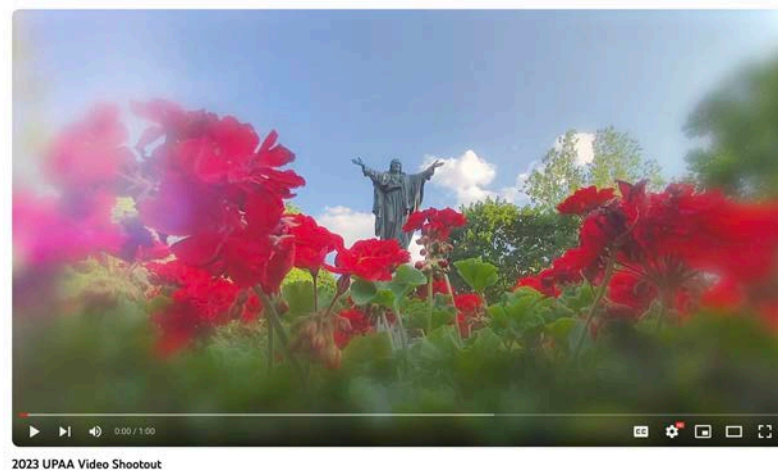
Within two hours of receiving the cue to make a 1-minute video on perspective, I had an AI-assisted script and non-AI video clips filmed. After a few more hours of sorting through dozens of AI voices, the video was edited and emailed. AI had helped me be ~500% faster than was needed. I believe this is a testament to how Artificial Intelligence can give you another tool in your belt, not take your job.

I am honored that this experimental video was voted the best in the contest. Being offered a prize was another honor. But I didn't feel right accepting it this time. Deciding to donate the prize is something I believe was only right for this experiment of a video. And prizes are great, but I treasure UPAA's camaraderie, knowledge sharing, and intellectual debate on the world of visual content. Let's keep that conversation going.

See Jon's video at the QR code here:



*Jon Hendricks speaks at the 2023 Symposium Awards Banquet. A frame from Jon's winning video. (photo by Jay Ferchaud)*



2023 UPAA Video Shootout

# KNOW YOUR WORTH

By Asher Swan

Are we expendable? How do we make sure our administration sees us as a viable resource?

Matt Yeoman has been the photographer and videographer at Aquinas College since 2020 and has grown their visual footprint greatly over the last few years. In 2022 he covered 250 events and produced over 40 videos. He has shown Aquinas College a visual aptitude that deserves recognition, but last year his office was hit with a 47% budget cut due to enrollment numbers and other issues. Because of that cut, his position was in question. Matt ran the numbers and calculated that the cost of a freelancer to cover the same events and produce the same quantity of videos would have cost the college somewhere between \$280,000 and \$1.5 million. Matt is fine now, and has maintained his position and still loves working for his college.

Jaren Wilkey of BYU offered this bit of advice: "The administration thinks in excel spreadsheets and quantifiable data." He encourages all photographers to keep track of your work, from the number of images, to the number of shoots. Those numbers don't lie and can help greatly

in situations just like Matt's. "When you can sit down and show them the amount of work and how it benefited the university, hopefully it will make them think about the value of having a full-time photographer on staff. We may think that image we took that wowed that president will sustain us, but at the end of the day it's about numbers and data for the administrators. We think in pictures, they don't."

Watch this UPAA Live presentation from 2020: "Communicating Our Value as University Photographers" via this QR code:



*BYU's shoot log makes it possible to have at-the-ready stats. (photo by Matt Norton)*





# GOOD BOY, SPOT

Missouri University of Science and Technology photographer Michael Pierce won a Best in Show in the January 2023 Monthly Image Competition with this image of a robot mine safety dog.

Missouri S&T was founded as the Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy, so photography in a literal mine is all in a day's work for Pierce.

Missouri S&T is home to two mines that are used in a variety of classes and research projects like this," said Pierce. "The assignment was to photograph the robot, SPOT, in one of our mines with its custom graphics. The robot is being used in mine rescue research and how it could assist trapped miners in emergency situations."

"For this specific photo, I was on the ground. It was a slow shutter, 1/10th of a second, and wide open at f2.8 which helped show the glow from the front guidance beams, the blue light from its battery in the back, and the headlamp of the tech. The beam from the headlamp is visible because I used some canned aerosol fog — it's great for the mine. We were in and out of the mine in a total of about 45 minutes because the batteries on the robot weren't quite charged and it was a cold day."

This photo also went on to win a first place award in the Annual Photo Competition Science and Research category.

A full list of annual contest winners begins on page 11.