

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

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**Texas communicator is four-time national sweepstakes award winner**

A Texas Senator and communications business owner has won the overall sweepstakes award in the National Federation of Press Women’s 2025 Professional Communications Contest.

Judith Zaffirini of Laredo was announced as the top award winner on Sept. 13, 2025, at NFPW awards banquet in Golden, Colorado. She won $250 cash and a plaque for finishing in first place.

Zaffirini, the first Mexican American woman elected to the Texas Senate, became the first woman Dean of the Senate in December 2023, succeeding 24 men who held the title since 1909 when it was first assigned to the longest-serving senator.

An award-winning Communication Specialist who has won more than 1,300 awards and honors for her legislative, public service, and professional work, Zaffirini holds bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate 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, 2023 and 2024.

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

The second and third-place prizes in the Sweepstakes competition were split between two NFPW members who earned the same number of points in the contest, resulting in a tie for second-place. Joshua Friedberg and Amy Wieser Willson will each receive a Second Place Award and a $75 prize.

“Congratulations once again to Judith Zaffirini for her Sweepstakes Award. Year after year, she astounds us all with her body of prize-winning work,” said NFPW President Julie Campbell. “And congratulations as well to Joshua Friedberg and Amy Wieser Willson for their second-place tie in the Sweepstakes category. Like Ms. Zaffirini, they are talented communicators with impressive careers.”

Friedberg, a member of Illinois Woman’s Press Association, is a TEDx speaker, college writing tutor, academic coach, music historian, and singer-songwriter living in Chicago. He has been a regular entrant of NFPW’s professional contest for nine years. This is his first time to win a Sweepstakes award.

Amy Wieser Willson, Ph.D., a member of North Dakota Professional Communicators, is president of Neon Loon Communications, a Minnesota-based communications firm. Before founding Neon Loon, Willson worked in journalism, corporate communications and marketing and served in the military for 20 years. She has won numerous awards for her work from NDPC, NFPW and others. This is her first Sweepstakes award from NFPW.

**Delaware takes home 15th Affiliate Sweepstakes award**

Delaware Press Association set a contest record by winning the Affiliate Sweepstakes Award for the 15th time since 2001. The Affiliate Sweepstakes Award is given to the affiliate with the most points for winning entries in the NFPW Communications Contest. The Delaware affiliate receives a $250 prize along with the honor.

“Contest director Katherine Ward has built a powerhouse program that draws high quality entries in a wide range of categories, making Delaware hard to beat in the Affiliate Sweepstakes race, though that doesn’t keep other affiliates from trying,” said Helen Plotkin, NFPW Professional Contest Director, noting that the 2025 contest drew entries from 39 states, the District of Columbia, and one foreign country.

Arkansas Press Women earned the second-highest number of points in this year’s Sweepstakes competition, with the Connecticut Press Club earning the third-highest number.

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 Golden, Colorado. 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, 2024, and Dec. 31, 2024.

For more information about NFPW and the annual Professional Communications Contest, please visit the organization’s website at [www.nfpw.org](http://www.nfpw.org).