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Herald-Sun receives awards in service, education

The Herald-Sun
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DURHAM -- The Herald-Sun won another top award in higher-education coverage and also was honored for public service journalism in North Carolina Press Association competition for work done in 2005.

Other Herald-Sun awards included sports photography and business writing.

The awards were presented Thursday night at a ceremony at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel in Durham.

The first place in higher-education coverage was the paper's second in a row and third in the past four years. The entry, a package of articles written by reporter Eric Ferreri, included stories on faculty donations to political candidates, use of educational consultants to plan for college, UNC's huge maintenance backlog and UNC's controversial summer-reading program.

The higher-education competition is open to every newspaper in the state. The News & Observer of Raleigh took second place and the Winston-Salem Journal took third.

In the public service category, The Herald-Sun took third place for a series of articles on fundraising efforts by a group called the College Republican National Committee.

The century-old GOP youth organization aggressively solicited money from elderly people, writing "urgent," high-pressure pitch letters that often touched on senior citizens' fears.

The News & Observer won first place and the Charlotte Observer took second.

In sports photography, The Herald-Sun captured two of the three awards, a first place and a third place.

The first-place photo, taken by photo editor Walt Unks, shows a Southern High School football player splashing down the field in a playoff game. The third-place photo, by staff photographer Bernard Thomas, shows UNC basketball players piling onto the court to celebrate their victory over Duke in the Smith Center.

The paper's business-writing award, a third place, was for an article on mixed-use developments -- walkable communities blending grocery stores, restaurants and theaters among offices, townhouses and homes -- that examined whether the rules governing them were too loosely crafted.

The Herald-Sun competed for the photography and business awards with the state's largest newspapers in the over-35,000 circulation category.

"I'm pleased that these awards highlight the excellent work our reporters, photographers and their less-visible colleagues in editing and other roles do," said Herald-Sun Editor Bob Ashley. "In an area where higher education is so critically important, it is especially gratifying to once again be recognized for outstanding work in that field. And there's no more satisfying compliment for most journalists than to be cited for public service.

"In the end, of course, the most important judges are our readers. But it is always gratifying to have judges who are our journalistic peers acknowledge our accomplishments."

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