



National Newspaper Association  
309 S Providence Rd  
Columbia, MO 65203  
573-777-4980 Fax: 573-777-4985

## Daniel M. Phillips Leadership Award 2015 NNA Checklist

**Nominee Name:** Jeremy Waltner

**Newspaper Name & Location:** Freeman Courier

**Nominated by:** Brian J. Hunhoff

**Age:** 38

**NNA Membership Information:** Through 12/31/2014 (press asso); verified: \_\_\_\_\_

**Year Nominated/Last Year Eligible for Award:** 2015

**Completed Nomination Form?** YES

**Completed Nomination Letter?** YES

**Documentation Supporting Nomination Criteria to Support the Areas Below?** YES (Included in letters/form)

- Professional Achievement**
- Community Leadership and Service**
- NNA/National Involvement (Note: evidence of NNA service is not required)**

**Biographical Sketch of Nominee?** Yes

**Three Letters of Reference?** Yes

**Photo Included?** YES (digital pic on file)

# Daniel M. Phillips Leadership Award

## 2015 Nomination Form

Nominee Name: Jeremy Waltner

Position: News Editor

Newspaper: Freeman Courier

Address: PO Box 950

City, State, ZIP: Freeman, SD 57029

Phone: (605) 925-7033 Fax : N/A

E-mail: courier@gwtc.net

Nominee's Age: 38

Nominator's Name: Brian J. Hunhoff

Position: Contributing Editor

Affiliation: Yankton County Observer

Address: 1308 W 17<sup>th</sup> St

City, State, ZIP: Yankton, SD 57078

Phone: (605) 760-0078 Fax : N/A

E-mail: brian@co.yankton.sd.us

**Industry Leadership:** Describe the nominee's activities and achievements that illustrate how the nominee serves to strengthen the newspaper industry through his or her leadership in the state press association.

Jeremy Waltner has been an extraordinarily active member of the South Dakota Newspaper Association. He was named SDNA Outstanding Young Journalist in 2000. He currently serves as SDNA first vice president and will be installed as SDNA president at the group's 2016 spring convention. Jeremy has participated in numerous SDNA programs and presentations on a variety of topics. He is regarded as one of South Dakota's best photographers and has presented many workshops throughout the state and region to help other community newspapers improve photo quality in their publications. Jeremy is also a skilled writer and layout artist. The Courier has been one of South Dakota's best newspapers for the past 25 years, led by the talented two-man combination of Jeremy and his father, Tim L. Waltner (longtime Courier publisher). Jeremy has averaged 10 journalism awards per year during his 20-year career with the Freeman weekly.

**Community Leadership and Character:** Describe and provide examples of how the nominee is well-respected in the community, of good reputation and integrity, and how he provides active leadership in serving the community on a local, state and/or regional level.

Jeremy is a respected and involved member of the Freeman community. He has been particularly active in the town's annual Schmeckfest celebration. He has acted or directed in several of the event's annual musical productions. He is also a co-founder and partner in Ghostlight Players, a non-profit theater company based in Freeman. He served 2010-2012 as a board member of Freeman Community Theatre. Jeremy is also involved in his church, teaching both children and adult Sunday school classes. He served 2004-2012 on the Heritage Hall Museum and Archives Board of Directors, and was vice-president. He is a regular presenter of historic lectures for local organizations, including the Freeman Public Library, retirement homes and nursing homes. He is also active in church and community choirs and has coached his two children in youth sports.

**NNA/National Leadership:** Describe nominee's involvement in national organizations, such as NNA or other national/international service organizations or causes in which the nominee has been involved. (Evidence of NNA service is not required.)

Jeremy Waltner has continued a family tradition of leadership in the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors. In 2007, at age 30, Jeremy served as the youngest president in ISWNE's 60-year history. He also helped his father and Moberly Tribune publisher Larry Atkinson organize the 2007 ISWNE conference in the Black Hills of South Dakota. In 2003, from a pool of 144 entries, Jeremy won ISWNE's Golden Quill award for best editorial. He remains one of the lynchpins of ISWNE.

Please return (1) this form and (2) letter of nomination by May 1, 2015, to:  
Daniel M. Phillips Leadership Award

**National Newspaper Association**

PO Box 7540

Columbia, MO 65205-7540



The YANKTON COUNTY  
**Observer**

**To: Selection Committee for Daniel M. Phillips Leadership Award**

**Re: Nomination of Jeremy Waltner**

I did not know Dan Phillips, but everything I've heard or read about the outstanding Mississippi journalist reminds me of Jeremy Waltner. There are many parallels in the careers of these two young newspapermen.

Like Dan Phillips, Jeremy is a talented photographer and writer – one of the best in his home state of South Dakota.

Like Dan Phillips, Jeremy Waltner had the ability and opportunity to work at larger newspapers in bigger cities.

Like Dan Phillips, Jeremy Waltner chose to spend his journalism career with his family's newspaper in the small rural town of Freeman, South Dakota.

Like Dan Phillips, Jeremy Waltner has an effervescent personality. His enthusiasm for the newspaper business makes Jeremy a popular presenter at South Dakota Newspaper Association events.

Like Dan Phillips, Jeremy Waltner has been honored with numerous journalism awards, including SDNA Outstanding Young Journalist in 2000 and the 2003 Golden Quill award for editorial writing from the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors.

Like Dan Phillips, Jeremy Waltner became a national leader in community journalism in his 30s. At age 30, Jeremy served as the youngest president in the 60-year history of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors.

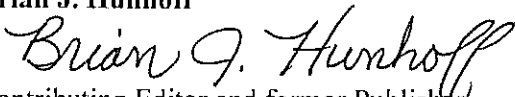
Like Dan Phillips, Jeremy Waltner has been a newspaper industry leader in his home state. Jeremy currently serves as first vice president of the South Dakota Newspaper Association. He will be installed as SDNA president at the group's 2016 spring convention.

Like Dan Phillips, Jeremy Waltner is a tireless volunteer in his hometown. Jeremy is active in his church, community theatre, community choirs, local heritage organizations, and the activities of his children.

I respectfully submit Jeremy Waltner as a worthy recipient of the National Newspaper Association's Daniel M. Phillips Leadership Award. Thank you for consideration of this entry.

Sincerely,


**Brian J. Hunhoff**



Contributing Editor and former Publisher  
Yankton County Observer  
1308 W. 17<sup>th</sup> St.  
Yankton, SD 57078

Phone: (605) 760-0078

Email: [brian@co.yankton.sd.us](mailto:brian@co.yankton.sd.us)



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**BRIDGE CITY PUBLISHING, INC.**  
1413 East Grand Crossing • Mobridge, SD 57601

March 24, 2015

To: Selection Committee for the Daniel M. Phillips Leadership Award  
Re: Nomination of Jeremy Walter

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter in support of the nomination of Jeremy Waltner for the Daniel M. Phillips Leadership Award.

I literally have known Jeremy since he was a child and have delighted in his decision to follow his incredibly talented father into the field of journalism, and am pleased to say, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." I've watched him grow into this wonderfully talented writer, photographer, graphic designer and community leader.

Having known Dan Phillips as well, I can say unequivocally that Jeremy epitomizes everything that Dan Phillips stood for and accomplished in his short life. I can think of no better nominee for this award that is given in memory of Dan and his distinguished career in journalism.

Our newspaper, the Mobridge Tribune, competes in the same South Dakota Newspaper Association circulation category as the Freeman Courier, the Waltner family newspaper. I've delighted in seeing Jeremy win a multitude of awards in virtually every category – news writing, feature writing, editorial writing, photography, newspaper design and general excellence. I've consistently held up the work of Jeremy and his father, Tim, to the staffs of our three newspapers as examples of the excellence in journalism to which we should strive.

Jeremy is already proving himself as a leader in our profession. At the age of 30, he was elected as the youngest president of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors, serving with great distinction. I'm a member of ISWNE and see the respect the membership gives Jeremy for his dedication and hard work not only for this organization, but for the profession of journalism as well. Jeremy's editorial writing has also earned him this organization's top award for editorial writing, the Golden Quill Award. To win this prestigious and coveted award at such a young age is a tribute to Jeremy's talents and professionalism.

He is also now serving as first vice president of the South Dakota Newspaper Association's Board of Directors, and in the following year, will be installed as the president. Again, his elevation to this position at such a young age is recognition of how his South Dakota newspaper peers view his abilities and talents.

I've always believed that it is the duty of newspaper people in small towns to give back to their communities in the form of non-elected public service. Jeremy's long list of community involvement shows that he feels the same duty.

Dan would be proud to see someone like Jeremy win his award.



Larry Atkinson  
President and Publisher

April 2, 2015

To: Selection Committee for the Daniel M. Phillips Leadership Award

I write today in support of the nomination of **Jeremy Waltner** for the Daniel M. Phillips Leadership Award.

One consistent challenge for smaller communities such as Freeman (population 1,300) is attracting and maintaining a leadership core which can help the community look both at itself and to the future.

As the News Editor and a regular photographer for the *Freeman Courier*, Jeremy has played a major role in the continuance of a tradition of excellence that places this publication numerous notches above the vast majority of weeklies in communities of a similar size. The paper is respected for its impartial, considered and thorough coverage. This includes editorials that actually merit reading and excellent photojournalism. The paper's excellence, and Jeremy's work, is regularly attested to by an embarrassment of awards from the South Dakota Newspaper Association and beyond. It is, simply said, special.

Fortunately, the paper and Jeremy are not just observers of our community's life (that's not in their DNA). They are participants, advocates and workers.

Many of Jeremy's local leadership roles have tied, in one way or the other, to our community's rich arts/history heritage. He has been an officer in the local community theatre group, has directed stage productions (musicals) for our Schmeckfest celebration, has sung in numerous vocal ensembles, served as the Chair of the Board for the Heritage Hall Museum and Archives, acted in productions of the Ghostlight Players both here in Freeman and at Heritage Village in Madison, SD, and was active in a community planning process for a performing arts center and expanded arts offerings. This is remarkable when you consider that he is also an active member of his church, a devoted husband/father, and each week has to contend with the demands of getting the paper out.

So ... why is Jeremy so important to Freeman --- beyond the obvious? It is because his presence here, and the reasons he is here, reinforce our community's hopes for a meaningful and prosperous future. Jeremy has come home to Freeman because he understands and values what this community has meant to him and would mean to his family. His choice is a strong affirmation to others in his demographic that there is something here that justifies their attention. He has committed his fiscal resources and his future to Freeman. He has purchased a home, established a business beyond the paper (Waltner Media), and is a regular contributor to local causes such as the library and health care system. There are few stronger statements about the vitality and survivability of a rural town than someone with confidence in its future. Finally, he is not afraid to take on those inertia issues that often plague small towns and drive younger populations away. The fact that he does

this is important, but the way that he does it may be equally important. He listens and is often that person who brings parties together or makes them aware of the interests of each other to the benefit of the community. Jeremy seems quite willing to not take bows for this role and, thus, is appreciated even more. Respectful change agents cannot be overvalued.

We would willingly accept another dozen or so "Jeremys". Fortunately, we do have this one. I urge your consideration of Jeremy for this honor.

Respectfully,

John C. Koch, Ph.D.  
President of the Board  
Freeman Education and Research, L.L.C.



We've got South Dakota covered.

April 1, 2015

To whom it may concern:

It is an honor to offer a letter of support for the nomination of Jeremy Waltner for the Daniel M. Phillips Leadership Award. Jeremy fits all of the criteria for the award, and more.

I have known Jeremy for more than 20 years. His skills in journalism are surpassed only by his love for his family, his devotion to his community and his passion for newspapering. He represents all the best in community journalism.

Jeremy takes all of these things to heart. He cares deeply about the Freeman Courier and the community served by the Courier. His involvement in Freeman, in SDNA, in ISWNE and other interests are inspiring. He pursues these interests with only excellence and service to others as his goals.

Over the years Jeremy has conducted several photography workshops for SDNA. Time and again Jeremy has provided support and advice to fellow journalists that has gone far and above what we asked him to do. It's that generosity and willingness to help others that typifies who Jeremy is.

I am confident the members of South Dakota Newspaper Association join in wholeheartedly supporting the nomination of Jeremy Waltner for this Leadership Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Bordewyk'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'D'.

David Bordewyk  
General Manager

# Jeremy Waltner biographical sketch

**Name:** Jeremy Stephen Waltner.

**Hometown:** Freeman, S.D.

**Birth date:** July 22, 1976.

**Age:** 38.

**High school:** Graduated from Freeman Academy in Freeman, S.D., in 1994.

**College:** Attended South Dakota State University in Brookings, S.D., 1995-1998.

**Family:** Wife, Stacey; two children: Ella (8) and Oliver (5); parents: Tim and Mary Waltner.

**Position:** News Editor for family-owned Freeman Courier.

