

Deborah M. Pastner

Scholar, visuals editor, photo coach

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EDUCATION

The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX

Current

PhD student in Journalism and Media

Four-year recipient of Provost/Moody Fellowship

2026-2027 Journalism Graduate Council Research Chair

Expected graduation year: 2029

University of Missouri, Missouri School of Journalism, Columbia, MO

2024

Master of Arts in Journalism

Thesis: "To show or to shield: Twin Cities news media's gatekeeping of the George Floyd video"

Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA

1993

Bachelor of Arts; Philosophy major, Studio Art minor; graduated magna cum laude

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Assistant Coordinator, Pictures of the Year Competition, Columbia, MO

2025-2026

Mentor and judging moderator at the 82nd and 83rd annual Pictures of the Year competition at the Reynolds Journalism Institute, Missouri School of Journalism.

Visuals consultant, Center for Community News, Burlington, VT

2024-2025

Partnered with CCN at the University of Vermont on their Election and Democracy and Statehouse Programs. Created a series of photo and video assignments for students, including a Best Visual Practices handout.

Assistant Managing Editor/Photo, *The Minnesota Star Tribune*, Minneapolis, MN

2023

Led award-winning department of 17 photographers, videographers and editors for the fifth-largest circulation U.S. daily newspaper. Oversaw planning, editing, and strategy for visuals online and in print. Managed million-dollar photo and video department budget. Started mentor program with alternative-learning Twin Cities high school to inspire students to pursue a career in photojournalism.

Fellow, Nieman Foundation for Journalism, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA Member of the 84 th Nieman Fellowship class. Took courses at Harvard College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the Kennedy School of Government, ranging from leadership to implicit bias to documentary innovations. Explored how photojournalists can approach coverage more empathetically.	2021-2022
Director of Photo/Video, <i>The Minnesota Star Tribune</i>, Minneapolis, MN Part of team that won the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in Breaking News Reporting for coverage of the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police officer Derek Chauvin. During tenure, photo editing team recognized three times for the Pictures of the Year Angus McDougall Excellence in Editing award. Individual members of photo team recognized by Pictures of the Year, Best of Photojournalism, and World Press Photo. In 2015, began annual Behind the Lens photo event to introduce highlights of staff's work to the Twin Cities community.	2013-2023
Photo editor, <i>The Minnesota Star Tribune</i>, Minneapolis, MN Edited news, sports, and features stories, as well as special projects. Led coverage and onsite editing for several high-profile news events, including the 2008 Republican National Convention, the 2007 35W bridge collapse, and the 2002 Minnesota Twins playoff run. Participant in the 2011 Kalish Workshop at Ball State University.	1999-2013
Photojournalist, <i>Bay City Times</i>, Bay City, MI Photographed news and sports assignments at central Michigan daily newspaper.	1998-1999
Coordinator, Pictures of the Year Competition, Columbia, MO In concert with POY Director Bill Kuykendall, coordinated the 55 th annual Pictures of the Year competition and awards presentation.	1997-1998
Photojournalist, <i>Lakewood Journal</i>, Lakewood, WA Handled photo assignments as sole photographer at weekly community newspaper in Washington State.	1994-1996
Photojournalist, <i>Nantucket Beacon</i>, Nantucket, MA One of two photographers at weekly newspaper on Nantucket Island.	1993-1994

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed Publications

Pastner, D. (in press). To show or to shield: Twin Cities news media's gatekeeping of the George Floyd video. *Visual Communication Quarterly*.

Work in Progress

Pastner, D. (under review). A theory of justice for journalists: Reimagining news coverage through the veil of ignorance.

Koo, H., Yao, S., **Pastner, D.**, Masullo, G. (under review). Moral language: How mainstream news, TikTok, and podcasts covered deaths of Charlie Kirk and George Floyd.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

2026 Bess Whitehead Scott Scribes Scholarship recipient, Headliners Foundation

First place, Student paper, Visual Communications division, 2025 AEJMC Conference

2024 Kappa Tau Alpha journalism honor society inductee

PRESENTATIONS

Peer-reviewed Conference Papers

Pastner, D. (2026, June 8) "A theory of justice for journalists: Reimagining news coverage through the veil of ignorance." Presented at the 2026 International Communication Association Conference, Journalism Studies division, Cape Town, South Africa.

Pastner, D. (2025, August 9) "To show or to shield: Twin Cities news media's gatekeeping of the George Floyd video." Top student paper, Visual Communication division. Presented at the 2025 AEJMC Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Pastner, D. (2025, March 15) "To show or to shield: Twin Cities news media's gatekeeping of the George Floyd video." Presented at the 2025 AEJMC Southeast Colloquium, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Chapel Hill, NC.

Invited Conference Presentations

Pastner, D. (2023, April 2) "Making the story pitch." Presented at the Hubbard School of Journalism, University of Minnesota Northern Exposure photojournalism conference. Minneapolis, MN.

Pastner, D. (2022, July 30) "Finding joy in your portfolio." Presented at the Hubbard School of Journalism, University of Minnesota Northern Exposure photojournalism conference. Minneapolis, MN.

Pastner, D. (2022, April 9) "Breaking into the journalism industry." Presented at the Christopher J. Georges Conference on College Journalism at Harvard University. Cambridge, MA.

Pastner, D. (2019, February 9) "Building a better portfolio." Presented at the Hubbard School of Journalism, University of Minnesota Northern Exposure photojournalism conference. Minneapolis, MN.

Pastner, D. (2018, November 14) "Photo night with Deb Pastner." Presented at the Hussman School of Journalism and Media, University of North Carolina. Chapel Hill, NC.

Panel Presentations

Pastner, D., Epping, S., Grewe, D., Taylor, R. (2025, August 6) "How technology is reshaping the bounds of ethical and practice-based norms, and how to prepare for it." Presented at the 2025 AEJMC Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Pastner, D., Mortenson, T., Smith, L., Vosburg, M. (2025, March 14) "What is the future of photography in a world with AI?" Presented at the 2025 AEJMC Southeast Colloquium, University of North Carolina. Chapel Hill, NC.

Pastner, D., Gonzalez, C., Harkness, K., Tsong-Taatar, R. (2020, November 14) "*Star Tribune's* George Floyd coverage." Presented online at the 2020 Atlanta Photojournalism Conference.

Conference Panels Organized

Pastner, D. (2019, September 9) Organized and moderated panel discussion "Women in Photojournalism" at the News Leaders Association annual conference. New Orleans, LA.

Television Appearances

Pastner, D. (2023, June 30). "TPT's Hype collaboration with *Star Tribune*." Presented on Almanac, Twin Cities Public Television. St. Paul, MN.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/tpts-hype-collaboration-with-star-tribune-40234/>

Pastner, D. (2020, January 10). "What Makes a Good News Photo." Presented on Almanac, Twin Cities Public Television. St. Paul, MN.

<https://www.tpt.org/almanac/video/what-makes-a-good-news-photograph-show-and-tell-36245/>

TEACHING

Teaching Assistant

Visual Journalism, Moody College of Communication, University of Texas at Austin (Fall 2026)

Digital Storytelling Basics, Moody College of Communication, University of Texas at Austin (Spring 2026)

Visual Journalism, Moody College of Communication, University of Texas at Austin (Fall 2025)

SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Service to Industry

Reviewer (2026) University of Oregon SOJC's AEJMC accreditation assessment
Reviewer (2026) International Communication Association conference, Visual Communication division
Research committee member (2026) Commission on Graduate Education, AEJMC
Portfolio reviewer (2024) Women Photograph collective
Participant (2024) Disarming Disinformation training, International Center for Journalists
Judge (2024) Utah Photojournalism competition
Portfolio reviewer (2024) Northern Exposure photojournalism conference
Portfolio reviewer (2022-2024) Social Documentary Network
Mentor (2023-2024) Missouri School of Journalism's J-School Mentoring Program
Founder and Mentor (2022-2023) Gordon Parks High School/*Minnesota Star Tribune* partnership
Contest Judge (2021) NPPA's Best of Photojournalism
President (2020) Associated Press Photo Managers
Contest Judge (2018) Society of News Design
Juror (2017) Pulitzer Prizes (photography jury)
Contest Judge (2016) Pictures of the Year
Juror (2016) Pulitzer Prizes (photography jury)
Board member (2007-2008) Minnesota News Council
Contest organizer (2003-2005) Minnesota News Photographers Association annual contest

Service to Community

Deputy voter registrar (2025-present) Travis County, TX
Grant reviewer (2024) Minnesota Department of Human Services
AmeriCorps literacy tutor (2023-2024) Ascension Catholic School, Minneapolis, MN
Hospice volunteer (2023-2024) Allina Health Hospice and Palliative Care, Minneapolis, MN

JOURNALISM AWARDS

Individual awards

Finalist, Visual Editor of the Year (2019) Pictures of the Year
Finalist, Picture Editor of the Year (2018) NPPA's Best of Photojournalism
Finalist, Visual Editor of the Year (2017) Pictures of the Year
Finalist, Visual Editor of the Year (2016) Pictures of the Year

Team awards

Award of Excellence, Angus McDougall Excellence in Editing (2022) Pictures of the Year
Third Place, Digital Picture Editing Team of the Year (2022) NPPA's Best of Photojournalism
Pulitzer Prize in Breaking News Reporting (2021) for George Floyd coverage
Edward R. Murrow Award (2021) for George Floyd coverage
Finalist, Angus McDougall Excellence in Editing (2021) Pictures of the Year
Online News Association Breaking News (2020) for George Floyd coverage
Finalist, Angus McDougall Excellence in Editing (2020) Pictures of the Year

Online News Association Explanatory Reporting (2015) for "Bees at the Brink"

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Completed UT's Teaching Preparation Certificate program, Spring 2026

International Communication Association

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

National Press Photographers Association

Content Authenticity Initiative