

To the Journalist of the Year Award Selection Committee,

It is with sincere enthusiasm that I write this letter in support of Mr. Mark Maddaloni's application for the Journalist of the Year Award. I have had the pleasure of witnessing Mark make profound contributions both in and out the classroom throughout the three years of advising him on staff of the award winning broadcast show, Tribe Talk.

In my years of working in both the collegiate and high school level, Mark is one of the most exceptional students that I have encountered. Mark understands the value of hard work and he pours his all into every position he has had on staff. He worked his way up the ranks from equipment manager, producer and now News Director and he has earned every position. His analytical skills, eye for the camera, artistic ability and his uncanny ability to have grace under pressure has made him a favorite amongst his peers. As the News Director, Mark manages our forty member staff. He facilitates brainstorming sessions, picks the show's line-up, helps with picking groups based on personalities and skillset, resolves the conflict amongst staff members, supervises production, manages deadline day and critiques everyone's pieces for correction day before they are submitted for the show. He does all this and more in the spirit of excellence. His work is impeccable and his leadership is beyond comparison. He holds his staff members to a high standard and it is breathtaking to see his peers work endlessly to meet that expectation. Mark has mastered the art of leadership; he knows when to command the troops and when to sit back and let others lead. He is one of the best News Directors that I have had and his shoes will be hard to fill next year.

Mark recognizes the power of journalism and the tremendous responsibility he has as a journalist. He advocates for his staff and their right to produce news stories on topics that administration may deem as too controversial. For example, when administration caught wind about a story Tribe Talk was producing in regards to the sex education policy, it was Mark that reached out to the board of trustees and discussed with them the importance of covering issues that will allow students to practice their journalistic skills and topics that impact student life. One of the board members was so impressed that she offered to be interviewed on camera and now serves as a main contact for our staff. He pushes our staff to report on issues that matter and empowers them to seek the truth and report it.

In addition to his time on staff, Mark has also served as my teacher assistant for the prerequisite course for Tribe Talk. Most high school teacher assistants just sit back and complete assignments from other classes. Not Mark. Mark was constantly engaged with the students and helped me teach the necessary skills to be an amazing editor, reporter and director. He spoke of his time in Tribe Talk and the impact journalism has made in his life. His passion is contagious and students aspired to be like him. In addition, Mark also conducted workshops at various journalism conferences. It is telling when you have students inspired by the work and passion of another.

His work speaks for itself as his pieces are always selected to compete in state, regional and national competitions. His news packages have helped our show win the Scroggins Award, Pacemaker Award and recently place third in the recent National Scholastic Press Association Best of Show competition and Best in the Southeast. Throughout his time on Tribe Talk he has won the most individual awards and even placed Best in Overall in last year's Broadcast TOP competition.

Nevertheless, Mark's contributions to this program goes beyond awards. His energy and passion is imprinted on the hearts of every member on staff. There is no doubt in my mind that his legacy involves leaving leaders and storytellers in my hands and for that I am extremely grateful. To say that Mark is worthy of this award would be an understatement. His reputation proves that he is beyond deserving and this is why I highly recommend Mark Maddaloni for the Journalist of the Year Award.

Warm Regards,

Shawntell Pace, M.Ed.

Media Technology Teacher

Tribe Talk Advisor

Wando High School