



2026 Excellence in Broadcasting Awards Finalists

The entries for the KBA Excellence in Broadcasting Awards were selected by independent panels of professional broadcasters judging every individual entry. Judges scored each entry, and the highest average scores determined the finalists. The finalist list is presented in random order. This list does not reflect scores or any placement (first, second or third). The winners for each category will be announced at the KBA Annual Membership Conference on Sunday, October 25, 2026 at the Galt House in Louisville.

TELEVISION FINALISTS

Rookie of the Year

- Drayton Charlton-Perrin - WPSD-TV
- Micah Henson - WNKY-TV
- Molly Demrow - WLEX-TV

Overall Digital Presence

- WLKY-TV
- WNKY-TV
- WKYT-TV

Special Program or Feature

- WDKY-TV - Lynch Colored School Stands Tall Decades Later
- WKYT-TV - WKYT Investigates | FCPS District Financial Fallout
- WKYT-TV - WKYT Investigates | The Death of Doug Harless

Behind the Scenes

- Kathy Werner - Traffic Manager at WNKY-TV
- Paul Wolf, Jeremy Draper & Brian Stahl - WLEX-TV Live Remote Spotlight on Somerset

Sportscaster of the Year

- Samantha Money - WNKY-TV
- Cole Scott - WNKY-TV
- Lee K. Howard - WKYT-TV

Videographer of the Year

- Ian Teasley - WAVE-TV
- Brian Stahl - WLEX-TV
- Nick Lazaroff - WLEX-TV

News Reporter of the Year

- Phil Pendleton - WKYT-TV
- Alyssa Williams - WKYT-TV
- Megan Mannering - WLEX-TV

Meteorologist of the Year

- Chris Bailey - WKYT-TV
- Alexa Minton - WKYT-TV
- Bill Meck - WLEX-TV

News Anchor of the Year

- Jennifer Baileys - WLKY-TV
- Amber Philpott - WKYT-TV
- Megan Mannering - WLEX-TV

Uniquely Kentucky (public service award)

- WNKY-TV - Bluegrass Reunion Becomes Farewell for Banjo Maker Arthur Hatfield
- WAVE-TV - WAVE News April Tornado Coverage
- WBKO-TV - We The People

Daytime Newscast

- WLKY-TV - WLKY News 6am: UPS Plane Crash
- WKYT-TV - WKYT News at Noon
- WAVE-TV - WAVE News Sunrise

Evening Newscast

- WLKY-TV - WLKY News 5pm: UPS Plane Crash
- WLKY-TV - WLKY News 6pm: Devastation in KY.
- WAVE-TV - UPS Plane Crash

Account Executive of the Year (Television)

- Amy Farmer - WLKY-TV
- Amber Kennoy - WKYT-TV
- Erin Barber - WBKO-TV

Podcast of the Year (Television)

- WPSD-TV - The Crossroads Suncast: The Impact of Sports Betting
- WPSD-TV - The Crossroads Suncast: Desegregating Paducah Tilghman High School
- WBKO-TV - Stage Left Unsaid

Locally Produced Commercial

- WKYT-TV - WKYT GB Poltergeist
- WBKO-TV - Family Enrichment Center Run Walk for Children
- WBKO-TV - Dirty Dog

Television Station of the Year

- WAVE-TV
- WLEX-TV
- WLKY-TV

RADIO FINALISTS

Rookie of the Year

- Brian Basham - WBIO-FM
- Macy Garrett - Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation
- William Battle - The Edge Media Group

Overall Digital Presence

- WKMS-FM - WKMS
- The Edge Media Group - YourSportsEdge.com
- Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation - GlasgowNews1

Behind the Scenes

- Dime Pierson - WXCM-FM
- Shelby Ashley - WKMS-FM
- Maria Belcher - Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation

Special Program or Feature

- WEKU-FM - Stable Recovery
- WXCM-FM - Pink Mic Project
- The Edge Media Group - Edward Marlowe Homeless Veterans Series

Sports Announcer of the Year

- Joe Wilson - WHOP-FM
- Sam Gormley - Heritage Media Of Kentucky
- Nathan Lyttle - WSGS-FM

Use of Streaming Video

- WLME-FM - WLME-FM 102.7 The Game
- Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation - WCLU Barren Inc Red Carpet
- Heritage Media Of Kentucky - K105 Digital Productions

Talk Show

- WEKU-FM - Eastern Standard October 16, 2025
- WLME-FM - Beyond the Bench
- WRUS-AM - "Church With No Walls" Radio Show

News Reporter of the Year

- John McGary - WEKU-FM
- Hannah Saad - WKMS-FM
- Lisa Autry - WKYU-FM

On-Air Personality of the Year

- Brian Burkhart - WEKU-FM
- Brian Basham - WBIO-FM
- Laura Shine - WFPL-FM

Uniquely Kentucky (public service award)

- WEKU-FM
- WBRT-AM
- WUKY-FM

Morning Show

- WHOP-FM — WHOP Radio Morning Show
- Mountain Top Media - The Day Break Morning Show
- Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation - WCLU Mornings with Todd Steenbergen

Broadcast Leadership Award

- Asia Burnett - WKMS-FM
- Traci Mason-Perry - WHOP-FM
- Chris Houchens - Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation

Overall Newscast/News Coverage

- WEKU-FM - London Tornado
- WEKU-FM - Lexington Church Shooting
- WMKY-FM - WMKY Midday News with Samantha Morrill

Account Executive of the Year

- Brian Basham - WBIO-FM
- Traci Mason-Perry - WHOP-FM

Podcast of the Year

- WEKU-FM - Democracy Optimist - Luisa Sanchez and Rachel Belin
- WFPL-FM - Music Box Podcast, Season 8
- WUKY-FM - Saving Stories

Locally Produced Commercial

- WLME-FM - Cruz Poop Squad
- Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation - Ace Construction - Leaky Roof
- Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation - T's Country Kitchen - Homestyle Southern Cooking

Radio Station of the Year

- WLME-FM
- WHOP-FM
- WKYU-FM

COLLEGE RADIO FINALISTS

News Reporter of the Year

- Will Darnall - Murray State University
- Shelby Bloomer - Murray State University
- Braeden Trent - Morehead State University

Newscast/Coverage

- Brayden Wilson - Morehead State University
- Will Darnall - Murray State University
- Annabelle Massa - Murray State University

Special Program or Feature

- Morehead State University - Rowan County Fish Hatchery Prepares to Stock Waters Across the Commonwealth
- Morehead State University - Poor Harvest Yield and Uncertain Market Leaves Local Farmers Wondering If There Is Any Room For Growth
- Morehead State University - MSU Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences Program Benefits From Updated Facilities

Overall Digital Presence

- Murray State University - WKMS
- Western Kentucky University - WWHR

College Program of the Year

- Murray State University - WKMS
- Western Kentucky University - WWHR

Student Broadcaster of the Year

- Alex Standifer - Morehead State University
- Ella Teuscher - Morehead State University
- Will Darnall - Murray State University

COLLEGE TV FINALISTS

News Reporter of the Year

- Allison Baugh - Western Kentucky University

Newscast/Coverage

- Western Kentucky University - WKU Channel 12 Newscasts

Special Program or Feature

- Western Kentucky University - Hudson Statue
- University of Kentucky - The Legacy of CD Central: How Steve Baron Influenced Generations of Music Lovers
- University of Kentucky - A Dream Carved From Wood

Overall Digital Presence

- Western Kentucky University - The Extra Point
- University of Kentucky - Are Resident Halls Safe?

College Program of the Year

- Western Kentucky University - WKU Broadcasting
- University of Kentucky - The Kernel Chronicles, Episode 10

Student Broadcaster of the Year

- Cole McIntire - Western Kentucky University

