

Governor General's Silver Medal 2023

The Governor General's Medal, established in 1873, is one of the most prestigious awards that can be received by a student in a Canadian educational institution for exceptional academic achievement. The University of King's College Governor-General's Silver Medal recognizes academic and journalistic excellence. It is awarded to a journalism student who is graduating with first-class Honours in the Bachelor of Journalism (Honours) degree program, or with Distinction in the one-year post-baccalaureate Bachelor of Journalism degree program, who has shown significant professional development during his, her or their time in the Journalism Program of the School of Journalism, Publishing and Writing and stands the highest among their peers.

This year, we were fortunate to have two students with identical grade point averages.

The first to receive this award is:

Anna Mandin

Unfortunately, Anna is unable to attend today's ceremony.

Anna Mandin

Incredibly curious, a great listener, and unafraid to ask difficult questions, Anna demonstrates all the hallmarks of a successful journalist. Anna achieved her near perfect GPA while going to school remotely during a global pandemic. Throughout her four years, she showed tremendous character. She also has a nose for news.

One afternoon, during the fourth-year news workshop, Anna flew out the newsroom door to cover a house fire. Not knowing what to expect and with no time to prepare, nothing could stop Anna – she got her interviews and photographs, all on a very tight deadline. She was able to capture the tension and worry of that moment and tell a compelling story.

During the same workshop, she was wandering through a local farmers' market when something caught her eye. That led to an enterprise story that you'll learn more about soon...

In the winter video workshop, she snagged an impactful interview with a Ukrainian family as they arrived in Halifax at midnight, after fleeing their home with only a whisp of an idea of where they would live. Anna also took on a story in another province, about a university that sought to oust a student living with mental illness.

That tenacity showed in her final workshop, when she spent day after day, over several weeks, quietly observing Nova Scotia's legislative librarian. Her goal was to write a 2,000-word article that is sharp, smooth and shiny. That requires writing one draft, then another, then another, until the words soar. Anna reached such heights that her piece was published online by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, where she also did her internship.

Anna brings a certain kind of lighthearted joy that endears her both to her colleagues and to the people she interviews. She is not afraid to poke fun at herself. She is also curious and inquisitive, and good at asking questions, a quality noted by several of her instructors. She was also happy to help fellow students, her kind nature always showing through.

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2023 Governor General's Silver Medal *in absentia* to **Anna Mandin**.

Our second recipient of the Governor General's Silver Medal is:

Ella Macdonald

In her final year in the Bachelor of Journalism (Honours), Ella Macdonald blossomed as a videographer. Her instructor in the Video Workshop noted that Ella demonstrates tremendous talent and initiative, and strong leadership skills as a show producer. She is always eager to take feedback and advance her skills. Notably, Ella was the only student in her class to use the most advanced documentary camera, travelling to Lunenburg to tell a story about the province's first exotic fruit nursery, capturing stunning imagery of exotic citrus fruit growing not far from the frigid North Atlantic Ocean. Through that story, Ella also showed her ability to change course when necessary. She was working on another story altogether, but one of the subjects of that story caught COVID-19 and had to cancel. Ella called her instructor and, calmly, pitched the nursery story as her backup, with beautiful results.

Ella is described by one of her other instructors as one of the hardest working students with whom he ever worked. Another called her "relentless." She showed that mettle during her second year, when her class was entirely online due to COVID lockdowns and worked from home with equipment sent from the school.

Ella's achievements weren't limited to video. In the winter News Workshop, Ella consistently captured strong portraits, showing immense talent with still photography.

Ella wrapped up her four years at King's in the Advanced Video Workshop. Video documentary requires journalism students to be collaborative, self-motivated, and creative – qualities Ella possesses in abundance. Her instructor said she was keen to learn and engage in discussions. Over the intense six-week workshop, Ella's storytelling skills grew and, along with her project partner, she crafted a compelling documentary that we can expect to see in future film festivals.

Since classes ended, Ella has been interning at Global News Halifax.

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2023 Governor General's Silver Medal to

Ella Macdonald