



Dear SPJ Georgia members,

We hope y'all can slow down and enjoy the season after what's been a difficult year for journalists and journalism.

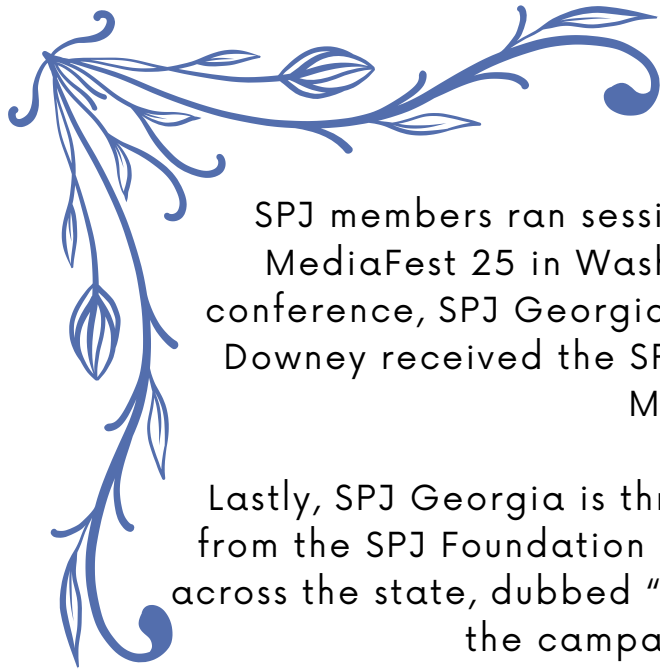
As we're turning the corner to 2026, we'd like to thank you for your ongoing commitment to the Society of Professional Journalists and our Georgia chapter, for sharing ideas and inspiration, helping on our committees and actively participating in our online and in-person events.

2025 was a busy and productive year for SPJ Georgia. We offered, among many opportunities, webinars on AI for journalists and photojournalism in the digital age, ran live panel discussions about media literacy, interviewing skills for student journalists and police-press relations. We joined forces with the Atlanta Press Club, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Association of Health Care Journalists for an event about mental health and self-care for journalists.

Together with Young Media Atlanta, we organized a networking reception and co-sponsored the Atlanta Press Club's holiday mixer. And we held our 3rd annual "Sip & Share" fundraiser for the first time in beautiful coastal Savannah, where we raised almost \$1,800.

Kanders Dukes, a graduate of Atlanta's Maynard H. Jackson High School, became the first recipient of the SPJ Georgia High School Scholarship. The scholarship was renewed for 2026, and the application is open on our website.

Members of the SPJ Georgia Board of Directors also spoke with high schoolers at VOX Teen communication and visited Beacon Hill Middle School for a chat with students about a career in journalism.



SPJ members ran sessions and participated in panels at MediaFest 25 in Washington, DC. During the three-day conference, SPJ Georgia's immediate past president Laura J. Downey received the SPJ Howard S. Dubin Outstanding Pro Member Award.

Lastly, SPJ Georgia is thrilled to be awarded a \$5,000 grant from the SPJ Foundation to pursue a media literacy campaign across the state, dubbed "Georgia Knows Media." Stay tuned for the campaign to roll out in 2026.

Plans for the new year are in full swing. They include online offerings and in-person events that cover a wide range of topics – from the FIFA World Cup to music journalism, from a freelance pitch clinic to safety and security training for journalists, from an interactive event in Savannah to a student workshop in Columbus.

If you'd like to get involved in planning and executing events in 2026, please reach out to us at [spjgeorgia@gmail.com](mailto:spjgeorgia@gmail.com). If you aren't a member yet, please consider joining SPJ and SPJ Georgia in 2026.

Happy Holidays, thank you – and onwards!

**Katja Ridderbusch**  
President, SPJ Georgia

**Genelle Williams**  
Vice President, SPJ Georgia