

The Detroit News

Gary Miles

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Dear judges,

When a tip reached our editors that there was another lockdown, this one in a northern suburban high school, the reaction from Managing Editor Kevin Hardy was immediate: Send a crew immediately; you won't regret it if it's real. That advice paid off with a swift and thorough response to the biggest school tragedy in recent Michigan history.

The first group of photographers and reporters, Todd McInturf, Jennifer Chambers, Daniel Mears, Mike Martindale and James Dickson made up the large News contingent that was first among reporters at the scene in Oxford, 45 miles north of downtown Detroit.

And the resulting story was the first to break the news: Multiple students had been shot, some fatally. That alert and story went out at 1:40 p.m. on Nov. 30 (31 minutes before the rival Detroit Free Press first published on the emerging story). The deadly toll soon came into view. Three students were dead and eight people were injured (one more succumbed the following day).

Before Tuesday ended, The News was also the first to break the news of a search warrant being executed at the home of the juvenile suspect, and later that his parents had apparently fled (they were charged and then apprehended later in the week). First-day coverage included the juvenile suspect's arrest and reaction, as well.

Readers recognized The News' leadership. The initial story recorded 700,000 page views; the same-day story highlighting the lives cut short reached 1.4 million. Not surprisingly, they were the two most-read stories of the year.

The tragedy reinforced that when breaking news happens, readers go to news sources that are first, accurate and trusted. Thanks to quick action on a quick tip, the staff of The Detroit News was all three when the community needed the information most.

We consider it the top Spot News performance of the year. We hope you'll agree.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Miles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.