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SENIOR COLUMN: THE STORY THAT STARTED IT ALL

My journey at The Daily Campus began on a quiet Sunday evening in October 2022. After Jenna Outcalt convinced me to join her at a News meeting in our journalism first-year experience class, I decided to make the trek from my Towers dorm to the small building tucked behind Moes in Downtown Storrs. I announced myself as a freshman when I tried to get into the building by the front door and quickly learned the way in is by the sketchy wooden staircase next to the loading dock in the back. I walked into the conference room, voice nervously shaking as I participated in my first ice breaker. It took me a couple weeks before I had the confidence to take my first news story — event coverage of an Undergraduate Student Government Reproductive Rights Town Hall. Please don't read it, it's really bad.

After attending the event in the Student Union Theater, I sat in the food court writing as quickly as my hands could type so it could be published the next morning. I had no idea what I was doing. I sent my copy to then-News Editor Tommy Alvarez, and it was returned to me with probably 100 comments and suggestions. I learned many things that night, but here are the two I remember: one, that you never spell "UCONN" like this, and two: This was exactly what I wanted to do for a career. I didn't know if journalism was for me when I got to the University of Connecticut. I honestly was fully expecting to change my major, but as I was sitting in the food court writing that story with a deadline fast approaching, I knew I loved the thrill of it all. When I saw my name on the front cover the next morning, I never looked back.

I strive to work my way upward in every aspect of my life. It's naturally how I have always been. So, my sophomore year I joined

the board of directors as a board member and took up a production role as a copy editor. This allowed

me to see the two other sides to the DC besides writing, which was a great way to see the organi-

zation from a whole perspective. With this experience, Maddie Papcun, the editor-in-chief at the

time, encouraged me to apply for her position for the 2024-2025 school year. I interviewed, miraculously got the job over Dan Stark (it's ok, we are good friends now!) and had no idea what I was in for that upcoming year.

Last year leading the paper as editor-in-chief was both a challenging and rewarding experience. I learned how to lead a large organization of over 100 people, manage conflict when it arose — a few lawsuit scares definitely were not fun! — but I also spent that year focused on outreach, bringing new people into the paper and putting it on a regional stage, such as collaborating with Connecticut College's newspaper for Election Day coverage and entering the paper into the New England Newspaper & Press Association's newspaper contest for the first time in several years. I enjoyed my time as editor as I worked to develop my leadership skills and grow as a person.

Going into my senior year, I wanted to explore other opportunities on campus and have some free time on Sundays! So, I went back to my roots as a news staff writer, doing what I loved best, which was writing and reporting. I end my last DC article, this one, as my 91st story.

I owe so much to the small building tucked behind Moes in Downtown Storrs and I don't think the words in this 700-word article could ever do it justice. On that fall day in October 2022, The Daily Campus gave a quiet, introverted freshman a voice and sparked a fire. A fire of confidence, passion and direction that defined my last four years at UConn and will continue into my future career as a journalist. If you are not sure if you want to join the DC, take it from me: you definitely should. The Daily Campus changed my life. Maybe it can change yours too.



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OUTGOING STAFF WRITER | FORMER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF