NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AND MAZDA ANNOUNCE "ASSIGNMENT: INSPIRATION" COMPETITION WINNER

WINNING PHOTOGRAPHER SAM TIPPETTS TO SHOWCASE HIS ARTISTRY ON OFFICIAL NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVEL ASSIGNMENT AND SERVE AS MAZDA'S NEXT CONTENT PARTNER

IRVINE, Calif., Sept. 18, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Last night, National Geographic and Mazda closed the first-of-its-kind photography-based competition, *Assignment: Inspiration.* Sam Tippetts was announced the winner and next great National Geographic storyteller on a special that aired on National Geographic.

The *Assignment: Inspiration* program began with a contest shared through the National Geographic Your Shot Instagram account, inviting emerging photographers to tell a visual story about where they find inspiration. Mazda launched this competition as part of its Power of Potential platform, which honors individuals making a difference, realizing their potential and ultimately inspiring others.

From those submissions, National Geographic and Mazda selected three storytellers to compete in a series of photography quests. These challenges were inspired by an exploration of Hiroshima, Japan that National Geographic photographer and *Assignment: Inspiration* mentor David Guttenfelder experienced with Mazda. On the journey, Guttenfelder took in the city's heritage to gain a deeper understanding of Mazda's design values: Takumi craftsmanship, ingenuity and passion for uplifting others.

The three *Assignment: Inspiration* finalists Nina Mayer Ritchie, Beth Mancuso and Sam Tippetts created amazing, uplifting photographs. In the end Tippetts, a young, intrepid photographer from Boerne, TX was declared the winner.

"Throughout the quests, Sam's devotion to visual storytelling resonated with us," Mazda North American Operations CMO Brad Audet said. "Mazda's designers and engineers have a similar approach to their work as artisans who seek mastery of their skills. They diligently transfer their passion, into each project to create a vehicle that evokes a feeling."

Tippetts officially becomes the next Mazda Content Partner and National Geographic storyteller with an official assignment for National Geographic Travel where his original work will be published on National Geographic Travel's digital platforms.

"Photography is the heart of National Geographic, and an essential part of our 132-year legacy of telling stories that matter," said George Stone, Executive Editor of National Geographic Travel. "Seeing the next generation of visual storytellers use their talents to inspire people to care more about the planet inspires us. We are excited to see where Sam takes his assignment, and we look forward to sharing the results on our National Geographic Travel platforms."

Produced through National Geographic CreativeWorks, the branded content studio for National Geographic and part of Disney CreativeWorks, with Radley Studios, the competition had cross-platform promotion with unrivaled reach across National Geographic's social and digital properties, including digital video and social components, spotlighting the photographers competing in the contest. The partnership reached more than 225 million U.S. fans and followers of National Geographic's social and digital social properties.

For more information visit NationalGeographic.com/Mazda.

ABOUT MAZDA NORTH AMERICAN OPERATIONS
Mazda North American Operations is headquartered in Irvine, California, and oversees the sales, marketing, parts and customer service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States and Mexico through approximately 620 dealers. Operations in Mexico are managed by Mazda Motor de Mexico in Mexico City. For more information on Mazda vehicles, including photography and B-roll, please visit the online Mazda media center at InsideMazda.MazdaUSA.com/Newsroom.

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