



Pittsburgh Black Media Federation

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EMBARGOED UNTIL 9 P.M. THURSDAY, APRIL 30.

Pittsburgh media group announces winners for 2015 Vann awards

PITTSBURGH (April 30, 2015) — The Pittsburgh Black Media Federation is proud to announce tonight's winners for its 2015 Robert L. Vann Media Awards. The winners were named at a dinner with more than 100 attendees, which took place from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, April 30, at the University of Pittsburgh's O'Hara Student Center ballroom, 4024 O'Hara St., Oakland.

With the Award of Excellence, the Vann program honors excellence in print, broadcast, photography and online journalism coverage of the African-American community of Western Pennsylvania.

"As race relations continue to make their way to the forefront of American consciousness, we are at a critical turning point in our profession and as a country," PBMF President Tory N. Parrish said. "It is our role as media professionals to accurately and fairly document and communicate these times to the public."

The Award of Excellence finalists were selected in 22 categories. Entries were published or broadcast between Jan. 1, 2014, and Dec. 31, 2014.

Professional journalists in Richmond; Northern Virginia; Washington, D.C.; New York City; Morgantown, W.Va.; and Seattle judged the contest entries.

"These stories continue to give voice to communities that are left behind," Robert L. Vann Awards Subcommittee Chair Ervin L. Dyer said. "We are grateful for creativity and resources that help make this storytelling possible."

Also at the dinner, PBMF presented three special honors – the Communicator of the Year, Legacy in Journalism and Trailblazer awards, whose winners were selected by the PBMF membership.

The Legacy in Journalism Award, which recognizes organizations or individuals who have been pioneers in making journalism a more open enterprise, was given to Ty Miller, manager of news, sports and digital services at American Urban Radio Networks.

The Communicator of the Year Award acknowledges winners' messages of empowerment, strength and hope they disseminate through service to their communities or professions.

The 2015 Communicator of the Year Award was presented to Sonya Toler, public information

officer for Pittsburgh's Public Safety Department.

The Trailblazer Award, which is given to veteran journalists who have advanced the mission of journalism through innovative work, was presented to Eddie Jefferies, a freelance writer and former sports editor at The New Pittsburgh Courier.

In 1988, PBMF launched its journalism awards competition. It is named for the late Robert L. Vann, legendary publisher of the Pittsburgh Courier, to honor his personal commitment to journalism and to creating a voice for the black community.

Proceeds from the Vann awards help fund PBMF initiatives, such as college scholarships for graduates of the Frank Bolden Urban Journalism Workshop for high school students and professional development programs for PBMF members.

Founded in 1973, PBMF is a nonprofit organization that advocates for diversity in newsrooms, hosts programs that recognize excellent media coverage of minority communities and trains young people to enter the media industry.

For more information about the Vann awards, contact Deborah Todd at 412-263-1652 or dtodd@post-gazette.com, or Ervin Dyer at 412-624-4796 or edyer@pitt.edu.

SEE THE LIST OF AWARD WINNERS ON THE SUCCEEDING PAGES.

2015 ROBERT L. VANN MEDIA AWARDS WINNERS

PRINT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Winner: “A Struggle to Achieve Equality” by Clarece Polke, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

NEWSPAPER SPORTS

Winner: “At PSU, A New Benchmark” by Mark Dent, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

NEWSPAPER COLUMN

Winner: “Silencing Abu-Jamal Helps No One Now” by Tony Norman, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

NEWSPAPER PRINT SERIES

Winner: “Pittsburgh’s New Immigrants” by Mark Roth, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

BROADCAST TV SPORTS FEATURE

Winner: “Stand Tall, Be Strong” by Lisa Sylvester, WPXI-TV

NEWSPAPER FEATURE

Winner: “A Painful Reminder/Shooting Victims Live with Bullets to Survive, Thrive” by Chris Togneri, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

BROADCAST RADIO PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Winner: “Police, Community Relations Forum” by Paul Guggenheimer, host; Marcus Charleston, producer; and Heather McClain, assistant producer; WESA Radio

NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL

Winner: “The Race Card: Southern Democrats Use a Tainted Ploy” by Reg Henry, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

PICTURE SERIES CATEGORY

Winner: “Rich in Pride/High School Football Lifts Spirits in ... Former Industrial Towns” by Stephanie Strasburg, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

FEATURE PHOTO CATEGORY

Winner: “Fifth-graders in Dancing Classroom Pittsburgh Colors Competition” by Lake Fong, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

PHOTOGRAPHY SPOT NEWS

Winner: “Student Shot to Death” by Darrell Sapp, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

ART/ILLUSTRATION

Winner: “City Kicker” by Ben Howard, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

BROADCAST TV DOCUMENTARY

Winner: “Hazelwood and The Hill” by Bofta Yimam, reporter, and Brian Caldwell, photographer, WTAE-TV

PRINT SPOT NEWS

Winner: “Terrance Hayes Is Named MacArthur Fellow” by Sharon S. Blake, The Pitt Chronicle

MAGAZINE FEATURE

Winner: “Many Minds/One Heart” by Ervin Dyer, Pitt Magazine

BROADCAST TV SERIES

Winner: Coverage of death of Jonny Gammage Jr. by Bofta Yimam, reporter, and T.J. Haught, photographer, WTAE-TV

NEWSPAPER BUSINESS NEWS

Winner: “Diversity Center Offers Resources for Businesses” by Patricia Sabatini, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

PRINT BUSINESS FEATURE

Winner: “Commitment to Diversity: Corporate-funded Program Here Is Training Young Black Men for the Oil and Gas Industry” by Anya Litvak, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

NEWSPAPER HEALTH/SCIENCE/ENVIRONMENT

Winner: “Liberians in Pittsburgh Feel Anguish for Loved Ones in Ebola’s Epicenter” by Megha Satyanarayana, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

BROADCAST TV SPOT NEWS

Winner: “Local Protests,” news team, WTAE-TV

BROADCAST RADIO HEALTH/SCIENCE/ ENVIRONMENT

Winner: “Increasing African-American Bone Marrow Donations” by Paul Guggenheimer, host; Marcus Charleston, producer; and Heather McClain, assistant producer; WESA Radio

NEWSPAPER INVESTIGATIVE/ENTERPRISE

Winner: "Hope Amid Turmoil" by Mary Neiderberger, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette