



Pittsburgh Black Media Federation

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Pittsburgh Media Group Announces Finalists, Winners for 29th Annual Journalism Contest

Vann Awards Recognize Storytelling That Empowers Communities

PITTSBURGH (April 4, 2017) — The finalists and winners in the 29th annual Robert L. Vann Media Awards represent the best in journalism coverage that lends power to communities by showing that their stories matter.

With the Awards of Excellence, the Pittsburgh Black Media Federation’s Vann program honors exceptional print, broadcast, photography and online journalism coverage of the African-American and African Diaspora communities of Western Pennsylvania.

Finalists in the professional contest and winners in the college contest are listed below. PBMF congratulates all of them.

“We know that fact-based journalism matters, from Capitol Hill to the Hill District,” PBMF President Tory N. Parrish said.

“And that’s why the Vann awards program is so significant — it celebrates journalists on the ground who shed light on truth in local and diverse communities,” she said.

The winners of the professional contest will be announced at an awards dinner at 6 p.m. Tuesday, May 2, at the University of Pittsburgh’s O’Hara Student Center, 4024 O’Hara St., Oakland. Winners in the college contest will receive their awards at the dinner, too.

KDKA journalist Lisa Washington and retired KDKA veteran journalist Harold Hayes will host the awards dinner. Powerhouse music group Lyndsey Smith & Soul Distribution will perform.

The theme of the evening will be “The Power of Our Voices.”

“These awards help us to showcase and document the social diversity that is a part of the fabric of Western Pennsylvania,” said Ervin Dyer, chair of the Vann awards subcommittee.

“These stories give voice to the aspirations and struggles of communities that are too often voiceless, and we are grateful to the journalists and their organizations for the time and resources invested in having these stories told,” he said.

The Award of Excellence finalists in the professional contest were selected in 28 categories.

This year is the first time that the Vann program has celebrated the best of college journalism. The student contest, whose winners were selected in six categories, was open to all journalists enrolled in accredited two- and four-year colleges in a 29-county region of Western Pennsylvania.

All entries must have been published or broadcast between Jan. 1, 2016, and Dec. 31, 2016.

The entries were judged by active or retired professional journalists in Atlanta; Cleveland; Columbus, Ohio; Long Island, N.Y.; Morgantown, W.Va.; New York; Northern Virginia; Roanoke, Va.; San Francisco; Tampa, Fla.; Tulsa, Okla.; and Washington, D.C.

In addition to presenting Awards of Excellence to journalists in various categories, the Vann program will recognize the following special honorees:

- **Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.'s Alpha Omicron Lambda chapter**, for its literacy program at Dilworth Elementary School, Literacy Champion Award winner
- **Lynne Hayes-Freeland**, KDKA reporter, Legacy Award winner
- **Dr. James and Pam Johnson**, founders of the Afro American Music Institute, Communicator of the Year Award winners
- **Damon Young**, co-founder of VerySmartBrothas.com, Trailblazer Award winner

Regis Bobonis Sr., the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's first black reporter, and **Cathy Milton**, a former WTAE reporter, both will be honored in memoriam.

Tickets for the Vann awards dinner may be purchased online at www.pbmf.org until April 25. Tickets are \$20 each for students, \$30 each for PBMF members and \$40 each for nonmembers.

Sponsorship packages may be purchased online until April 19.

Proceeds from the Vann awards help to fund college scholarships for graduates of PBMF's Frank Bolden Urban Multimedia Workshop for teens, as well as professional development programs, international reporting fellowships and other initiatives.

For more information about the Robert L. Vann Media Awards, contact Dyer at 412-624-4796 or vannawards@pbmf.org.

Founded in 1973, PBMF is a nonprofit organization whose members are professional journalists, public relations specialists, and professors and college students in schools of journalism or related programs.

PBMF advocates for diversity in newsrooms, hosts programs that recognize excellent media coverage of minority communities, and trains young people to enter the media industry. The National Association of Black Journalists named PBMF a chapter of the year in 2015.

FINALISTS FOR 2017 PROFESSIONAL CONTEST

Magazine Feature

- Sharon Tregaskis/Pitt Med Magazine/“Jackson Wright Jr. Takes African American Medicine to Heart”
- Ervin Dyer/Pitt Magazine/“Voices of Color”
- C. Denise Johnson/Soul Pitt Magazine/“All Tied Up and Loving It: Ethical Wear, Elevated”

Magazine Feature Photo

- Terry Clark/Pitt Magazine/“Pitt Serves – Marcus Poindexter”

Magazine Public Affairs

- LaMont Jones, Jr., writer; Dr. Larry E. Davis, editor; Rosie Rinella, assistant editor/Bridges Magazine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work (Fall 2016)/“Broken: Race and Police Relations”
- Robyn K. Coggins/Pitt Med Magazine/“A Long Way to Go on Disparities Past, Present, and Future”

Newspaper Business News

- Anya Litvak/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Oil, Gas Firms Faced Dozens of Workplace Suits”
- Tim Grant/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“The Demographics of Death”
- Joyce Gannon/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Diversifying the Pool of Entrepreneurs”

Newspaper Columns

- Tony Norman/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Why Firing Wendy Bell Was All Wrong”
- Gene Collier/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Athletes Emerge Again As Torchbearers Where Much Light Needs to Be Shed”
- Lisa Micco/Beaver County Times/“New Video Series ‘Barbershop Talk’ Offers a Peek into ‘Black Men’s Country Club’

Newspaper Illustration

- Daniel Marsula/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Six Dead in Wilkinsburg”
- Daniel Marsula/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Tracy Morgan, Picking Up the Pieces”

Newspaper Feature

- Kevin Kirkland/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Pittsburgh Sculptor Thaddeus Mosley: 90 Years in the Woods”

- Sean Hamill/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Region’s Only Recorded ‘Lynching’ Did Not Happen”
- Marsha Keefer/Beaver County Times/“Crowning Glory: Aliquippa Woman Has ‘Hattitude’”

Newspaper Education

- Marsha Keefer/Beaver County Times/“Molding Boys Into Men”
- Molly Born/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Consultant’s Findings Stun City School Board Members”

Blogging

- Mike Clark/WTAE-TV/“#TGIT: Reflections on the News That ‘Fences’ Will Be Filmed in Pittsburgh”

Newspaper Feature Photo

- Justin Merriman/Pittsburgh Tribune-Review/“Miss Cleo”
- Nate Guidry/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“In the Light of the Virgin of Guadalupe”
- Andrew Russell/Pittsburgh Tribune-Review/“Doris Mickens”

Newspaper Health/Science/Environment

- Jill Daly/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Back to the Old Ways/Penn Hills Teacher Encourages African-American Women to Breastfeed”
- Natasha Lindstorm/Pittsburgh Tribune-Review/“Health Workers in Haiti on Mission to Thwart Spread of Zika”
- Chris Togneri/Pittsburgh Tribune-Review/“Faithful Beaver Falls Transplant Recipient Gave Before Receiving”

Newspaper Investigative/Enterprise

- Joe Smydo and Rich Lord/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Mental Illness Behind Bars”
- Sean Hamill/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Questions Surround Man’s Death in Weirton”
- Kate Giammarise/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Subsidized Housing in City Is Difficult to Nail Down”

Newspaper Series

- Andrew Conte and Brian Bowling/Pittsburgh Tribune-Review/“Justice for Some” series

Newspaper Public Affairs

- Kris B. Mamula/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Pittsburgh Man Motivated by Lack of Care He

- Saw in Construction Jobs in Minority Neighborhoods”
- Natasha Lindstrom/Pittsburgh Tribune-Review/“Author Puts Lack of Affordable Housing in Spotlight”
- J.D. Prose/Beaver County Times/“State Has 6th-Highest Rate of Black Homicide Victims”

Newspaper Sports Feature

- Elizabeth Bloom/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Quietly, Pirates Gene Baker Crossed Manager Color Lines”
- Stephen J. Nesbitt/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Death, Prison And A Village Of Support: Rookie Artie Burns”
- Lauren Kirschman/Beaver County Times/“There’s More Than One Way To Be Strong”

Newspaper Sports News Photo

- Rebecca Droke/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Dad Dribbles with 2-year-old Son”
- Peter Diana/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“McCutchen Hit”
- Sally Maxson/Beaver County Times/“There’s More Than One Way to Be Strong”

Newspaper Spot News

- Paula Reed Ward and Chris Potter/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Sentences in T Station Assault Are Questioned”
- Maria Sciuillo/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“Facebook Post by WTAE’s Wendy Bell Sparks Online Debate”
- Natasha Lindstrom/Pittsburgh Tribune-Review/“College Students in U.S., Elsewhere, Protest Trump Election”

Newspaper Spot News Photo

- Matt Freed/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“The Warmth and Power of the President”
- Michael Henninger/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“In the Aftermath of the Wilksburg Killings”
- Larry Roberts/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“A Veteran’s Daughter Misses Him”
- Andrew Russell/Pittsburgh Tribune-Review/“We Want Community”

Radio News Feature

- Paul Guggenheimer/WESA/“Jasiri X’s Live ‘Body and Soul’ Score”
- Virginia Alvino/WESA/“Pittsburgh Artists Diversifying Comics Scene”
- Sarah Kovash/WESA/“Baron Batch on Graffiti Charges: Make Something Good out of It”

Radio Series

- Journalists Allegra Johnson, Vicki Cohill, De'Saundra Harris and Trevin A. Jones; Ty Miller, producer/Sheridan Broadcasting Networks/"The Obama Legacy" series
- Megan Harris and WESA staff/WESA/"Wilksburg Shooting"
- Mike Sauter, Brian Siewiorek, Rosemary Welsch, WYEP staff/"Music and the Civil Rights Movement"
- Megan Harris and Jeffrey Benzing/WESA and PublicSource/"The Aftermath of a Murder: a Multipart Series on Unsolved Black Homicides"

Radio Spot News

- Megan Harris and Sarah Kovash/WESA/"Trump Supporters and Protestors Clash in Pittsburgh"

Radio Public Affairs

- Danielle Smith/Sheridan Broadcasting Networks /"SisterFriend Provides Feminine Care Products to Homeless Women"
- Megan Harris/WESA/"Sexual Assault Survivors Lay to Rest a Triggering Election Season"
- Deanna Garcia/WESA/"Pittsburgh Celebrates Pride in the Wake of Orlando Shooting"

TV Documentary

- Brittny McGraw/WPXI-TV/"Ban the Box"
- Bofta Yimam/WTAE-TV/"Sweet Success from Chronicle: Bakeries of the 'Burgh"

TV Editorial

- Charles W. Wolfertz III/WTAE-TV/"Black History Month"

TV Feature

- Sheldon Ingram/WTAE-TV/"Fences Filming Begins"
- Lynne Hayes-Freeland/KDKA-TV/"Fences: Denzel's Pittsburgh Screening"
- Lisa Washington, reporter; Dan Vojtko, photographer/editor/KDKA-TV/"Living Juicy"
- Brenda Waters and Ian Smith/KDKA-TV/"Heart to Hart: The Final Chapter"

TV Public Affairs

- Aaron Martin/WPXI-TV/"Data Shows Water in Certain Pittsburgh Neighborhoods Tested More Often Than Others"
- Minette Seate, Chris Moore, Rebecca Born/WQED-TV/"The State of Black Pittsburgh"

- Aviva Radbord, Ken Rice, John Allison, Joe Dimpfl/KDKA-TV/“KD/PG Sunday Edition: Wilkinsburg Tragedy”
- Olga George and Aaron Sledge/KDKA-TV/“Black History Month”

TV Sports Feature

- Paul Ruggieri/WQED-TV/“Charlie’s Story”
- Andrew Stockey/WTAE-TV/“Antonio Brown on Dancing With the Stars”

TV Spot News

- Lisa Sylvester, Gordon Loesch, Justin Platek/WPXI-TV/“Tragedy in Wilkinsburg”
- David Kaplan/WTAE-TV/“Missing Child Search”
- KDKA-TV staff/“Wilkinsburg Mass Shooting”

Multimedia

- Michel Martin/NPR and WESA/“Going There: Reinventing the American City”
- Sylvester Washington Jr. and Marina Weis/Beaver County Times/“Barbershop Talk”
- Steve Mellon and Zack Tanner/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/“A Life on the Hill: The Journey of Sala Udin Mirrors the Experience of Many African American Pittsburghers”

WINNERS FOR 2017 STUDENT CONTEST

Newspaper/Wire Feature

- Morgan McCoy, staff writer/Point Park News Service/Point Park University/“Aspiring Actors Give Voice to Wilson’s Words”

Newspaper Public Affairs

- Neil Strebig, staff writer/Point Park News Service/Point Park University/“Pulitzer Winners Discuss Race and Diversity”

Newspaper Sports News

- Christopher Ward, staff writer/Point Park News Service/Point Park University/“Cameroon and Pittsburgh Meet on Soccer Pitch”

TV Spot News

- Hannah Smith, reporter; Matt Merlino, videographer/RMU Sentry Media/RMU TV/Robert Morris University/“President Howard Inauguration”

Online Spot News

- Brittany Mayer, reporter; Morgan Torchia, videographer; Katey Ladika, photographer/RMU Sentry Media/Robert Morris University/“Christopher Howard Inaugurated as RMU’s 8th President”

Multimedia

- Brittany Mayer, reporter; Morgan Torchia, videographer; Katey Ladika, photographer/RMU Sentry Media/Robert Morris University/“Christopher Howard Inaugurated as RMU’s 8th President”