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Pittsburgh Media Group Announces 2019 Vann Winners

31st Annual Event Honors Journalism Coverage of Africana Communities, Individuals

PITTSBURGH (May 2, 2019) – The Pittsburgh Black Media Federation’s Robert L. Vann Media Awards Dinner celebrated its 31st year and honored area journalists and community pioneers.

The theme of the evening was “No Walls,” to advocate for accessing truth and information, removing all barriers to a free and independent press, and overcoming bias in reporting.

The Vann program’s Awards of Excellence were presented at a dinner Thursday night at the University of Pittsburgh’s O’Hara Student Center ballroom in Oakland. The winners are listed below.

The Vann program honors excellence in print, broadcast, photography and online journalism coverage of the African-American and African diaspora communities of Western Pennsylvania. The Vann awards recognize the best in professional and college journalism.

“We congratulate all the Vann winners, who work diligently to bring truth to storytelling and show that the stories of diverse and minority communities matter,” PBMF President Brian Cook said.

The cohosts for the Vann ceremony were journalists Michele Newell, a reporter/anchor at WPXI-TV, and Chris Carter, a sports reporter and analyst at DKPittsburghSports.com.

At the dinner, PBMF presented five special awards whose winners were selected by federation members:

- **Vanessa German**, an internationally recognized artist and innovator who has long shared the message that “art” matters — Communicator of the Year Award winner
- **Billy Jackson**, a national award-winning filmmaker and principal owner of NOMMO Productions, which has produced more than 50 films, many of which focus on equity and racial justice — Legacy Award winner
- **1Hood Media**, a collective of socially conscious artists and activists who use media, arts and culture, and youth programming to promote social justice locally and globally — Trailblazer Award winner
• **The Langston Hughes Poetry Society**, a project that does outreach in local schools and communities, using the poetry of Hughes — Literacy Champion Award winner

• **Leon Ford**, his book “Untold” advocates perseverance and social justice — Literacy Champion Award winner

“More and more it seems that independent journalism is under threat,” said Vann Media Awards Chair Ervin Dyer. “So, the media federation can appreciate a call for ‘No Walls’ and appreciate all of the work the journalists and their media organizations are doing to cover minority communities and the range of issues and concerns connected to those communities.”

The Awards of Excellence winners in the professional contest were selected in more than 30 categories, while college submissions were judged in four categories. The winners of the professional and student contests were named at the dinner, where winners also received their plaques.

All entries were published or broadcast between Jan. 1, 2018, and Dec. 31, 2018. The entries were judged by active or retired professional journalists in Columbus, Ohio; Long Island, N.Y.; Morgantown, W.Va.; and Northern Virginia.

In 1988, PBMF launched its journalism awards competition named for the late Robert L. Vann, the legendary publisher of the Pittsburgh Courier. The intent was to honor his personal commitment to journalism and to create a voice for the Black community.

Proceeds from the Vann Media Awards help 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.

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 the professional chapter of the year in 2017. PBMF tied for the title in 2015.

For more information about the Vann Media Awards, contact Dyer at 412-304-7455 or edyer@pitt.edu.
WINNERS IN 2019 PROFESSIONAL CONTEST

**Magazine/Public Affairs**
Christine H. O’Toole
H magazine
“Singled Out”

**Magazine/Feature Photography**
Tom M. Johnson
Pitt Magazine/University of Pittsburgh
“Undefeated”

**Multimedia**
Steve Mellon and Julian Routh
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette / Post-Gazette.com
“The Week the Hill Rose Up”

**Print /Sports Feature**
Lee Wolverton
Pittsburgh Magazine, “Ghost of the Tight Man”

**Print /Opinion/Editorial**
Damon Young
Pittsburgh Magazine, Perspectives
“The Big Pittsburgh Lie”

**Newspaper/Business News**
Kate Giammarise
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
“Many Low-Income Households Getting Zapped by Utility Bills”

**Newspaper/Education**
Elizabeth Behrman
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
“You need all teachers: Schools with Diverse Student Populations Struggle to Hire Minority Educators”

**Newspaper/Feature**
LaMont Jones, Jr.
New Pittsburgh Courier
“Cuba’s Open Secret: A Complex Color Bias Rooted in Colonialism Continues to Disadvantage Those There with Dark Skin”
Newspaper/News-Feature Photography
Matt Freed
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Tia Taylor is comforted by her friend Jameira Mosely during a protest of the shooting death of Antwon Rose II

Magazine/Feature
Ervin Dyer
Pitt Med Magazine/University of Pittsburgh
"With Love, From Haiti: A Native Son, Two Brothers, and Three Little Girls"

Newspaper/Health-Science-Environment
Debbie Norrell
New Pittsburgh Courier
“A New Sharon Epperson—CNBC Finance Expert Suffered Brain Aneurysm”

Magazine/Investigative-Enterprise
“In the Neighborhoods” Team
H magazine
In the Neighborhoods, Issue 2

Newspaper Series
The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette for its series covering the people and issues of the Woodland Hills School District.
Matt McKinney, Bill Schackner, Elizabeth Behrman, Staff Post-Gazette.com, PG Visual Staff

Newspaper/Public Affairs
Christopher Huffaker and Andrew Goldstein
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
“Allegheny County Police Departments Lack Diversity”

Newspaper/Sports Feature Photography
Matt Freed
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Pitt defensive back Therran Coleman is congratulated by Paris Ford and linebacker Elijah Zeise.

Online/Investigative-Enterprise
Brittany Hailer
PublicSource
“The Men Who Didn’t Disappear”

Online/Business News
Courtney Linder
Post-Gazette.com
“High Price of High Tech: Bootcamp Programs Promise to Teach Highly Prized Coding Skills”
Online/Education
Matt McKinney
Post-Gazette.com
“Woodland Hills, a District Scarred by Violence, Copes with Tragedy”

Online/Health-Science-Environment
Brian Broome,
PublicSource
“In the Hypocrisy of the Opioid Epidemic, White Means Victim, Black Means Addict”

Online/News Feature
Steve Mellon and Julian Routh
Post-Gazette.com
“The Week the Hill Rose Up”

Online/Public Affairs
PublicSource staff and contributors
PublicSource
“Let’s Talk About Race”

Newspaper/Spot News
Shelly Bradbury and Andrew Goldstein
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
“Woodland Hills Student Shot and Killed by Police in East Pittsburgh Was Not Armed”

Online/Feature Photography
Michael Santiago
Post-Gazette.com
Police try to calm and remove a motorist from the hood of his truck as he shouts racial slurs at protesters.

Print/Illustration & Graphics
Diane Juravich and Holly Artz
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
“The Week the Hill Rose Up”

Radio/Public Affairs
Bill O’Driscoll
90.5 WESA
“Pittsburgh Hosts Nation’s First Festival for African American Craft Beer Brewers”

TV/Feature
Nathalie Berry, Paul Ruggieri, David Forstate
WQED-TV
“Service & Sacrifice”
TV/Investigative/Enterprise
Staff
WTAE-TV
“Avalon Fire Response Time”

Radio/News Series
WESA Staff
90.5 WESA
“Dividing Lines”

TV/Sports Feature
Alexis Wainwright
WJAC-TV
“Overcoming the Odds”

TV/Editorial
Charles W. Wolfertz III, President & General Manager
WTAE-TV
“Trust: Antwon Rose Coverage”

TV/Spot News
Staff
WTAE-TV
“The Death of Antwon Rose”

TV/Documentary
Iris Samson, Harold Hayes, Paul Ruggieri, Dave Forstate
WQED-TV
“A Beacon for Change: The Pittsburgh Courier Story”

TV/Public Affairs
Minette Seate, Christopher T. Moore, Lisa Washington, Rebecca Jean Born
WQED-TV
“The State of Black Pittsburgh 2018”

Radio/Spot & Breaking News
An-Li Herring
90.5 WESA
“This Hurts. This Is Real.’ Protesters Fill Downtown After East Pittsburgh Teen Fatally Shot”
WINNERS IN 2019 STUDENT CONTEST

Online/Investigative-Education
Sabrina Bodon
Point Park News Service
“Pennsylvania’s Lack of Teachers of Color Is Worsened by an Educator Shortage”

Online/News Feature
Mick Stinelli and Cora McCarty
Point Park News Service
“Young Fans Remember Mac Miller as Spokesperson for a Generation”

Online/Public Affairs
James Kail
Point Park News Service
“New District 4 Councilman Looks to Re-Energize the South Hills”

Online/Sports Feature
Derek Malush
Point Park News Service
“College Student-Athlete Keeps Brother Alive Through Basketball”