



# Pittsburgh Black Media Federation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Pittsburgh Media Group Announces Winners of 2017 Vann Awards

### 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Event Honors Journalism Coverage of African-American Communities, Individuals

**PITTSBURGH** (May 2, 2017) — The Pittsburgh Black Media Federation’s 2017 Robert L. Vann Media Awards Dinner showcased “The Power of Our Voices,” the theme of the evening.

The Vann program’s Awards of Excellence were presented at a dinner Tuesday 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. For the first time in its 29-year history, Vann also is recognizing college journalists and the best of their work.

“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 Tory N. Parrish said.

KDKA journalist Lisa Washington and retired KDKA veteran journalist Harold Hayes co-hosted the Vann program. Powerhouse music group Lyndsey Smith and Soul Distribution performed.

Also at the dinner, PBMF presented four special awards whose winners were selected by federation members:

- 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 were honored in memoriam.

“From sports and medicine and arts and police relations, the journalists and their media organizations did a comprehensive job of covering minority communities and the range of issues and concerns connected to those communities,” Vann Media Awards Subcommittee Chair Ervin E. Dyer said. “The journalism they produce continues to give power and voice to communities often ignored.”

The Awards of Excellence winners in the professional contest were selected in 29 categories, while college submissions were judged in six categories.

Winners of the Vann college contest and finalists in the professional contest were announced April 4. The winners of the professional contest were named at the dinner, where the college winners also received their plaques.

All entries were 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.; and Washington, D.C.

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 Media Awards program help to fund college scholarships for graduates of the federation'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 a chapter of the year in 2015.

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

**SEE THE LIST OF AWARD WINNERS ON THE SUCCEEDING PAGES.**

# **WINNERS IN 2017 PROFESSIONAL CONTEST**

## **MAGAZINE FEATURE**

- Ervin Dyer  
Pitt Magazine  
“Voices of Color”

## **MAGAZINE FEATURE PHOTO**

- Terry Clark  
Pitt Magazine/University of Pittsburgh  
“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”

## **NEWSPAPER BUSINESS NEWS**

- Anya Litvak  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
“Oil, Gas Firms Faced Dozens of Workplace Suits”

## **NEWSPAPER COLUMNS**

- Gene Collier  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
“Athletes Emerge Again As Torchbearers Where Much Light Needs to Be Shed”

## **NEWSPAPER ILLUSTRATION**

- Daniel Marsula  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
“Six Dead in Wilkinsburg”

## **NEWSPAPER FEATURE**

- Sean Hamill  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
“Region’s only recorded ‘lynching’ did not happen”

## **NEWSPAPER/ EDUCATION**

- Marsha Keefer

Beaver County Times  
“Molding Boys Into Men”

## **BLOGGING**

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

## **NEWSPAPER FEATURE PHOTO**

- Andrew Russell  
Pittsburgh Tribune-Review  
“Doris Mickens”

## **NEWSPAPER HEALTH/SCIENCE/ENVIRONMENT**

- 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”

## **NEWSPAPER PRINT SERIES**

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

## **NEWSPAPER PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

- Natasha Lindstrom  
Pittsburgh Tribune-Review  
“Author Puts Lack of Affordable Housing in Spotlight”

## **NEWSPAPER SPORTS FEATURES**

- Lauren Kirschman  
Beaver County Times  
“There’s More Than One Way To Be Strong”

## **NEWSPAPER SPORTS NEWS PHOTOS**

- Peter Diana  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

“McCutchen Hit”

### **NEWSPAPER SPOT NEWS**

- Paula Reed Ward and Chris Potter  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
“Sentences in T Station Assault Are Questioned”

### **NEWSPAPER SPOT NEWS PHOTOS**

- Michael Henninger  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
“In the Aftermath of the Wilksburg Killings”

### **RADIO NEWS FEATURE**

- Paul Guggenheimer  
WESA  
“Jasiri X’s Live ‘Body and Soul’ Score”

### **RADIO SERIES**

- Journalists Allegra Johnson, Vicki Cohill, De’Saundra Harris and Trevin A. Jones; Ty Miller, producer  
Sheridan Broadcasting Networks  
“The Obama Legacy” series

### **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”

### **TV DOCUMENTARY**

- Brittny McGraw  
WPXI-TV  
“Ban the Box”

### **TV EDITORIAL**

- Charles W. Wolfertz III  
WTAE-TV

“Black History Month”

**TV FEATURE**

- Lynne Hayes-Freeland  
KDKA-TV  
“Fences: Denzel’s Pittsburgh Screening”

**TV/ PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

- Minette Seate, Chris Moore, Rebecca Born  
WQED-TV  
“The State of Black Pittsburgh”

**TV SPORTS FEATURE**

- Paul Ruggieri  
WQED-TV  
“Charlie’s Story”

**TV SPOT NEWS**

- David Kaplan  
WTAE  
“Missing Child Search”

**MULTIMEDIA**

- 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 IN 2017 STUDENT CONTEST (previously announced April 4)**

### **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”