

SABC journalists succeed at Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards

At the Vodacom Journalist of the Year awards, held in Cape Town early this month, SABC journalists performed excellently, picking up TV Feature award, SABC Radio News, Radio Feature, Sports and TV News.



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SABC (Special Assignment Journalist team) of Hazel Friedman, Pieter Brewis and Marc Mullenberg won an award for their thought-provoking TV feature, *Afterburn* for SABC current affairs programme, *Special Assignment*.

Afterburn is a story about burn survivors and communities living in informal settlements, for whom shack fires are a constant hazard. The feature focused on the story of Michelle Motibi, who suffered burns to 86% of her body when a shack she was sleeping in caught fire. She was five years old at the time and was given little chance of survival. However, this lucky little girl stubbornly refused to succumb to her horrific injuries.

Simultaneously in Cape Town's affluent southern suburbs, Andrew Meddick – a 15-year-old student at Bishops College – suddenly contracted viral encephalitis and tragically died from the virus. Although he was an organ donor, all his organs had been infected by the virus, except for his skin. His mother, Shelley Mackay-Davidson – a Cape Town-based lawyer and musician – donated his skin to the Red Cross Children's Hospital where Michelle was being treated. His skin served as a temporary covering while her burns healed. So Michelle's life was saved, literally, by Andrew's skin. Furthermore, Mackay-Davidson subsequently reached out to Motibi, who now lives at St Joseph's Home for chronically ill children, forming a powerful bond that continues today.

Motibi is now a bright, feisty nine year old, but she faces enormous challenges due to her terrible disfigurement. The story also focused on pioneering fire-awareness and prevention partnerships between UCT students and communities living in informal settlements.

Special Assignment shared the TV Feature award with SABC's Matshwela Ngoveni (Cutting Edge) for the Lily Mine Tragedy.

Other winners

- SABC News journalist, Nkululeko Nyembezi was declared a winner for his story about the court case and sentencing of the king of the Abathembu.
- The winner in the featured stories that brought to the fore the specialist skills that are needed for the genre of radio features went to Izak du Plessis, for SABC Current Affairs, RSG.
- Radio Feature winner was Jayed-leigh Paulse for SABC Radio, Rhodes.
- Sport winner was Mcebisi Mgqina for SABC, School rugby.
- Television Feature winner was Nontsikelelo Nohiya for SABC Cutting Edge, Stock vigilantism.
- Television News winner was Janine Lee for SABC, Killer Canals.

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