

Heroes of the theatre of the mind

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Radio is the theatre of the mind and it is the people on the air that bring it to life every day. The 2017 Liberty Radio Awards recognised the people who have made a contribution to the medium, honouring them at a gathering of the industry's stalwarts and rising stars.



John Robbie was the recipient of the Lifetime Achiever Award at the Liberty Radio Awards. Image © Times Media.

John Robbie was the recipient of the Lifetime Achiever Award. Having worked in radio for 30 years, 17 of which were as host of the 702 breakfast show, for which he was named best breakfast show presenter at previous radio awards. "For more than half of those 30 years I got up at 02:15 every morning to be in studio by 3am. I was never late," the recently retired Robbie told the audience.

In his years on air, Robbie was known for anti-Apartheid stance as well as his vision for free speech, receiving hate mail and death threats as a result; none of which stopped him.

I was given a chance by a small station when I was just a rugby player and thanks to that I have lived through the miracle of South Africa, he said. "In 1986, we were still living in a state of Apartheid where people were tortured, organisations were banned and in a country that was on the brink of a civil war. But we made it and for all our problems today, we never had a war. Given these problems, radio is more relevant today."

Liberty Radio Awards Hall of Fame

The event, held at the Sandton Convention Centre, also saw Fakir Hassen, Lynn Joffe, Jeremy Maggs, Rev Nomathamsanqa Rwequana, Tony Sanderson and Zola Yeye inducted into the Liberty Radio Awards Hall of Fame.



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"While you never work for recognition, to be recognised for something you love to do and do out of passion is amazing,"

said Joffe. She believes that radio will live forever as it is the one medium that plays well with all other mediums. “For example, it can migrate to digital... it is the theatre of the mind and no other medium can do what it does, because entertainment in radio involves the imagination.”

Liberty Radio Awards Bright stars

The Bright Stars, who are seen to be the future leaders of the industry, are Keneilwe Mohapi of Capricorn FM, Herman Human of East Rand Stereo, Nonjabulo “Njabs” Zwane of Gagasi FM, Sthembiso Nabi of Inanda FM, Mabelle Shanda of Nqubeko FM, Charonike Nel of PUK FM, Lwazi Mpofu of TruFM and Katleho Mahlangu of Vow FM.

The 2017 Bursary winner, Bongani Mgiba, from Witbank’s community radio station, says “Radio is my life. I love radio and hope to see myself working at one of the commercial or public broadcasting stations in the future.”



Making great radio with the Liberty Radio Awards

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ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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