

Standard Bank Sikuvile Journalism Awards set benchmark for excellence

The Standard Bank Sikuvile Journalism Awards 2022 are a reminder of the important role that journalism plays in South Africa's democracy.



Daily Maverick's Pieter-Louis Myburgh receiving the Story of the Year for Digital Vibes

While newspapers might be under pressure, the standard of local journalism is still high, as the winners of the recent Standard Bank Sikuvile Journalism Awards prove

Hosted by the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) for the first time, the Awards honoured the best journalists and their stories at a live event at The Venue, Melrose Arch last Saturday.

All the winning articles raised important issues in South Africa showing just why journalism is critically important to the country. The Awards themselves are significant as they set a benchmark for excellence in journalism, a profession that has been under attack and undermined worldwide.



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Sanef office bearers, including Sbu Ngalwa, Sanef Chairperson, and sponsors Standard Bank's representatives and Standard Bank CEO, Lungisa Fuzile, and various media stakeholders and journalists were all in attendance.

Heroes and Heroines

Ngalwa says that while the industry has been through a tough time over the past two years, with the industry affected by journalists losing their lives due to Covid-19 and a jobs bloodbath, exacerbated by various media titles closing, the Awards show that South African journalism is thriving. "We are now seeing green shoots and can build."

Fuzile says that the pandemic robbed the country of some of the best journalists in this country.

He paid tribute to the industry. “You are a great service to our relatively young democracy. I will make a bold statement and say that without you our democracy would fail. Every one of you here in this room and watching online is a hero and heroine. We are eternally grateful to you and proud of what you have achieved over the past two years.”

Never give up!

At the Awards, veteran editor Anthony Heard was honoured with the Allan Kirkland Soga: Lifetime Achiever Award. Heard, who was a shining light in the dark days of Apartheid, gave the audience the thumbs up and shouted, “Never give up!” after receiving his award.

Heard says that now, more than ever the media is vulnerable and in need of patrons. “The media, and journalists, must be supported. The enlightened corporations and institutions know that. They need to invest in the media as it is an investment in their future.”

He says that journalists are not invincible but some of their actions can lead to major change. “Very few other institutions in society have that capacity.”



Investigative journalism is a necessity

Danette Breitenbach 28 Jun 2022



The value of the industry

Daily Maverick’s Pieter-Louis Myburgh expressed surprise at winning Story of the Year for Digital Vibes. But says he is thrilled.

Myburgh also won the Investigative Journalism category for “Digital Vibes”, published by *Daily Maverick*, and is one of several journalists who won the Investigative Journalism category in 2018 for the collaborative body of work “Gupta Leaks”. He is also the author of the book: >*Gangster State* (Penguin Random House).

He says the SikuVile Awards give journalists a moment to bask a bit in the recognition of their work. “Because in between there are many challenging and difficult moments.”

Lifestyle category winner, Graham Wood, from *Financial Mail* says the Awards are important because journalism is under fire. “It is good for the industry to remind itself of its value from time to time.”

More young people into the industry

The Upcoming/ Rising Star of the Year was shared by Shonisani Tshikalange of the *Sunday Times* and *TimesLIVE* and Onke Ngcuka, *Daily Maverick*. Ngcuka, who was also a finalist in the Lifestyle category, says it is important for young people to enter the profession. “We need as many people as we can to hold our leaders accountable for the work they are supposed to be doing.”

The Awards also acknowledged the role of jury member Phindile Mary Xaba, who passed away shortly after the jury session.

This was the first live awards event in two years and the first awards since 2020.

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