

Standard Bank Sikuvile Journalism Awards entries reflect newspaper landscape

2020 saw shifts in some of the Standard Bank Sikuvile Journalism Awards' categories, reflecting the trends across the industry.



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What did not change was the high quality of the entries the Awards have come to expect. “In most cases, the quality was similar to last year with cases where the quality was better,” says Ryland Fisher, a member of the Standard Bank Sikuvile Journalism Awards 2020 judging panel.

The judging panel for the Awards also includes the respected industry figures of Dinesh Balliah, Henry Jeffreys, Mike Siluma, Tyrone August, Phindile Xaba, Shona Bagley, Pippa Green, Liesl Louw-Vaudran, Mary Papayya, Neo Ntsoma, Maud Motanyane, Themba Hadebe, Gus Silber and Thabo Leshilo with Lizeka Mda, this year’s convener judge.

The judging panel reviewed the 14 categories, including the South African Story of the Year, Journalist of the Year, Upcoming/Rising Star of the Year, and the Lifetime Achiever Award - the Allan Kirkland Soga Achievement Award

Many missed opportunities

Most judges found the News Category disappointing, especially given it has traditionally been one of the most popular and hotly contested categories. “I was slightly disappointed with the number of entries into this category especially in light of the avalanche of big stories in 2019,” says Hadebe.

Fellow panellist, Ntsoma, says there were stories that were not submitted. “I had expected to see more entries of the protests that took place during the Uyinene rape court case, the Springbok World Cup win and similar stories of national interest that dominated the news last year.”

Ntsoma concedes that this could in part be because breaking stories generally happen in social media with the other media forms following up.

The jury also felt that there were many missed photo opportunities in most of the images submitted. The Opinion Category was also disappointing.

Setting a very high standard

The Investigative Category also had high quality entries and as expected, the ever-popular Features Category saw some brilliant entries as well as the Sport Category. “These categories continue to set a very high standard,” says Ntsoma.

“The standouts in the Features Category bear witness to the immense commitment by the journalists who went the extra mile to research these stories,” says Louw-Vaudran.

Winners will receive R15,000, a trophy and a certificate at the virtual awards event to be held on 15 October.

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