

Pure Truth recognised

By  Danette Breitenbach

13 Sep 2019

Last night the newspaper industry gathered to recognise and reward the best journalism in the country at the Standard Bank SikuVile Awards. The winners lived up to this year's awards theme: Pure Truth, with the Journalist of the Year and South African Story of the Year awards going to *City Press* journalists Dewald van Rensburg and Siphon Masondo for their stories on VBS.



All the Standard Bank SikuVile Journalism winners. Image supplied.

'Thank goodness for a free press'

Masondo and Van Rensburg, who won in the Investigative category, were the first to break the VBS story. "I started working on the story in 2016 already," says Masondo. He says that despite receiving threats, they were able to get on with their work without too much interference. "Luckily, many of the threats were empty. Thank goodness for a free press in this country and a Constitution that allows us to do our jobs. In other countries, journalists get killed for doing stories like this."



#SBSJA19: All the Standard Bank SikuVile Journalism winners!

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The two make a good team. Both are senior journalists, having worked in the industry for 15 years or more. Van Rensburg worked as a business journalist for a decade and together with Masondo's investigative background, the two brought the VBS story to the attention of the public.

“ [#SBSJA19](#) [#SouthAfrican](#) Story of the Year goes to Siphon Masondo and Dewald van Rensburg 🏆🏆🏆🏆
pic.twitter.com/4lGO5xMWyM— amaSocial (@amaSocialSA) [September 12, 2019](#) ”

"As with the Gupta Leaks and PIC story, it is journalists who kickstart and bring awareness to an issue in this country," says van Rensburg. With VBS in the news once again, Masondo is on the story again. "More is unfolding in this story and I suspect we could write about it for the next 10 years."

Making a difference in the world

Rosetta Msimango, a photographer at *City Press*, was named Upcoming/Rising star of the Year. Commenting on winning the award, she says her work is in the human rights sector. "I focus on personal things I have experienced, such as gender violence. I let my work tell the story." She adds that in five years' time she hopes that her work will have made a difference to the world.

“ What a wonderful thing it is to have a young Black female photographer as the “Rising Star” winner at the [#SBSJA19](#) Congratulations to you [#RosettaMsimang](#) of [@City_Press](#) [pic.twitter.com/pTLyx6vBqb](#)— Dinesh Balliah (@DineshBalliah) [September 12, 2019](#) ”

The Allan Kirkland Soga Lifetime Achiever Award was awarded to Robin Comley, who unfortunately was not at the event to receive the award.

From 1990 to 1994, countless people died as the country moved to democracy. Recording this transition and the violence surrounding it was the group of photographers who became known as the Bang Bang Club. Comley was the picture editor of *The Star* for the years during South Africa's transition to democracy.

“ A lovely memento at the request of [#LifetimeAchievement](#) winner [#RobinComley](#) - a pic of [@ReporterStar](#) staffers past and present at the [#SBSJA19](#) tonight. [pic.twitter.com/Y0KXZO41It](#)— Dinesh Balliah (@DineshBalliah) [September 12, 2019](#) ”

The features category is one of the most popular and this year there were 51 entries. This year's winner was a collaboration effort from the Bhekisisa Centre for Health Journalism based at the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper in Johannesburg and *Mail & Guardian's* Mia Malan, Laura Lopez Gonzalez, Pontsho Pilane and Joan van Dyk. Malan is a six-times winner of the SikuVile Awards, five of which are in the feature writing category. "Tonight's award is very gratifying as it was a team effort where everyone pulled together."

The Standard Bank SikuVile Awards recognise the skills of the traditional newsroom and what award-winning journalists do. The Awards are hosted by the Publishers Support Services (PSS) is an umbrella body incorporating print and digital media and sponsored by Standard Bank. All the category winners were rewarded with R15,000, a trophy and a certificate.

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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