

All the Mondi Shanduka winners

The 2006 Mondi Shanduka Newspaper Awards saw an unprecedented five winners as joint recipients of South African Story of the Year at the sixth awards ceremony hosted by Mondi Shanduka Newsprint and the Newspaper Association of South Africa in Sandton last night, Wednesday, 25 April 2007. Bruce Cameron walked away as the South African Journalist of the Year.



Bruce Cameron receives the Mondi Shanduka SA Journalist of the Year Award from Prof Guy Berger

The awards ceremony for this prominent competition, which this year was themed “Weapons of Mass Discussion” and received 457 entries from 193 entrants, was held at the Sandton Hilton and hosted by Leanne Manas.

SA Journalist of the Year

No one enters in the premier category of SA Journalist of the Year; the verdict is based on judges’ review of all the work entered. Cameron won for his investigative work in Independent Newspapers’ *Personal Finance* supplement on the Pension Fund Scandal which exposed the secret profits made by retirement fund administration companies. Cameron was also a finalist in the Investigative Journalism category.

Founding editor of *Personal Finance*, Cameron is described by Prof Guy Berger, judging panel convenor and head of media studies and school of journalism at Rhodes University, as “a serious and senior journalist who takes refreshing stabs at businesses that behave badly”.

“[Cameron] takes on corporate abuses with well-researched information. His writing is independent, nuanced and analytical, even when covering news,” noted Berger in the judges’ statement.

“During 2006, he brought his expertise to bear by proactively, and almost single-handedly, conducting a penetrating investigation into hidden abuses in the pensions industry. By bringing this all to light, and in a sustained and wholly professional manner, Cameron is the single most deserving candidate of this award for the year.”

SA Story of the Year

The judging panel selected the winners for the SA Story of the Year and the Mondi Shanduka Journalist of the Year from the nine category winners.

According to the judges' verdict based on a review of all the work entered, the joint winners in this premier category are responsible for unpicking the complex and corrupt web that the late Brett Kebble built around him.

The winners are:

- Rob Rose for his series on the Kebble saga in *Business Day*; and
- Co-winning *Mail and Guardian* team Sam Sole, Nic Dawes, Zukile Majova and Stefaans Br?mmer for their series on the "The Kebble – Selebi link".

The judges noted that their iconoclastic journalism "scrupulously unraveled the networks of intrigue and dubious deals, including the man's connections with police chief Jackie Selebi".

Their work highlighted the unsavoury links between money and politics, a near-institutionalised collaboration that poses a direct danger to both democracy and development. "The reportage shows that where the state is unwilling or unable to guard against Kebblesque trends, the media has risen to the responsibility," said the judges.

Category winners

Each of the category winners received a R10 000 personal cash prize, a Mondi Shanduka Golden Nib trophy and a framed certificate.

Speaking on behalf of the judges, Prof Berger said, "We had more praise than criticism, and a good feeling about the service to society being provided by our entrants – whether it was information, aesthetics or entertainment, or all three. If these journos were waitrons, we'd have a world-class tourism service in SA.

"What was impressive was the range of new stories we found, as well as new angles on old staples. Quality, and quantity, was up in some categories – like investigative journalism. But although good work is being done in South Africa in graphics and presentation, it was not as present as it should have been among the entries that were contributed. We encourage more entries especially in these areas."

The judges were heartened by the distinct range of new names amongst the winners, the finalists and the journalists who were commended.

The winners in the nine categories are as follows:

Hard news

- Rob Rose – *Business Day* for a series on the Kebble story titled "Kebble's R2bn dodgy share deals exposed". Rose was also a finalist for his "Mzi Khumalo in new BEE share-sale controversy" story.

Finalists:

- Simpiwe Piliso, Jessica Bezuidenhout and Jocelyn Maker – *Sunday Times* for "Selebi named..." and "Selebi and the cop mafia"

Analysis and commentary

- Wally Mbhele and Moipone Malefane – *Sunday Times* for “A house divided cripples ANC”

Finalists:

- Reneé Bonorchis – *Business Day* for “Absent Mittal chiefs do it by phone – if at all”; “BEE buzz hides how things stay the same” and “Accidental plus for investors”
- Sithembiso Msomi – *City Press* for “The amazing vanishing acts of Muzi Kunene”

Feature writing

- TJ Lemon – *Sunday Independent* for “Village of Dance”

Finalists:

- Hanlie Retief – *Rapport* for “Maar wat van ‘n bietjie Liefde”
- Kevin Bloom – *Sunday Times* for “Mabrr is still in the house”

Investigative journalism

- Sam Sole, Nic Dawes, Zukile Majova and Stefaans Br?mmer – *Mail and Guardian* for a series on “The Kebble – Selebi link”

Finalists:

- Adriaan Basson and Carien du Plessis – *Beeld* and *Die Burger* for “Vrae oor SA tronkbaas”
- Bruce Cameron – *Personal Finance* for a series on the “Alexander Forbes plundered pension funds”

Creative journalism

- Andie Miller – *Sunday Independent* for “Berea Gogo”

Finalist:

- Braam Kruger – *Rapport* for “etensTYD”

Graphical journalism

- Zapiro – *Sunday Times* for “Eskom: Loose bolt tightened” and “Jacob Zuma’s 101 uses for condoms”

News photographs

- Chris Collingridge – *The Star* for “Help Me!”

Finalists:

- Enos Mhlongo – *Isolezwe* for “Isiphihli bekhandwa ngamatshe abalsolwa ngokudlwengula”
- Esa Alexander – *Die Burger* for “Begrawe verlede” – the PW Botha Funeral - Thabo Mbeki story

Feature photographs

- Steve Lawrence – *The Star* for a portfolio on the “Zuma sex grilling”

Finalists:

- Alon Skuy – *The Star* for a portfolio on the “Zuma Trials”
- Neil McCartney – *Citizen* for a portfolio especially “Fallen Heroes”

Presentation (layout and design)

- Renthia Bornman – *Rapport* for “Lark”

Finalists:

- Gabriel Seeber – *Saturday Star* for “The battle for the HILL”
- Marzanne van den Bergh and Waldimar Pelser – *Beeld* for “Onskuldig of Skuldig”

The army of judges comprised convenor Guy Berger; John Dlodlu, former editor of *Sowetan*; Ebbe Dommissie, former editor of *Die Burger*; Ivan Fynn, former editor of *Cape Argus*; Alf Kumalo, veteran award-winning photojournalist; Ruda Landman, television journalist and co-anchor of *Carte Blanche*; Irwin Manoim, founding editor of *Mail and Guardian*; Phil Mtimkulu, founding editor of *The Voice*; and Sophie Tema, award-winning journalist.

Former editor of *Die Burger* Ebbe Dommissie, a first-time judge this year, commented that he found the experience to be interesting and rewarding. “The photographs were particularly impressive, and disturbing too. South Africa is perennially interesting and all of the entries proved it.”

Commented Landman, who was also part of the judging panel for the first time, “I was particularly impressed with the investigative journalism entries. The top journalists went way beyond the surface, finding evidence that others desperately wanted to hide. The winners stayed with their story over months and months, becoming true experts on the subject.”

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