



A TRIO OF WINNERS—Senior staff members represent the New Pittsburgh Courier at the Merit Awards Dinner at the NNPA convention held last week in Detroit. The weekly garnered four first-place awards. Proudly representing are from left: Stephan Broadus, assistant to editor and publisher; Rod Doss, editor and publisher; and Lou Ransom, managing editor.

Courier wins four first place NNPA awards

by Lorinda M. Bullock
For New Pittsburgh Courier

DETROIT (NNPA) —The New Pittsburgh Courier garnered four first place awards (tops in the competition), during the National Newspaper Publisher's Association's Merit Awards Dinner.

The Courier snapped up first place awards for Best Women's Section, Best Sports Page, Best Business Section and Best Feature Story (a story by staff writer Deborah M. Todd). The Courier also won third place awards for Best Youth Page and Best Religion Page.

“Winning in NNPA competition has always been important to me,” said Courier Editor and Publisher Rod Doss. “It is competing against a peer group of newspapers that are measured by their journalistic excellence and presentation, and they challenge us to constantly improve our product. Key to our success in winning is our committed and

dedicated staff who constantly seek ways to better serve our readership. Each win brings us closer to our goal of winning the top award, the John B. Russwurm Trophy.”

For the second year in a row, the St. Louis American dominated the National Newspaper Publishers Association’s Merit Awards dinner, netting eight awards including the top honors General Excellence and the John B. Russwurm Trophy that is given to the newspaper receiving the most points in all Merit awards categories. The American also placed first in Best Column Writing.

“We are also surprised, flattered, deeply, deeply appreciative, honored and proud,” says Donald M. Suggs, publisher of the St. Louis American in an interview. “First of all, we have a great regard for our readers and a great obligation to our readers, so we invest in every page of our newspaper, into the quality of our reporting, into our layout, and into our content overall. Every week we try to make a special edition for our readers.”

Staffing is the key, says Suggs.

“We want people who are passionate about what they do and creative. We have been able to develop, over the years, people who take their work seriously,” says Suggs. “It’s labor intensive, but our philosophy is excellence.”

The semi-formal gala in Detroit’s Renaissance Center Marriott last week celebrated the past, present and future of the Black Press in grand style.

“This is really the Oscar night for the more than 200 Black newspapers,” said dinner chair Ofield Dukes.

Black newspapers from across the nation were recognized for their excellence in 21 categories ranging from best photography to circulation promotion.

The Carolina Peacemaker may have had a quiet presence during the awards ceremony with one third place win for best news story, but its publisher, John Kilimanjaro, was awarded with one of the most highly anticipated awards of the night, Publisher of the Year.

Kilimanjaro, who founded the Peacemaker in 1967, was not in attendance to accept his award. Kilimanjaro’s resume also includes a career in academia as well as journalism. He has served as Professor of English at North Carolina A&T and established the Department of Speech and Theatre Arts there in 1969. He founded the Paul Robeson Theatre in 1970, served as executive director of the Theatre and the Richard B. Harrison Players from 1970-1981. He produced more than 80 major plays and musicals.

Other big winners that made several trips to the stage The Philadelphia Tribune, which also placed first in four categories, Best Youth Section, Best Use of Photographs, Best Church Page and Best Special Edition Broadsheet. The Tribune was nominated nine times—the most of any publication.

Mother and son politicians Congresswoman Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick and Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick welcomed the newspapers to the city of Detroit and thanked the Black press for its contribution to the Black community.

“We thank you for feeding the information engine because we’re not ignorant because you give us the correct stories. You tell it straight and you tell it like we need to hear it and you lift up our community,” said Mayor Kilpatrick.

“We need you now more than ever,” said Congresswoman Kilpatrick.

The evening was celebratory with one solemn and proud moment as the NNPA celebrated the life and legacy of Charles Kelly, founder and publisher of the Michigan Citizen who died earlier this year.

A DVD salute to Kelly was played on a large screen as Detroit Councilwoman JoAnn Watson spoke about Kelly's fearless reign at the Citizen, tackling issues other publications were to afraid to take on, and "calling out" Michigan politicians of all races, "making them more honest."

The crowd stood to their feet and applauded Kelly's family including his widow, Teresa, and daughter, Catherine, who inherited his position as publisher.

Other tributes of the night were paid to the 2006 inductees into the Black Press Hall of Fame including NNPA founder John Sengstacke, journalist, and advisor to three American presidents, Louis Martin and former Michigan Chronicle publisher Longworth Quinn.

General Excellence

- 1st: The St. Louis American
- 2nd: The Amsterdam News
- 3rd: Los Angeles Wave

Best Editorial

- 1st: Cleveland Call and Post
- 2nd: Dallas Examiner
- 3rd: Richmond Free Press

Best Column Writing

- 1st: The St. Louis American
- 2nd: Michigan Chronicle
- 3rd: Winston-Salem Chronicle

Best Community Service

- 1st: Seattle Medium
- 2nd: Richmond Free Press
- 3rd: St. Louis American

Best News Story

- 1st: Cleveland Call and Post
- 2nd: Amsterdam News
- 3rd: Carolina Peacemaker

Best Feature Story

- 1st: Pittsburgh Courier
- 2nd Richmond Free Press
- 3rd: Baltimore Afro American

Best News Picture

- 1st: The Washington Informer

2nd: Los Angeles Sentinel
3rd: The Indianapolis Recorder

Best Editorial Cartoon

1st: Dallas Weekly
2nd: Los Angeles Sentinel
3rd: Philadelphia Tribune

Best Layout and Design Broadsheet

1st: Los Angeles Sentinel
2nd: St. Louis American
3rd: Philadelphia Tribune

Best Layout and Design Tabloid

1st: Washington Informer
2nd: Dallas Weekly
3rd: Arizona Informant

Best Special Edition Broadsheet

1st: Philadelphia Tribune
2nd: The Cincinnati Herald
3rd: St. Louis American and
Indianapolis Recorder

Best Special Edition Tabloid

1st: New York Amsterdam News
2nd: Washington Informer
3rd: Dallas Weekly

Best Circulation Promotion

1st: Washington Afro-American
2nd: Indianapolis Recorder
3rd: Philadelphia Tribune

Best Women's Section

1st: New Pittsburgh Courier
2nd: Richmond Free Press
3rd: Cleveland Call and Post

Best Youth Section

1st: Philadelphia Tribune
2nd: Los Angeles Sentinel
3rd: New Pittsburgh Courier

Best Original Advertising

1st: Indianapolis Recorder

2nd: St. Louis American
3rd: Los Angeles Sentinel

Best Use of Photographs

1st: Philadelphia Tribune
2nd: Winston Salem Chronicle
3rd: Los Angeles Sentinel

Best Church Page

1st: Philadelphia Tribune
2nd: Indianapolis Recorder
3rd: New Pittsburgh Courier

Best Sports Page

1st: New Pittsburgh Courier
2nd: Indianapolis Recorder
3rd: Philadelphia Tribune

Best Business Section

1st: New Pittsburgh Courier
2nd: St. Louis American
3rd: Philadelphia Tribune

Best Entertainment Section

1st: Los Angeles Wave
2nd: Cleveland and Post
3rd: New York Beacon