

Awards highlight best in Black newspapers

By Makebra Anderson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

CHICAGO (NNPA) - For some, it's the Grammy's. For others, the Oscars. But when it comes to Black newspaper honors, it's the National Newspaper Publishers Association's (NNPA) Merit Awards that captures the spotlight.

Given to the best and brightest in categories ranging from best sports section and editorial page, to best women's section and layout design, the *St. Louis American* and the *Philadelphia Tribune* battled to see who indeed has the best paper. And, the winner is...

Anxiety set in as people anticipated who would win the coveted John B. Russwurm Award — a trophy that stands at least four feet tall and means that your paper received the most points in all Merit Awards categories.

Editors and publishers grouped together. Audience members tallied the number of nominations, and judges prepared for what could have been a long night— especially if someone disagreed with the results. In the end, it was no surprise to many that

the *St. Louis American* left Chicago with the Russwurm Award in hand and a strategy to prepare for next year's defeat.

"The *Philadelphia Tribune* is super, and it's good to beat them, and I was really worried about *Richmond [Free Press]* because they do a great job," said Alvin Reid, city editor of the *St. Louis American*.

"We never become accustomed to winning any award, and we compete in a lot of contests. It takes everyone from the receptionist to the classified ad department for this to happen. There are only 21 of us and everyone really works very hard to make the *American* a great paper. We're proud of our paper every week."

The award didn't come easy. The staff from the *Philadelphia Tribune* put up a good fight. Throughout the night, the two papers competed in several categories, going back and fourth between first, second and third place.

The *Philadelphia Tribune* was nominated 11 times and won first place in three categories, including Best Special Edition, Best Circulation



St. Louis American City Editor Alvin Reid and Publisher Donald Suggs stand next to the John B. Russwurm Award.

Promotion and Best Youth Section. Like the *Tribune*, the

St. Louis American also took home three first place plaques for Best Sports Section, Best Use of Photo-

graphs for broadsheet and General Excellence; however, they only had nine nominations.

Also in the race was the *Richmond Free Press*, which had six nominations and one first place trophy for Best Original Advertising, and the *New York Amsterdam News*, which was nominated seven times and won first place for Best Feature Story and Best Layout and Design.

"This feels great. It's a tribute to the great staff we have at the paper. It always motivates the staff when they win; to continue to do excellent work and to be recognized by your peers is the best recognition of all," said Irv Randolph, editor of the *Philadelphia Tribune*.

Not only did NNPA honor papers with the Merit Awards, several papers also received the sought after A. Philip Randolph Messenger Awards.

The awards, initiated by Miller Brewing Company 15 years ago, is a staple for NNPA.

It represents the best and the brightest in journalism for "papers that play a role that mainstream media can't play."

Miller Brewing Company executive Larry Waters

thanked publishers and editors for "reporting that is dynamic, inspirational and educational," and promoting "honesty, sincerity and integrity," before giving out the awards for the night.

Among the four award recipients were: the *Chicago Defender*, Best Education Editorial; the *Philadelphia Tribune*, Best Civil Rights Editorial; the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Best Education News Story; and the *Richmond Free Press*, Best Civil Rights News Story.

This year's award ceremonies were held at the Harold Washington Cultural Center in Chicago. The beautiful structure sits right in the heart of Chicago's inner city. Built by African-American contractors, it is the pride and joy of Chicago's African-American residents.

As the night ended, some smiled; some laughed and some cried. But, in the end, true to form, the A. Philip Randolph and NNPA Merit Awards was the highlight of the annual NNPA convention.

By recognizing the talents of Black newspapers and Black publishers, the event reenergized the Black Press and will continue to keep the spirit of competition alive.

Dropouts

(Continued from Page 4)

attacking the problem. States have the power to set graduation rate goals. Some have established low goals and view minimal improvement as a sign of progress.

Education Trust data shows that Connecticut, Virginia, Texas and Tennessee are among those states that have said that any improvement is enough to meet the requirement of the federal No Child act, while no progress is required in New Mexico or South Carolina.

"We are very concerned that the graduation data doesn't accurately reflect what's truly happening in the states," says Susan Aspey, a spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Education.

"The Secretary has been highlighting

the magnitude of high dropout rates as she presses the case for high school reform. Since you can't fix problems if you don't know about them, it's absolutely vital that states get the necessary systems in place so parents and the public know the true extent of the dropout problem."

There are some signs of progress.

"Florida schools are doing a good job," says Hall. "Each student has a unique ID and [the state] can track them throughout the school system."

She adds, "Washington state, just over a year ago, was reporting inflated graduation rates. Now the rates are lower but much more honest. This opens up discussions among leaders, which can lead to improvements."



Arthur and Dorothy White celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary with a dinner-dance at Fitzgeralds Casino/Hotel on Friday, June 17. An intimate group of 50 relatives and friends attended including 20 guests from out of town.

BiDiI

(Continued from Page 3)

said, but they did suggest that BiDiI helped the few Blacks participating.

Based on those results, NitroMed Inc. of Lexington, Mass., launched a study of 1,050 Blacks with severe heart failure. Half of them got standard heart failure drugs and a placebo; the other half got standard drugs plus BiDiI.

The study showed a 43 percent reduction in deaths and a 39 percent decrease in

hospitalizations compared with a placebo, and the study was stopped ahead of schedule last year when doctors saw BiDiI clearly was better.

"The information presented to the FDA clearly showed that Blacks suffering from heart failure will now have an additional safe and effective option for treating their condition," said Robert Temple, the agency's associate director of medical policy.

"In the future, we hope to

discover characteristics that identify people of any race who might be helped by BiDiI."

Heart failure occurs when the heart is too weak to pump effectively, causing fluid to back up in the lungs and leaving people weak and short of breath.

Half die within five years of diagnosis. Heart failure, or end-stage cardiovascular disease, affects about 5 million Americans, including an estimated 750,000 Blacks.

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