

Webber Wentzel Legal Journalist of the Year Awards announced

The Webber Wentzel Legal Journalist of the Year Awards, founded in 1999, were announced on 4 November 2015. The awards acknowledge the important role that journalists play in promoting knowledge of the judiciary and understanding of the country's civil and criminal justice systems.

Print Category:

Franny Rabkin from *Business Day* clinched the title in the print category. According to the award judges, Rabkin has a solid understanding of both the broader socio-political context within which the law operates as well as the complex legal issues discussed and analysed in each of her three contributions, which were submitted. Going beyond the headlines, the articles provided readers with intelligent and informed analysis, thus offering readers a deeper insight into matters reported superficially elsewhere in the media.



From left: Joy Summer, Philippa Marques, Tony Beamish and Carolyn Raphaely

Carolyn Raphaely from the Wits Justice Project was the runner-up in the print category for the heart-breaking and astonishing story of Thembekile Molaudzi, who was wrongly convicted for a murder he did not commit and his 11-year battle to prove his innocence.

Television Category:

Joy Summer and Tony Beamish from Carte Blanche walked away with the Legal Journalist of the Year award in the television category. The winning entry investigated the practice of lawyers overcharging clients in contravention of the Contingency Fees Act, focusing on the practices of a well-known attorney, Ronald Bobroff. Their clear understanding of the complex factual and legal issues involved, in addition to convincing Bobroff to give a disastrous on-camera interview, made for compelling viewing.

Michael Duffet also received a commendation in the television category for '*Week 7: Dewani Trial*' that was aired on Carte Blanche. Duffet competently summed up the evidence presented by the state to assess whether the judge would grant an application by Shrien Dewani's lawyers not to have to present a defence. Duffet employed an innovative premise that showcased the opposing views of two lawyers on the matter and educated the public on the factual and legal considerations the judge had to consider, in an entertaining manner.

Radio category

The judges decided not to award a prize in the radio category as none of the entries were of a sufficiently high standard to merit an award.

Philippa Marques of Webber Wentzel received the award for the best legal article for Webber Wentzel's Candidate Attorney Writing Programme for 2015. Her article, entitled '*Court protects freedom of expression in Steve Hofmeyr Twitter battle*' covered a ventriloquist, his puppet and a well-known performing artist.

The independent and acclaimed panel of judges for the 2015 Legal Journalist of the Year Award comprised of Pierre de Vos, Joe Thlooe and Eusebius McKaiser. Judges were looking for journalists who produced an article, radio bulletin or video insert, which provides insight into a legal concept or development, and a rare and accurate glimpse into the complexities of South Africa's judicial landscape. Every entrant into the 2015 Legal Journalist of the Year Awards is commended for his or her excellent work and encouraged to continue to promote knowledge and understanding of our country's justice system.

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