

Caption: Takalani Netshitenzhe, Director of External Affairs at Vodacom South Africa winner Paul Moola of North West On Sunday and seasoned media professional Ryland Fischer

Paul Moola takes home another award at 2024 Vodacom journalist of the year awards

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In a celebration of journalistic excellence, Paul Moola of North West On Sunday has once again proven his mettle, clinching the award for Opinion at the 2024 Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards. Moola's compelling body of work, which includes the thought-provoking pieces "Dust and Dreams: The Tale of Itsoseng" and "A Nation Divided," has resonated deeply within the community and beyond, earning him recognition among South Africa's finest media professionals.

The Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards unveiled their regional winners for Free State, Northern Cape, North West, and Limpopo, showcasing the remarkable talent within these provinces. This year's competition saw over 1,200 entries from journalists nationwide, a testament to the vibrant media landscape and the commitment to quality storytelling across various genres.

Takalani Netshitenzhe, Director of External Affairs at Vodacom South Africa, emphasized the importance of ethical and independent journalism in a democratic society. "As we mark 30 years of democracy in South Africa, we are reminded of the vital role that media plays as the fourth estate. Supporting journalism is crucial, as a sustainable media landscape fosters informed and connected societies," Netshitenzhe stated.

The judging panel, led by seasoned media professional Ryland Fischer, included luminaries such as Arthur Goldstuck, Patricia McCracken, and Manelisi Dubase. Their rigorous selection process highlighted the depth and diversity of stories coming out of the region, culminating in a celebration of exceptional journalism.

Moola's award-winning pieces delve into pressing societal issues, reflecting the challenges and triumphs of life in South Africa. "Dust and Dreams" explores the aspirations and struggles of the residents of Itsoseng, while "A Nation Divided" tackles the complexities of unity in a country marked by stark contrasts.

As Moola accepted his award, he expressed gratitude for the recognition and the opportunities that journalism provides. "It's an honour to be acknowledged alongside such talented journalists. Our work reflects the communities we serve, and I'm proud to bring their stories to light," he remarked.

The regional winners each received R5,000, with Moola's achievement underscoring the impact of well-researched and passionately written opinion pieces in shaping public discourse.

Other notable winners included Aphumelele Mdlalane for Investigative Reporting, Ulrich Hendriks for Lifestyle and Financial categories, and Lucas Ledwaba for Features.

Looking ahead, Clement Matroos of SABC has been nominated as the Young Journalist representative for the region, setting his sights on the national Young Journalist of the Year Award, which will be announced on November 7. The national category winners will receive R10,000, with the prestigious title of Vodacom Journalist of the Year accompanied by a remarkable prize of R100,000.

As the journalism community in Free State, Northern Cape, North West, and Limpopo celebrates these achievements, the legacy of storytelling continues to thrive, ensuring that the voices of South Africans are heard and respected. Paul Moola's latest accolade not only honors his individual talent but also inspires a new generation of journalists committed to excellence and integrity.