

Written by Ashura M.I.R. Bayyan
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This past Thursday evening, during the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) Annual Convention, the Houston Forward Times was honored at the NNPA's Annual Merit Awards ceremony held in Nashville, TN.

Out of the more than 200 NNPA member newspapers, the Houston Forward Times was honored in 3 out of the 14 possible award categories it qualified for; those awards were for Best Feature Story, Best Youth Writer and Best Lifestyle Section.

Congratulations to Houston Forward Times Associate Editor Jeffrey L. Boney, who received an award for Best Feature Story, out of many national publication entries that were submitted.

His article, "Ungrateful Negroes?," chronicles the history of African-Americans in this country and their ability to vote, while challenging modern day African-Americans to learn their history surrounding voting. The article also puts a detailed spotlight on the sacrifices many African-Americans made to obtain the right to vote, along with the comparison of modern day African-Americans who may take that right for granted today.

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The Best Feature Story award is named after Frank L. Stanley, Sr., the influential publisher of The Louisville Defender, who drafted the 1950 legislation that led to the desegregation of Kentucky's colleges and universities and was a co-founder of the NNPA.

Congratulations also go out to Grace Boateng for Best Lifestyle Section. Grace is our Managing Editor and she is responsible for layout design and total look of the Houston Forward Times newspaper. The Best Lifestyle section was judged for the layout design, written articles and content.

We also congratulate Eryn Roberts for her win as Best Youth Writer. Youth writers were judged on layout, articles and pictures of special interest to youth, as well as writing style.

Merit Award winners were awarded in the following categories:

BEST EDITORIAL
BEST COLUMN
BEST NEWS STORY
BEST FEATURE STORY
BEST LAYOUT & DESIGN (Broadsheet)
BEST LAYOUT & DESIGN (Tabloid)
BEST LIFESTYLE SECTION
BEST YOUTH WRITER (16-23)
BEST USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS (Broadsheet)
BEST USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS (Tabloid)
BEST CHURCH PAGE
BEST SPORTS SECTION
BEST BUSINESS SECTION
BEST ENTERTAINMENT SECTION
DIGITAL EXCELLENCE
GENERAL EXCELLENCE

“There were many exceptional entries this year,” said Karl B. Rodney, Merit Awards Chairman and publisher of the Carib News. “We congratulate not only the winners, but other papers that exemplify excellence every week.”

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In addition to the Merit Awards winners, the NNPA also presented the Front Page Award to Roland Martin, host of “Washington Watch with Roland Martin” on TV One cable network, and Larry Waters, Senior Director of Community Commerce and Partnerships for MillerCoors. NNPA Legacy Awards were also presented to Jesse Jackson, Sr., founder and president of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, and James Farmer, former vice president of General Motors Acceptance Corp. (GMAC).

To round out the awards, Mary Alice Thatch, publisher of the Wilmington Journal, was selected “Publisher of the Year” by her colleagues. Thatch was the driving force behind the NNPA’s successful national campaign that won pardons of innocence for the Wilmington Ten. Her paper provided the lead coverage of the issue. The stories were then distributed to member newspapers by the NNPA News Service.

Throughout the 53-year history of the Houston Forward Times, the paper has been the recipient of various awards for journalistic excellence surrounding editorial excellence and many other categories. The Houston Forward Times will continue to strive to produce editorial and newsworthy content that is told for us, by us and about us, with the highest level of professionalism and journalistic excellence.