

NIGHT OF THE SCRIBES

It was a night of the scribes, for the scribes. Having written stories about other people, events and places all year round, it was the time of the year when they get a little space in the newspapers for themselves and their achievements. The Journalism Awards of Excellence organised by the Editors Guild of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Press Institute was held at Mount Lavinia Hotel on Tuesday night. The highlight of the annual event was the presentation of Lifetime Achievement medals and shawls to five veterans in the field who had been dedicated to the cause of journalism. Print journalists including cartoonists, layout artistes and photographers working for newspapers published in all three languages received recognition for their hard work in 2015. Apart from the winners in most categories, to encourage others merit awards were also presented on the recommendation of the eminent panel of judges drawn from journalism and academia. Three lucky journalists who had won awards in three categories also received return air tickets from SriLankan Airlines. The awards night culminated with the presentation of the Mervyn de Silva Journalist of the Year Award and fellowship thereafter, away from the rush of newsroom deadlines.



Lifetime Achievement awards winners Piyasena Ihalavithana, Neville de Silva (representative), Sarath Malalasekera, Veeragathy Thanabalasingham and Premasiri Abeyasinghe.



B.A. Siriwardena Columnist of the Year (English, Merit), Rasika Jayakody (*The Sunday Observer*).



B.A. Siriwardena Columnist of the Year (English) Padma Edirisinghe. (*The Sunday Observer*)

Padma Edirisinghe Columnist of the Year

By Ryhanna Salle



Veteran author, translator and journalist Padma Edirisinghe won the Excellence in Journalism Award at the 17th Journalism Awards ceremony organised by the Editors' Guild of Sri Lanka (TEGOSL) and the Sri Lanka Press Institute (SLPI) as Columnist of the Year (English) for her column "Musings" published in the *Sunday Observer*. She was recognised "for her analytical commentary and satirical style."

Padma began writing as a teenager, and as a schoolgirl she contributed to the youth section of the *Daily News* in the 1950s. Her university education took priority over journalistic work, and after completing her higher studies she began a professional career as a principal of teachers colleges. However her journalistic streak never left her and she continued writing in her inimitable style. Her articles have been published in the *Sunday Observer*, *Daily News*, *The Sun*, and *the Sunday Times*. For the *Sunday Observer*, her first column was on Robert Knox. She was a hands-on journalist. When she

was the Principal of Gampola Teacher's College, she visited the village of Legundeniya where Robert Knox lived in order to do find out how he survived there.

She has written more than 500 articles on historical subjects. She is also the author of several books such as *From a Woman's Diary*, *Memoirs of Three Teachers Colleges*, *Long Ago Lanka*, *Truth Hurts*, *Story of a Slum Child*, *Those Who Know Nothing*, *Kuveni's Curse*, *Child and the Earth*, *Time Traveller* and *The Tams*. She has also translated *The Wonders of Asia*, *Dr. Ariyaratne's* autobiography, *The Changing Face of Colombo* by Dr. R.L. Brohier, *Clarity Amidst Chaos*, K. Jayatilake's autobiography and *Mahagedara* by Ratnapala Wijesinghe.

Padma won the State Award for Literature in 2007, and the award for Best English Writer in 2015. She is currently compiling the second volume of *The Musings* which is a collection of her contributions to the *Sunday Observer*.

Pics: Vipula Amerasinghe and Sulochana Gamage.



Investigative journalist of the Year Namini Wijedasa (*The Sunday Times*)



Mervyn de Silva Journalist of the Year K. Sanjeewa (*Ravaya*).



Cartoonist of the Year Namal Madushanka Amarasinghe (*Tamil Mirror*)



Photojournalist of the Year Heshan Fernando (*Ada*)



B.A. Siriwardena Columnist of the Year (Tamil) Gopi Krishna (*Tamil Mirror*)



Best Designed Newspaper of the Year (*The Sunday Times*).



Denzil Peiris Young Reporter of the Year Piyumi Fonseka (*Daily Mirror*)



Upali Wijewardena Feature Writer of the Year (English) Chandani Kirinde (*The Sunday Times*)



Subramaniam Chettiar Social Development Reporter of the Year Sudharma Kumari Herath (*IridaLankadeepa*)



Feature Writer of the Year Sinhala Tharanga Rathnaweera (*Irida Divaina*)



The D.R. Wijewardena Award for Earning the Appreciation of Peers and the Public, for all those who campaigned for the RTI Law, received by Kishali Pinto Jayawardena.



Feature Writer of the Year Tamil Robert Antony (*Virakesari*).



Sports Journalist of the Year Asela Withana (*Divaina*)



Business Journalist of the Year Chandeepta Wettasinghe (*Daily Mirror*)



Best Environmental Reporter of the Year K.A. Jagath Kumara (*Divaina*)