

# Talk station cracks BBC Africa Radio Awards

Talk Radio 702 won Station of the Year in the first-ever BBC Africa Radio Awards in Nairobi, Kenya, this past weekend. Speaking from Nairobi, 702's station manager Pheladi Gwangwa, said: "We are thrilled... This is a great achievement for the station and the talented people who work for it. It's a team effort."

"We will continue to serve the community with dedication and passion. Our listeners always come first. Our listeners have told us all along that we are the best radio station on the continent and this award is confirmation of that. We wish to thank our listeners for their loyal support over the past 27 years," added Gwangwa.

Primedia Broadcasting's group head of news and talk programming, Yusuf Abramjee, said: "Everyone at the station is ecstatic. There is a celebratory mood. This recognition means a lot to 702's management, staff and our listeners."

The other winners in a night of star-studded celebration, hosted by the BBC's popular presenter Komla Dumor and which included live performances from Nigerian rapper 2Face Idibia, South African vocalist Thandiswa Mazwai and Kenyan newcomer Valerie Kimani, were:

## **New Radio Station of the Year:**

Radio Pacis - Uganda

## **News Journalist of the Year:**

Esther Mbondo, KBC, Kenya

## **Sports Journalist of the Year:**

James Wokabi, Capital FM, Kenya

## **Local On-Air Campaign of the Year:**

Matilda Asante, Joy FM, Ghana

## **Interactive/ Talk Show of the Year:**

The Citi Breakfast Show hosted by Bernard Avle, Citi FM, Ghana

## **Young Broadcaster of the Year:**

Qaanitaah Dramat, Radio 786, South Africa

The judges praised 702 as “a confident and professional station which uses its immense resources to change people's lives through broadcasting and community activities.” They said that they were “especially impressed with the range of on-air initiatives including hosting a live debate with political parties before elections, hosting and organising the press conference to quiz Vice President Jacob Zuma the day after his acquittal on rape charges, hosting a celebrity party for the Oscar-winning film, Tsotsi, and unveiling the FIFA World Cup at a special ceremony.”

Commented Abramjee, “These were but only some of the many successful events 702 had hosted. We bring our listeners news, talk and information ‘as it happens, when it happens’. We will continue with this proud heritage.”

Since the station first started broadcasting on 28 June 1980, 702 has received a number a number of awards. “In this case, we were competing against the best on the continent. I wish to also congratulate all the other category winners,” Gwangwa added.

The BBC launched its Africa-wide search for the very best radio talent in autumn 2006 in order to recognise and celebrate the exceptional broadcasting talents of those working in the continent's vibrant radio scene.

Expert judges from throughout Africa, including Ferial Haffajee, editor-in-chief of South Africa's *Mail & Guardian* newspaper, listened to hundreds of hours of radio to finalise the prize winners and reward excellence – including representatives of the audience who won their coveted places on the judging panels through a competition.

BBC radio coverage of the Awards, which were held on Saturday, 26 May 2007 at the Safari Park Hotel, included live coverage on the BBC Swahili and BBC English language services, and highlights from the awards were broadcast on a wide range of programmes, including African Perspective, Africa Have Your Say, Focus on Africa, Weekend Network Africa, World Have Your Say, the international news and information channel BBC World and music channel MTV base (Africa). Full coverage was also available at <http://bbcworldservice.com/africaradioawards>.

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