

ETHNIC MEDIA

Promoting Unity in Diversity

Previously this column has mentioned many ground-breakers, pioneers – “Movers and Shakers” – whose steadfast dedication to the reflection of linguistic and cultural diversity has contributed to the thriving and vibrant ethnic media Canadians enjoy today. [See Sandy’s columns in issues #36 and #38 at www.cnmag.ca].

The following will look at others in ethnic media whose accomplishments – each a first in their respective fields – are significant. It’s impossible to list everyone, but here are a few of the most inspiring stories.

TV Reporter Sorin Mihailovici came to Canada from Romania in 2001 to cover the World Track & Field Championships, and never went back. As a refugee and film student, Mihailovici wrote, directed and executive produced “419: the Nigerian Scam” , for under \$200. The movie, first ever made on this topic, was released in the summer of 2008, quickly went viral online and became a multiple-award winner. The success of this movie, and the obvious need for it, led to his development of the Scam Detector (www.scam-detector.com), a free online app that launched in September of 2011 and soon reached #1 in Canada as the most downloaded app in the Lifestyle category.

Raheel Raza is an award-winning freelance writer who contributes to mainstream and ethnic media in Canada and abroad. She was born in Pakistan and started writing at a young age because – as she states on her website – she grew up in a culture where women were “supposed to be seen and not heard.” Raza has appeared many times in print and electronic media, frequently to discuss and promote interfaith dialogue, gender equality and multiculturalism-related issues. In addition to being acknowledged locally, nationally and internationally for her work, she has achieved many firsts, including being the first Muslim woman to lead mixed gender prayers in Canada, and the first South Asian woman to narrate a Gemini award-winning documentary.

Second-generation Vietnamese-Canadian Paul Nguyen has been honoured for his myth-busting website www.Jane-Finch.com , a project that combines his experience growing up in the neighbourhood with his skills and training as a filmmaker. Since its launch in 2004, Nguyen has received widespread critical acclaim, national media attention – and a list of awards most of us can only dream about. In the past two years alone he has received: the Newcomer Champion Award from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration; the Paul Yuzyk Award for Multiculturalism; and the Canadian Ethnic Media Association (CEMA) Award for best ethnic internet journalism in Canada. In 1999, Nguyen was one of ten winners in Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s Racism. Stop It! National Video Competition. Currently, he focuses on Jane-Finch.com and still finds the energy to lecture on topics of racial diversity, news journalism, youth issues and documentary filmmaking.

Phew! Just reading about these phenomenal individuals can be exhausting. However, if you’re in need of further inspiration...

“It always seems impossible until it’s done.” *Nelson Mandela*

“Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.”

Albert Einstein

“I claim to be a simple individual liable to err like any other fellow mortal.”
Mohandas Gandhi



Sandy Zwyer

Sandy Zwyer has over 30 years’ professional experience in media, including more than a decade as Programme Information Coordinator for OMNI Television, where she managed viewer and media relations. Sandy is a member of the Canadian Ethnic Media Association and has an understanding of Canadian ethnocultural communities along with a thorough knowledge of multilingual/multicultural television and broadcast regulations.

