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## Philippine Reporter, 13 other newspapers receive 2015 Ethnic Press Awards

[Community News & Features](#) Nov 3, 2015 at

3:05 pm

### Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell confers awards

Hermie Garcia, publisher and editor of *The Philippine Reporter*, received the 2015 National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada (NEPMCC) Award for "Distinctive Achievements in Media and Free Speech," on Oct. 30 during ceremonies officiated by Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the 29th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, representing Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as Queen of Canada and head of state.

The award also recognized *The Philippine Reporter* as "one of the most influential ethnic publications with a circulation covering all the Filipino communities in Ontario, and the strongest voice of this community in Canada and

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AWARDEES with Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell (center, in blue dress) and Ethnic Press Council President Thomas Saras (left, standing)

PHOTO: Luca Viorel  
Editor in Chief, YAOL CANADA Inc.

The award specially cited *The Philippine Reporter* as “well known for the dedication of its editor-in-chief Hermie Garcia to freedom of speech, social justice and his endless struggles in support of human rights and the defense of democratic values.”



Hermie Garcia receives award from the Lieutenant Governor.

PHOTO: Luca Viorel

*The Philippine Reporter* was one of 14 recipients in the Newspaper Category, recognized for Excellence in Editorial Concept, Art and Visual Presentation, the others being Hindi Abroad, The Weekly Bangla Mail, Chinese Canadian Voice, Eesti Elu, El Centro, The Weekly Asian Connections, Sol Portugues, Thamilar Sentamarai, and Yeni Hayat.

This is *The Philippine Reporter's* sixth award received by Garcia in the Newspapers Category for Excellence in Editorial Concept, Art and Visual Presentation in 11 years. A seventh award, this time in the Individual Category, was received by *The Philippine Reporter* in the past when the newspaper's managing editor, Mila Astorga-Garcia was accorded the 2007 Social Justice Award.

The NEPMCC counts among its membership 750 ethnic media organizations and individuals all over the country. An Awards Committee chaired by the

organization's Ombudsman made the final decision among the nominated candidates for the 2015 awards.

During the last 37 years, the NEPMCC has recognized and honored many achievers "who left their own mark of change to Canadian Society." In 2015, the organization recognized 35 publishers, journalists and individuals, in the seven categories, as follows:

### **Distinguished Services**

#### **Category: "Distinguished Services"**



Hermie Garcia with other awardees, David Nguyen (Jane-Finch.com) and Sgt. Paul Chiang of York Regional Police at Queen's Park.

#### **1. Sergeant Paul, Chiang York Reg. Police *Public Service/ Diversity/Culture/Humanities***

A tireless servant of the new multicultural Canada, Sergeant Chiang, demonstrated over the years his special communication talents. As a member of the Diversity and Culture Resources Unit of the York Region Police Force, he is attending every single cultural event of the various communities in York region and he is always an active participant ready to help. His work extends beyond being a police officer, in helping citizens in need. He speaks 8 languages including Mandarin, Hubei, Hakka, Cantonese, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi and English and is an expert of the multicultural and very diverse community of the region. In his current position, he meets with community members on a daily basis to bridge, if any, existing gaps between police and community, while promoting diversity.

#### **2. Hon. Laas Leivat, *Humanities/ Social Justice/ Democracy (Estonia)***

Mr. Leivat, is the Honourary Consul General of Estonia in Toronto. He is President of the Estonian Word Council. He served as president of the Estonian Central Council of Canada and also the Baltic Federation. He served as Vice Chairman of the World Council of Central and East European Communities; Secretary General of the Canadian Committee for Captive European Nations; Chairman, Education Committee, ONTARIO Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship and other community organizations. He worked as editor of the English language "Estonian Life" newspaper. Co-authored the book "The Decolonization of the USSR". He recognized today for his distinguished contributions to democracy and to Canadian Multiculturalism.

#### **3. Ms. Mary Jo Leddy Romero *House Humanities/ Equality/ Social Justice***

Ms. Leddy is widely recognized for her work with political refugees at the Toronto

“Romero House” where she is serving as director. She is the founding editor of the “Catholic New Times” and author of the book “Say to the Darkness We Beg to Differ”, which is finalist City of Toronto Book Award, as well as other significant books among them At the Border Called Hope: Where Refugees are neighbors, “Our friendly Local Terrorist” and others. She is holding a Ph.D in Philosophy from the University of Toronto. She is currently Senior Fellow at Massey College, of the University of Toronto. Dr. Leddy received the Human Relations Award of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, the Ontario Citizenship Award and is a member of the Order of Canada (1996).



PHOTO: Luca Viorel  
Editor in Chief, YAOL CANADA Inc.

#### **4. Inspector, Sonia Thomas 53 Division TPS *Public Service/ Social Justice/ Equality***

Inspector Thomas, joined the Toronto Police Service as the second female black officer of the force. She served as training officer at the Police College for four years; today as inspector she is the highest ranking black female officer in charge of 53 Division, while she was responsible for the security of the PAN AM games. As a Training officer, inspector Thomas take great pride in training and mentoring new officers in a multicultural community fabric. Inspector Thomas is recognized today for her restless efforts for equality, equal opportunities and social justice.

#### **5. Mr. Panayiotis G. Tzimas *Community Service/ Social Justice/ Humanities “Life Time Achievements” (Greek)***

Mr. Tzimas came to Canada over 50 years ago from his native Kastoria, in Western Macedonia, Greece. An Electrical Engineer educated in McGill University, he worked with many Canadian companies in his field. Throughout his years of studies he always worked to promote the interest of the students as a volunteer and at the same time he dedicated his services to serve on the board of the McGill Hellenic Club-Students Association. A resident of Montreal, he is an active member of the Hellenic Community of the Greater Montreal, and at the same time he is serving as a volunteer with various ethnocultural foundations, associations and organizations, in order to serve the community at large. He dedicated time and efforts for the development and promotion of educational needs in 3 linguistic schools and libraries, in English, French and Greek. His work is known well and accepted by the community as he recognized with a number of Awards, certificates of merit in recognition of his services.

#### **Category: Individuals**

#### **6. Mr. Abdul Wafi Hadi *Humanities/ Arts/ Community (Afghan)***

A Public Engineer Mr. Abdul Wafi Hadi, for the last 25 years demonstrated a passion to help others and try to make the difference in the lives of people of the Afghani community and not only. Over the years he served on the Board of Directors or as Advisor to several not for profit organizations. He served also for 4 years as the president of the Afghan Association of Ontario and another 4 as



The Lieutenant Governor's Suite at Queen's Park where the ceremonies were held.

PHOTO: Luca Viorel

Vice President of the same organization, besides the 2 years term he served as president of the Council of Afghan Associations of Canada.

#### **7. Ms. Shadi Mousavi Nia *Community Service/ Humanities/Social Justice (Iranian)***

Ms. Mousavi Nia, is a community activist, hardworking and dedicated individual with a lifelong passion for volunteerism, helping others and community building. She has always been involved in supporting individuals and communities, also over the years she organized many events beneficial to not for profit organizations and the communities. As a journalist she is covering events, conducting interview, publishing articles in order to increase engagement of the members with the community. As a student Shadi, has received numerous awards and grants in recognition of her outstanding contributions to public in general.



PHOTO: Luca Viorel,  
Editor in Chief, YAOL CANADA Inc.

#### **8. Mr. Ahilakumaran Muththumarasamey *Culture/ Social Justice/ Humanities (Tamil)***

A businessman originally, Mr. Muththumarasamey, in order to help his community and also the people back home created the TamilCNN, which eventually became one of the main sources of information for the people of his community. At the same time and after the end of the civil war in his native Sri Lanka he formed the directors Club and through it provided livelihood support to the people back home. According to Mr. Muththumarasamey, "When poverty and hunger effecting our homeland, we jumped into the field immediately and took action in order to

provide the necessary help and with the assistance of other members of the community, is providing necessities for life to the innocent and poor victims of the war and social isolation.

#### **9. Mr. Mashoud Nasser Community/ Culture/ Social Justice (Persian)**

Mr. Nasser, is an active member of his community, over the years he is supporting community groups and organizations in order to help their members to integrate into Canadian mainstream community. For this cause he has committed enormous amount of personal time as a volunteer in organizations supporting Iranian Canadian youth and seniors. He demonstrated concerns for the protection of the environment and also strong involvement in the democratic political process of Canada.



Norman Garcia, Mila and Hermie Garcia

#### **10. Dr. Thurairajasingham Ponnampalam, MBBS, MD. Humanities/ Science/ Arts (Sri Lankan)**

Dr. Ponnampalam, practices medicine for more than 40 years in Ontario and he helped countless patients. He graduated from the medical school of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, worked in the United Kingdom, Dubai and later he came to Canada where he started practicing medicine, helping people and being always close to most vulnerable, to elders and to sick. For his work he was rated by the Ontario Medical Association among the ten medical doctors of the province of Ontario for his outstanding care for his patients. His scientific work together with his community involvement and his humanitarian help to poor and needy, creates a powerful picture of a Canadian leader.

#### **11. Mr. Vinasithamby S. Thurairajah Humanities/Culture/Community Service (Tamil)**

For half a century, Mr. Thuairajah has worked to strengthen Canada's multicultural fabric by encouraging Tamil-Canadians to become active participants in their communities. As the head of the Tamil Eelam Society of Canada and the Canadian Tamil Academy, as well as a Special president of the International Movement for Tamil Culture, he helped to shape the paths of many young members of the community and enhanced the quality of life for new Canadians through a variety of settlement support programs he was involved. Today he is recognized for his 51 years work in order to create a better life, with equal opportunities and justice for all the members of his community.

**Category Journalists: (For exceptional Services rendered to Community Media)**

**1. Mr. Royson James (Toronto Star) Humanities/ Social Justice/**



Toronto Star columnist Royson James receives award (PHOTO: Luca Viorel)

***Equality/City Politics***

A native of Jamaica Royson, attended Harbor Collegiate in Toronto and is graduate of Andrews University of Michigan. He is the municipal affairs columnist with the Toronto Star, since 1991. His column is well respected by the readers. He began his career in journalism in 1979 with a community publication serving mostly the African and Caribbean communities of Canada. Through his columns he provides commentary and analysis on all matters of civic and urban concerns. A passionate defender of equity, Royson pulls few punches in setting bar at a level Toronto's motto claims: Diversity is our Strength. He believes in Toronto's ability and desire to make the capital of Ontario a beacon of hope for the world, and a symbol of peace, cooperation and prosperity for all its citizens.

**2. Mr. Michael L. Van Cooten (Pride magazine) Equality/ Humanities/ Social Justice African**

Mr. Van Cooten is the publisher and Editor of the "Pride News Magazine", for the last 32 years. During this long period of time, for a publication, he is serving the African and Caribbean Canadian Communities, with diligence, integrity and compassion, as he reporting the news with accuracy and authenticity. His contributions to the success of many businesses seminars and community events are invaluable. To this extend his work is recognized by the community by extending to him the African Canadian Achievement Awards for his contributions to Canadian Society.

**3. Mr. Jatin Naik (Free Lance) Social Justice/ Humanities/ Equality South Asian**

Mr. Naik, is a dedicated worker of the press for the past few decades, covering news and events happening in Canada with relevance to his South Asian communities. His columns also include topics affecting Canada, international developments as well as events affecting the multicultural fabric of our country. He is an advocate of peace and cooperation among the various ethnic communities of the country. He also advocates the need for the communities to adopt, as soon as possible, the Canadian way of life. He is encouraging the members of the community to educate their children as much as possible, offering them, through education a secure future in the Canadian multicultural fabric.



CATEGORY: Newspapers (Distinguished Services to Community for long

years)

### **Distinctive Achievements in Media**

#### **1. “Canadian Jewish News” Yoni Golstein (Jewish)**

Mr. Golstein, is the Editor-In-Chief of one of the most respected ethnic publications the “Canadian Jewish News”. A well respected and recognized publication by the media community of Canada, as well as the Jewish community it serves. Today also we are recognizing Mr. Golstein for his courage to accept to serve the publication during hard economic times and to continue the services rendered to community.

Your Honour, Receiving for the “Canadian Jewish News” the editor-in-chief Mr. Yoni Golstein.

#### **2. “Share” Arnold A. Auguste (Caribbean)**

Mr. Auguste, is the publisher and Editor of the “Share” publication. One of the most respected publications among the members of the Caribbean communities. He study Journalism in Toronto and also he served in an advisory capacity with the Ryerson University and other institutions. Arnold, worked very hard over the period of time in order to make a success his publication, which today is recognized as the voice of the members of the Caribbean communities. Today his publication considered as one of the top ethnic publications in Canada.

#### **3. “Kanadansanomat” Liisa Kurechi (Finnish)**

Ms. Kurechi, is the editor of “Kanadansanomat” a publication serving the Finnish community of Canada for the last 83 years. This is a really wonderful milestone for a publication serving a small community in a multicultural country.

To this extend and in celebration of their achievements, today we are recognizing this great milestone to the achievements of the publication.

#### **4. “Shahrvand” Hassan Zerehi (Persian)**

Mr. Zerehi, is the publisher and editor-in-chief of the publication “Shahrand” serving for the last four decades the Persian Communities of Canada. Mr. Zerehi is an intellectual, a writer, a poet and a fitter defender of the free speech and human rights. Both the publication and Mr. Zerehi are well respected and recognized by the community and his services are appreciated. Your Honour, today we are recognizing Mr. Zerehi’s struggles for equality and social justice, for freedom of the speech and democracy in his native Iran and around the world.

### **Newspapers: (Excellence in Editorial concept, Art and Visual Presentation)**





From left, Angelica and Maria Voutsinas, Hermie and Mila and a protocol officer from Lieutenant Governor's office.

#### 5 “Hindi Abroad” Ravi R. Pandey (Hindi)

Mr. Pandey, is the publisher and editor of the weekly publication “Hindi Abroad”. One of the best publications of the Hindi speaking communities. During the 18 days CN Exhibition our booth had also copies of this publication. We have been impressed by the fact of the popularity of this publication and the great demand by our visitors. Today we are recognizing Mr. Pandey for his great achievement and the services he is rendering to his community and Canada. The publication is recognized for the editorials, the art and visual presentation.  
Your Honour, Mr. Ravi Pandey.



From left: Dr. Mohammad Tajdolati (Chair of Awards Committee), Tony Ruprecht (former MPP, Ontario), Hermie Garcia, Ahmad Shah Hotaki (Chief Editor of Afghan Post) and Maria Voutsinas (Executive Director, National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada)

#### 6. “The Weekly Bangla Mail” Shahidul Islam Mintu, (Bangladeshi)

The “Weekly Bangla Mail”, is one of the largest ethnic publications within Canada. From humble beginnings in 1964, this publication grew to one of the largest and most popular weekly publications covering issue affecting the lives of the members of the Bangladeshi community. The publication is a strong advocate of the need of the members of this community to intergrade as soon as possible into mainstream Canadian community.

### **7. “Chinese Canadian Voice” Patrick Long (Chinese)**

The “Chinese Canadian Voice”, is the newest publication of Mr. Patrick Long, serving the huge Chinese community of the GTA. This paper is mainly analyzing issues from an immigrant’s point of view. Well written, professionally produced and well researched. The publication is retaining a policy of establishing an open dialog between the Chinese community and the wider Canadian society.

### **8. “Eesti Elu” (Estonian Life) Kai Kiilaspea (Estonian)**

Eesti Elu, is one of the best publications serving the small but very dynamic Estonian community of Canada. This publication reflects the ideas and concerns of the members of the Estonian culture community and it is a strong advocate of respect for the human rights, freedom of expression and the democratic rights of an independence Estonian republic. The publication helps dispel many doubts about the Estonian culture and projects a vision for the future of Canada.



El Centro publishers Ernesto and Susana Donan with Hermie and Mila

### **9. “El Centro” Susana Donan (Latino)**

Ms. Susana Donan, is the editor-in-chief and publisher of the weekly publication “El Centro, (El Centroamericano), serving the Latino speaking community of Canada. Since 2000 the paper has received a number of awards for its editorial contest advocating equality and social justice for all Canadians. This publication has strong bonds with the community and is very well respected for its reporting and stand for the rights of the members of the community serves.

### **10. “The Weekly Asian Connections” Rakhee Prabhakar (Multicultural)**

Rakhee Prabhakar, is the editor-in-chief of the “Weekly Asian Connections”. This is one of the finest and oldest community publications serving the multicultural communities of Canada. The paper became a strong voice expressing the concerns of the Canadians from the various ethnic communities, with great editorials and its views surrounding national issues and advocates to the new Immigrant communities for fast integration into mainstream Canadian Society.

### **11. “Sol Portugues” “Portuguese Sun” Antonio Perinu. (Portuguese)**

Mr. Antonio Perinu, is the editor-in-chief of the publication “Portuguese Sun”. It is a publication very well respected by the community and especial from its readership as one of the most informative publications serving the Portuguese speaking communities of Canada. Mr. Perinu has been involved in community service and also has volunteered at many not-for profit community organizations. From this point of view this publication in reality is bridging the Portuguese

speaking and the mainstream society of Canada, communicating the problems and concerns of the people to government authorities.



#### **12. “The Philippine Reporter” Hermie Garcia (Filipino) “Free Speech for 2015”**

The “Philippine Reporter”, is one of the most influential ethnic publications with a circulation covering all the Filipino communities of Ontario, for the last 26 years, and the strongest voice of this community in Canada and Philippines. This publication is well known for the dedication of its editor-in-chief Hermie Garcia, to freedom of the speech, social justice, and his endless struggles in support of human rights and in defense of the democratic values. Mr. Garcia is recognized today, for his struggles with the special award for free Speech for 2015.

#### **13. “Thamilar Sentamarai” Rajeswary (Rajee) Arasaratnam (Tamil)**

Ms. Rajeswary (Rajee) Arasaratnem, is the publisher and editor-in chief of the publication “Thamilar Sentamarai”, serving the Tamil speaking communities of Canada. She is a hard working individual producing one of the finest voices of multicultural Canada. As the Tamil communities of Canada are in reality significance their point of view considered to be extremely important to peaceful developments of our societies, and extremely relevant for the affairs of Canada due to fact that this community is contributing to all aspects of the Canadian multicultural experience.

#### **14. “Yeni Hayat” Suleyman Guven (Turkish/Kurdish)**

Mr. Suleyman Goven, is a community leader, interpreter, adviser and also publisher and Editor of the “Yeni Hayat” newspaper serving the Turkish/Kurdish speaking communities of Canada. For the last 20 years he has helped hundreds of new comers settle in our country. He informed them about our democratic institutions and inspired them to take a lead and adopt the new way of life. The city of Toronto recognized his hard work by honoring him for his leadership and courage at the refugee Rights Day in 2000. Mr. Goven, continues his struggles in those days, as he is trying to help and save his fellow country citizens from the ISIL maniac murderers.

#### **CATEGORY: Magazines**

#### **“Best Editorial Concept. Visual and Artistic Presentation”**

#### **1. “Assaha Magazine” Saad Alshafar (Arabic)**

“Assaha” Magazine, is one of the finest publications of its kind in Canada. The publication is serving the Arabic speaking communities of the country and is an



Jatinder Jaswal of Road News Rangoli Radio, awaits award.

PHOTO: Luca Viorel

the members of the community serves for its outstanding editorial and visual expression.

## 2. Dutch/ De Krant Magazines Thomas Bijvoet (Dutch)

Mr. Thomas Bijvoet, is the publisher and editor-in-chief of both the magazines Dutch and De Krant. Both publications are serving the members of the Dutch speaking communities of Canada and also informing the Canadians about the problems and concerns of the members of the Dutch communities. Today we are recognizing this magazine for its fine editorial, the harmonious setting of the pages and the artistic visual presentation, together with the distinguished services they provide to Canada.



NEPMCC President and CEO Thomas Saras

(PHOTO: Luca Viorel)

## 3. Zhi-Zun (Pure Luxury) Magazine Helen Li (Chinese)

The “Zhi-Zun” is the latest publication, serving mainly the Chinese speaking communities of Canada. Today we recognize this Magazine for its fine line of production, the editorials, the artistic expression and visual presentation. The philosophy of the publishers of the Magazine is to promote good citizenship, integration and to promote the arts among the readers.

**CATEGORY: Radio, Television, Electronic Media (Best Concept, Audition, Presentation)**

### 1. “Road News Rangoli radio” Jatinder Jaswal (South Asian)

The Road News Rangoli Radio, is one of the latest developments towards the information of the transport industry. Being a proud member of Brampton Board of Trade and Ontario Trucking Association (OTA), the program highlights the core issues of the sector and it is a true voice of the South Asian communities. Apart

from covering the transport sector this radio program it is a unique blend of community and Canadian News.

## 2. Ethiofidel.com Yohannes Ayalew (Ethiopian)

Mr. Yohannes Ayalew, a new Canadian from Ethiopia is the publisher and director of "Ethiofidel.com", one of the finest publications on line. Through this publication Mr. Ayalew proved his skills and abilities to serve Canada and the Ethiopian communities around the world, by providing news and information of the life in Canada and also informing the members of his community about the Canadian Government its decisions and the various bills the members of the house are voting to law. Although this is a new sector of the industry the committee believes on the significance of the fine job Mr. Ayalew is providing is to be recommended, especially under the difficulties a new immigrant is facing in the new country.



PHOTO: Luca Viorel,  
Editor in Chief, YAOL CANADA Inc.

## 3. Jane-Finch.com David Nquyen (Vietnamese)

Mr. David Nquyen, is a young Canadian immigrant fully integrated into our mainstream Canadian way of life. Living in a very multicultural area of Toronto, he is facing daily the problems and concerns of the young members of its community and the results of high unemployment among the youth which drives them out of the school and brings them to horizons of disparity, crime and drugs. To this extend David, in cooperation with his brother Paul created the Jane-Finch.com, web site providing information about employment, jobs and the possibility of helping people returning back to school and out of the drugs. David, also is a person dedicated to help also elderly people and is a volunteer for every good cause.

## 4. Cinematography Ahmad Rostamijam (Iranian)

Mr. Rostamijam, is a community activist, documentary filmmaker and journalists. Through his documentary work he has focused on the lives of immigrants from various ethnic communities, and the problems and difficulties they face as they trying to establish themselves and their families, in the new country. Besides his work behind the camera he is an outspoken advocate for the respect of human rights and against any form of discrimination. He is a believer of the superiority of democracy and equality among all Canadians. He promotes the need of every new comer to adopt into Canadian way of life as soon as possible.

Comments (1)

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Congratulations once again, Hermie and Mila Garcia, Editors of Philippine Reporter. You make your fellow Canadians of Filipino origin proud of you and your accomplishments.