

BT bags two awards for financial journalism

Senior correspondent Michelle Quah is Financial Journalist of the Year, Lee Meixian the Most Promising Journalist of the Year

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TWO reporters at The Business Times have bagged top awards for financial journalism by the Securities Investors Association Singapore (SIAS).

Senior correspondent Michelle Quah was named Financial Journalist of the Year and Lee Meixian clinched the title of Most Promising Journalist of the Year.

The Straits Times senior correspondent Goh Eng Yeow was also recognised with the Best Commentary Award.

The journalists were honoured as part of SIAS's Corporate Governance Awards (SCGA) on Friday, which recognises companies for exemplary corporate governance standards and transparency approaches.

Among the winners for the most transparent company is agri-business Olam International, construction services provider Koh Brothers, as well as Singapore Press Holdings and StarHub under the services sector, and taking home the coveted Golden Circle Award is real estate firm CapitaLand.

Worthy of mention is DBS Group, which won big in this year's SCGA, topping a total of three categories. The bank was recognised as the most transparent company in the finance category, the Big Cap winner for corporate governance as well as the winner of the diversity award, which focuses on board diversity. DBS also emerged runner-up for the Internal Audit Excellence Award and was one of the nominees for the Golden Circle Award.

Another winner of the Big Cap corporate governance award is Keppel Corporation, whose subsidiary Keppel Telecommunications & Transportation also won the same award under the Mid Cap category.

Of winning her award, BT's Ms Quah said: "The media industry has changed a lot in the years since these awards were first handed out - and especially so in the last couple of years.

"The new landscape and added demands on journalists have not made things easy, so it's heartening to know that the fundamentals of good journalism - with integrity being at the core of these - continue to be valued and recognised. For me, at least, these remain the most important."

Friday was the third time her work has been recognised by SIAS. In 2007, Ms Quah was the joint-winner of the same award and in 2010 she won Financial Story of the Year.

Of Ms Quah's win, executive editor and news editor of BT Wong Wei Kong said: "Michelle is without peer as an authority on corporate governance issues in Singapore. She combines her knowledge base with her years of experience covering corporate Singapore to put corporate governance, or the lack of it, under sharp scrutiny. She pulls no punches, regardless of who are involved, and her commentaries and stories have touched on a wide range of issues that have investor protection at their heart."

Winning an SIAS award for the first time, BT's Ms Lee said it was "very encouraging", given that she had started writing full-time for print only in March this year.

"BT is a newsroom that trusts you with assignments, so you hit the ground running and really learn hands-on," she said. "It allows you independence, but also offers you support."

Mr Wong added: "In just her first full year in reporting, Meixian has gone beyond the headlines to explore issues in depth. Her tenacity in chasing down the news, and refusal to give up until she is satisfied she has found the answers, make her a promising financial journalist."

And for the first time ever, SCGA handed out a one-off Corporate Governance Excellence award this year to Associate Professor Mak Yuen Teen for his long-standing dedication to developing corporate governance in Singapore.

The co-author of Singapore's very first paper on corporate governance, which was commissioned by the World Bank in 1998, Prof Mak has also been authorised by the Monetary Authority of Singapore and Singapore Exchange to research and provide recommendations on ways to improve the implementation of corporate governance practices for Singapore-listed companies.

Upon receiving his award, he encouraged businesses to continue giving their support to SIAS. "Because we need a very strong investor body in Singapore if we want corporate governance to continue to improve," he said.

