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<b>Title:</b>	Allister Sparks recognised for lifetime contribution to newspaper journalism		
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### Article:

**Allister Sparks, a newspaper journalist for 60 years, was presented with the prestigious Allan Kirkland Soga Lifetime Achiever Award at the Mondi Shanduka Newspaper Awards in Johannesburg tonight (10 May 2011).**

The award recognises impeccable ethics, craft excellence and a sustained, extraordinary contribution to newspaper journalism.

“This is a journalist whose life is a tribute to the philosophy that good South African journalism should be optimistic without becoming propagandistic,” said Professor Guy Berger, convenor of the judging panel.

The Allan Kirkland Soga award is named after an admirable South African journalist, who served as editor of *Izwi Labantu* (Voice of the People) between 1898 and 1908. Kirkland Soga is remembered for the journalistic credo he promoted: “Gainst the wrong that needs resistance; for the good that lacks assistance.”

Sparks is no stranger to awards, having won the 1979 International Editor of the Year Award during his time as *Rand Daily Mail* editor, the 1963 Nieman Fellowship to Harvard and a nomination for the US Pulitzer Prize. His list of accolades is extensive.

He started his career in the Eastern Cape, his province of birth, with the *Queenstown Daily*, before working in the United Kingdom. He then moved to the *Rand Daily Mail* as its South African political correspondent, rising to become editor.

Subsequently, he developed a second illustrious career as a correspondent for *The Washington Post*, *The Observer*, and *NRC Handelsblad*.

Sparks has shown an unwavering commitment to reporting quality news, and he founded the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism in association in 1992 in an effort to improve the standard of journalism in South Africa.

An author in his own right, Sparks has also published four books, including *The Mind of South Africa*, which won him the 1990 Sanlam Literary Award.

The judging panel consisted of former editors and senior journalists with prominent records in South African journalism: Peter Sullivan, Mike Siluma, Adrienne Sichel, Pippa Green, Jodi Bieber, Joe Latakomo, Tyrone August, David Wightman, Jubu Mayet, Liesl Louw, Mathatha Tsedu, Tumi Makgabo, Paula Fray, and Arrie Rossouw.

### Extraordinary Contribution to Newspaper Journalism

A special award was made to the late Andriette Stofberg, *Beeld's* former deputy editor, for her extraordinary contribution to newspaper journalism. Stofberg, who had been with the paper for 15 years, was highly-respected for her commitment to quality and truth.

Her outstanding journalism often set a new benchmark for quality hard news features in Afrikaans. During her tenure as news editor at *Beeld*, Stofberg opened her readers' minds to the world of South African politics during the political transition period of CODESA and subsequently the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"This award was born from a special request by her colleagues who felt that they had for many years neglected to nominate her for the Lifetime Achiever Award, although she was a fitting candidate," says Berger. "She passed away in March after a brief but brave battle with liver cancer. This award, albeit posthumous, is a tribute to her contribution to newspaper journalism and society."