

Spirit in the Words Poetry Program Winners

Written by Robert ID1759

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Not exactly a hip-hop or rap concert but the compilation of metaphors led to an evening of fun and excitement as three journalists prevailed as the winners of the "Spirit in the Words" poetry program.

The poetry program, held during the 30th Anniversary of the National Association of Black Journalists" (NABJ) conference in Atlanta, GA., celebrated the spoken word with 10 journalists from around the nation.

The winner, ReShonda Tate Billingsley, of KRIV-TV, Fox 26, and a member of NABJ, took center stage along with other journalists to compete for \$5,000 in prizes. Billingsley's poem, along with Renee Mitchell's, of the Portland Oregonian, and Andre Williams", of The Morning Call, were the judges' favorites. Mitchell and Williams, both members of NABJ, won second and third place, respectively.

"Chrysler Group congratulates our NABJ partners on their 30th Anniversary as they celebrate the many years of progress," said Frank Fountain, Vice President External Affairs and Public Policy. "We believe the Spirit in the Words program is an opportunity for all of us to tell a story about our passions and to celebrate our culture."

Actress Shari Headley, known for her work in "Coming to America" and "The Johnson Family Vacation," served as master of ceremonies for the event, which she has done on many other occasions. An independent panel of judges, including Ralph Gilles, Chrysler Group director of truck exterior/interior design -- previously the lead designer of the Chrysler 300C, Dodge Magnum and Dodge Charger -- served as a judge along with four print and broadcast journalists. The winning poets were selected based on their theme, delivery, content and creativity.

The "Spirit in the Words" poetry program has been offered at diverse journalism conferences throughout the U.S. which include UNITY, the National Association of Black Journalists, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the Asian American Journalists Association and the Native American Journalists Association. The poetry program invites participants to write, read and perform their works, in an effort to further the art of poetry.

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As an added feature to this year's program, the Chrysler Group donated \$10,000 to the NABJ Scholarship Fund to further opportunities for future journalists.