



POZ Contributor Mark S. King Named LGBTQ Journalist of the Year

My Fabulous Disease also garnered NLGJA's Excellence in Blogging honor.

June 26, 2020 By [Mark S. King](#)

"I'm just a guy with HIV and a keyboard," I often say. It's meant as a pithy remark, sure, but it also feels like I'm somehow diminishing my power, and I won't do that right now.

Today, the [National Lesbian and Gay Journalist Association \(NLGJA\)](#) announced the winners of their 2020 Excellence in Journalism awards. "The highest individual awards, Journalist of the Year and [Sarah Pettit Memorial Award](#) for the LGBTQ Journalist of the Year, have been awarded to [Oscar Lopez](#) and Mark S. King, respectively," according to [NLGJA's press release](#).

My Fabulous Disease also garnered NLGJA's Excellence in Blogging honor, its third win since the category was instituted in 2014. A full list of honorees can be found on [the NLGJA website](#).

I'm thrilled with this recognition and equally proud of my voice as a person living with HIV. Our stories are crucial to the LGBTQ tapestry and to the world at large.

If you are living with HIV, you have a story. It deserves to be heard, in whatever form or platform you can find. Writing, art, spoken word, it all matters. And, because the HIV arena is by definition a social justice space, we must all find ways to amplify the voices of Black men and women living with HIV or otherwise involved as allies. I renew my invitation to any Black writer in the HIV arena [to contact me](#) if you would like to reach my blog audience to share a message.

"Every word Mark writes or edits is a testament to our community," said one judge, according to NLGJA. "He's been a long-standing witness to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and deeply deserving of this award."

When I began writing in the 1980s about living with HIV, it was out of pure necessity and a cosmic

bargain of sorts. Writing was my way of processing the horror around me, in the darkest years, and part of my karmic campaign to do some good before [I died of AIDS](#).

LGBT newspapers carried my work, like *Frontiers Newsmagazine* and *The Washington Blade*. In those days, I was a columnist. Years later, I would be renamed a blogger because my words appeared online. Today, NLGJA named me as a journalist. Call me whatever you like. All I know is I like to make my point in about 800 words.

[Oriol Gutierrez](#) and the entire team of POZ Magazine ([Jennifer](#), [Ian](#), [Trenton](#), [Ben](#), et al) have become my closest literary DNA match, and every opportunity to contribute to POZ is a high water mark. For that matter, I appreciate the mutual support of so many editors in HIV-focused media. They're my literary family, and include [Jeff Berry](#) and [Rick Guasco](#) at Positively Aware, [David Artavia](#) at *The Advocate*, [Diane Anderson-Minshal](#) at PLUS Magazine, and [Chael Needle](#) at A&U.

If this were the Oscars, the band would have played me off several paragraphs ago.

Be well, my friends. Speak up and out. Know your worth. Wear your mask.

Mark

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