

2010

**LEGAL AID
LAWYER**
OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Do you know a
legal aid lawyer who
deserves a medal?



NOMINATION FORM

The Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards are now into their eighth year and are a unique celebration of the invaluable work done by solicitors, barristers, legal executives, and other advisers working in the publicly-funded sector. They are organised by the Legal Aid Practitioners Group on behalf of the profession. The awards are non-profit-making and are only possible because of the generous support of our sponsors.

Principal sponsor



The Law Society

The Law Society is delighted to be the principal sponsor of the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards. The Society campaigns vigorously for legal aid lawyers. A sustained campaign on best value tendering persuaded the Ministry of Justice against proceeding with potentially damaging proposals. Work on the new contracts and tendering rounds has secured significant improvements, and lobbying on new family fees proposals has resulted in a much more favourable advocacy scheme for solicitors. The Society understands the fundamental importance of legal aid to a modern democratic society and, in a time of public spending cuts, is doing all it can to protect the interests of legal aid lawyers and clients.

www.lawsociety.org.uk

Sponsors of individual awards

MENTAL HEALTH LAWYER

ALLEN & OVERY Allen & Overy LLP is an international legal practice with over 5,500 staff, including some 500 partners, working in 29 major centres worldwide. A&O is proud to be associated with the LALY awards which support legal aid lawyers who make a real difference to the lives of many vulnerable members of society. We are committed to pro bono and community work and we view such activities as central to our values. We congratulate the winner and commend all lawyers involved with the provision of legal aid work.

www.allenoverly.com

LEGAL AID BARRISTER



The Bar Council is the professional body which represents and, through the independent Bar Standards Board, regulates barristers. The Bar provides vital advocacy and advisory services. The Bar Council fully supports the need for legal aid in providing essential access to justice for all who need it and congratulates those practitioners who work tirelessly to provide this essential public service. It is delighted to be sponsoring these awards once again.

www.barcouncil.org.uk

CRIMINAL DEFENCE LAWYER



The Criminal Law Solicitors Association is a proud voice of representation for solicitor members and associate members alike, in all areas of criminal law. Whether it be on changes to the law, legal process or legal aid, the association is a respected and influential consultee and contributor and is proud to be associated with the awards. www.clsa.co.uk

YOUNG LEGAL AID BARRISTER



Irwin Mitchell has over 90 years of facilitating access to justice – originally in Sheffield and now additionally in 8 other offices in England, Scotland and Spain. Reputedly the only one of the very large firms still to have a legal aid practice, Irwin Mitchell remains committed to publicly funded legal work (and pro bono) and is delighted to sponsor the LALY award for Young Legal Aid Barrister of the Year.

www.irwinmitchell.com

YOUNG LEGAL AID SOLICITOR



The Legal Services Commission is proud to sponsor the Young Solicitor of the Year Award. The LSC is committed to supporting the training of new legal aid solicitors. We have already invested nearly £18m in the next generation of legal aid solicitors, supporting the development of over 700 new solicitors. This year, over 100 training contract grants will be available to organisations who are committed to legal aid work, enabling more aspiring lawyers to make a real difference to people's lives.

www.legalservices.gov.uk

IMMIGRATION LAWYER



The legal profession represents an important component of the UK economy contributing over 7% of annual GDP. The Royal Bank of Scotland Group, of which NatWest is a member, has a long and proud history as a banker to the legal sector supporting banking relationships with in excess of one third of the law firms operating in the UK. NatWest is delighted to be working in partnership with the LAPG in recognising performance excellence across all lawyers involved in legal aid. www.natwest.com

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT



Manches' work in commercial, private client and family law brings us into contact with people from all walks of life, but we never lose sight of the fact that not everyone has the financial resources to get all the legal support they need. It falls to the often unrecognised dedication of legal aid lawyers to provide this support and we are delighted to sponsor the 2010 LALY Outstanding Achievement award. www.manches.com

LEGAL AID FIRM /NOT-FOR-PROFIT AGENCY



Matrix is pleased to once again be sponsoring the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards. We have a longstanding commitment to public interest and publicly-funded work and we celebrate the efforts that law firms make in this important field. Their

work is crucial in protecting the rights of the vulnerable and often undervalued groups in society. Matrix is delighted this year to be sponsoring the Legal Aid Firm/ Not-for-profit Agency award. www.matrixlaw.co.uk

FAMILY LEGAL AID LAWYER



Resolution's 5,500 members are family lawyers committed to the non-adversarial resolution of family disputes. Resolution solicitors abide by a code of practice which emphasises a constructive approach to family problems and encourages solutions that take into account the needs of the whole family, and the best interests of any children in particular. At least half Resolution's members undertake legal aid work and their firms make up the vast majority of family legal aid lawyers. www.resolution.org.uk

SOCIAL AND WELFARE LAWYER



Trimega Laboratories is an award winning ISO 17025

accredited laboratory that routinely tests for drugs and alcohol. As well as regulatory bodies, police and professionals such as commercial aviation, its clients include social services, family law practitioners and tests ordered directly from the court. In supporting the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards, Trimega hopes to draw wider attention to the influence that hair tests have in cases where dependency is an issue.

www.trimegalabs.co.uk

Media partner



The Legal Action Group is a self-financing educational charity which aims to provide greater knowledge of the law through its programme of publications and training for lawyers and advisors. LAG also undertakes policy research on access to justice issues particularly the public funding of legal services. We do not represent providers of legal aid, but are primarily concerned that the public has access to good quality publicly-funded legal services.

www.lag.org.uk

ORGANISER



The Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards are organised by Legal Aid Practitioners Group. LAPG is the leading membership organisation for lawyers working under Legal Services Commission contracts. We provide a range of services for members including monthly newswires, courses and support on legal aid issues. We are at the forefront of discussions with the LSC and government over the future of legal aid. We believe in a system of publicly-funded law that enables all the vulnerable in society to protect and enforce their rights. LAPG has worked closely with Young Legal Aid Lawyers in setting up and running the All Party Parliamentary Group on Legal Aid.

www.lapg.co.uk

Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards 2010

Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards 2010

Nomination form

Please complete and return to Carol Storer, Director, Legal Aid Practitioners Group, 242 Pentonville Road, London N1 9UN; email: Carol.Storer@lapg.co.uk by **Monday 12 April 2010**.

See Guidance, below, and www.lapg.co.uk for more details about what to include in your nomination.

Additional forms are available from the website

Nominee's name: _____

Nominee's organisation name and address: _____

Nominee's phone number: _____ Nominee's email address: _____

Category (tick as appropriate): Entrants can be nominated in more than one category

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Defence Lawyer | <input type="checkbox"/> Social and Welfare Lawyer ³ | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Legal Aid Solicitor ² |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Legal Aid Lawyer | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Lawyer | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Aid Barrister |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration Lawyer | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Legal Aid Barrister ² |

Nominated by: _____

Name: _____

Organisation name and address: _____

Phone number: _____ Email: _____

What type of legal aid work does the nominee conduct? _____

Reasons for nomination: _____

How has this person/organisation demonstrated exceptional commitment to their clients and publicly-funded work?

(continue on separate sheet) _____

We welcome supporting documentation. Please list additional material below: _____

Guidance

- 1 With the exception of the Barrister and Young Barrister categories, nominees must work in a private practice solicitors' firm, law centre, or solicitor agency which has a specialist level contract with the Legal Services Commission. Solicitors, legal executives, employed barristers and paralegals are all eligible.
- 2 Nominees for the Young Solicitor award must be trainee solicitors working under a current training contract, or must be no more than 3 years' qualified on 1 May 2010. Nominees for Young Barrister must be of no more than 7 years' call on 1 May 2010.
- 3 The Social and Welfare category includes all legally-aided fields that are not covered separately.
- 4 Individuals may not nominate themselves, although an organisation may make a nomination on its own behalf for the Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency award. Where possible, one person should be identified at the lead nominator, that the organisers can contact for further information or clarification if needed, with supporting statements from others who wish to support the nomination, rather than supplemental nominations. Other documentation in support should be provided where possible.
- 5 Non-lawyers may nominate people for awards but, ideally, the nomination should be made or supported by a professional (ie, solicitor, barrister, judge, tribunal member). Nominations from outside the nominee's organisation are not essential, but external nominations/supporting statements are likely to carry more weight with the judges. We welcome supporting statements from clients.
- 6 Membership of LAPG is not required either to nominate someone or to be a nominee.
- 7 The judging panel has the right to nominate anyone who meets the criteria and will be solely responsible for awarding the Outstanding Achievement award.
- 8 Nominations must include a statement setting out the reasons for the nomination, and the name and details of the person making the nomination. The statement may be set out on the nomination form or on a separate sheet.
- 9 The decision of the director of LAPG as to whether to accept a nomination as valid is final.
- 10 Nominations will be acknowledged to the person identified as making the lead nomination. Those making the shortlist will be informed asap after the judging meeting in May 2010. It will not be possible to contact those who do not make the shortlist.
- 11 The closing date for nominations is Monday 12 April 2010. Send to Carol Storer, Director, LAPG, 242 Pentonville Road, London N1 9UN email: Carol.Storer@lapg.co.uk; fax: 020 7183 2270



'He works hard to fight for those who would not otherwise have a voice'

'You made all this bearable. It was an honour to have met you'

'It is not an elite firm – but it provides its clients, without exception, with an elite service'

'...a thirst for righting injustice'

'In 25 years of working in criminal law, I have never witnessed such single-minded devotion and commitment'

'He saved my sight by getting me the drugs I needed. He was very nice to me while being tough with the NHS – Fantastic!'

Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards 2010

The Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards are unique. They are the only awards organised by the grassroots legal aid profession for the grassroots legal aid profession. The Legal Aid Practitioners Group (LAPG) launched the LALYs in 2003 to celebrate the vital but unsung work of publicly-funded lawyers. These lawyers are not the fat cats of tabloid myths; they are not the famous names of high-profile trials. They are the dedicated professionals who commit their professional lives to improving the lot of the poor and the marginalised, without looking for substantial financial reward or public recognition.

We are seeking nominations in 9 categories:

Criminal Defence Lawyer – sponsored by Criminal Law Solicitors Association

Family Legal Aid Lawyer – sponsored by Resolution

Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-profit Agency – sponsored by Matrix

Legal Aid Barrister – sponsored by Bar Council

Social and Welfare Lawyer – sponsored by Trimega Labs

Mental Health Lawyer – sponsored by Allen & Overy

Immigration Lawyer – sponsored by NatWest

Young Legal Aid Solicitor – sponsored by Legal Services Commission

Young Legal Aid Barrister – sponsored by Irwin Mitchell

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Outstanding Achievement – sponsored by Manches

The judges will also be making an award for Outstanding Achievement

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Closing date for nominations: Monday 12 April 2010

Shortlisted candidates will be notified by early May and invited to the ceremony on Wednesday 26 May 2010 in London, where the winners will be announced.

From previous years' nominations...

“Rebuilding my career and my life will be much easier thanks to the money she helped me win and the confidence she has given me. I can never thank her enough”

“She is the perfect example of a legal aid lawyer and clearly only happy with providing a superior service”

“This period of my life was a very emotional time for me and my family, and she helped us to overcome it and also fought our battle until it had been successful”

“I can only say that if my child were under threat of removal then I know whom I would choose to instruct. I would have to hope that she could just squeeze in another client. She usually does”

“A tireless champion of and fighter for some of the most vulnerable and demanding clients imaginable”

“I was made to feel like an equal in a room of professionals. She treated me with respect; her professionalism was reassuringly blended with genuine concern”

“As a result of his hard work, this testimony comes from a proud, confident and grateful individual, who has secured permanent accommodation, which has allowed me to secure a full time job and the ability to carry out my resettlement plans”