

Winners of African Legal Awards

This year's winners of the African Legal Awards were announced at a function hosted by Legal Week (organisers of The British Legal Awards) in association with the Corporate Lawyers Association of South Africa (CLASA) at The Wanderers Club in Johannesburg on 16 October 2015.

Of the 23 winners, Baker & McKenzie, Anjarwalla & Khanna and the South African Reserve Bank scored top positions.

Bakers beat off competition from a host of leading firms, including Allen & Overy, Norton Rose Fulbright and White & Case, to be named International Law Firm of the Year. It also secured the Banking, Finance and Restructuring Team of the Year category and was joint winner of the CSR Award for its work on a range of projects, including the provision of training for the Tanzanian Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau.

Anjarwalla was named African Law Firm of the Year in the large firm category after the judges praised it for being the 'beating heart' of the Africa Legal Network (ALN), an alliance of independent firms set up by Anjarwalla in 2004.

Highly commended in this category was Linklaters' South Africa alliance partner, Webber Wentzel, which also won Litigation and Dispute Resolution Team of the Year. This was awarded to Odette Geldenhuys for the case of University of Stellenbosch Legal Aid Clinic and 15 others v Minister of Justice and Correctional Services and 17 others.

A strong showing for South African firms saw Bowman Gilfillan win the IP and Competition and Regulatory awards, while ENSafrica was named Employment Law Team of the Year.

Top Ghanaian firm AB & David received two awards: African Law Firm of the Year (Small Practice); and the Diversity, Transformation and Economic Empowerment Award. "This is an African firm that is truly committed to quality and has shown ability to consistently deliver legal services that meet client expectations," said the judges.

The Innovation Award went to Barefoot Law, a not-for-profit group, for a project to use new media to provide legal advice to isolated communities in Uganda.

Alongside Bakers, the international firms to receive awards were DLA Piper, which secured the TMT award fresh from launching its first African office in Casablanca, Hogan Lovells (property, and transportation and infrastructure) and Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer (M&A).

The event culminated in the presentation of the CLASA Achievement Award to Honourable Judge Dikgang Moseneke, Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa.

A major feature of the awards is the credibility of the judging process - an independent adjudicating panel made up of general counsel and other senior members of the legal community decides the winners. Judging criteria included legal expertise and innovation, project management skills, teamwork and client satisfaction. This year's judging panel, chaired by CLASA chief executive Alison Lee, included Shibishi Maruatona, general counsel of Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa and Vinodh Jaichand, head of the school of law at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Winners

- Corporate Lawyers Association of South Africa (CLASA) Achievement Award - The Honourable Judge Dikgang Moseneke
- International Law Firm of the Year - Baker & McKenzie
- African Law Firm of the Year - Large Practice - Anjarwalla & Khanna
- African Law Firm of the Year - Small Practice - AB & David
- General Counsel of the Year - Pieter Badenhorst - AFGRI
- Legal Department of the Year - Large Team - South African Reserve Bank
- Legal Department of the Year - Small Team - Life Healthcare Group
- Legal Counsel of the Year - Jonathan Maphosa - South African Reserve Bank
- Assistant/Associate Solicitor of the Year - Ghassan Sader, Hogan Lovells
- Innovation Award - Barefoot Law
- CSR Award - AFGRI; Baker & McKenzie
- Diversity, Transformation and Economic Empowerment Award - AB & David
- M&A Team of the Year - Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer
- Banking, Finance and Restructuring Team of the Year - Baker & McKenzie
- Competition and Regulatory Team of the Year - Bowman Gilfillan Africa Group
- Litigation and Dispute Resolution Team of the Year - Webber Wentzel
- Environmental, Energy and Natural Resources Team of the Year - Chadbourne & Parke
- TMT Team of the Year - DLA Piper
- Employment Law Team of the Year - ENSafrica
- IP Team of the Year - Bowman Gilfillan Africa Group
- Transportation and Infrastructure Team of the Year - Hogan Lovells
- Property and Construction Team of the Year - Hogan Lovells

For more information, go to www.africanlegalawards.com.

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