

SPECIAL FEATURE

DIVERSITY LEGAL AWARDS HONOUR TRAILBLAZER GINA MILLER



(Clockwise)
ALL SMILES: Gina Miller, pictured with Amanda Pinto QC, Chair Elect of the Bar and Dr Shaun Wallace.
GOOD TO TALK: Paulette Mastin, Counsel at Linklaters
TOGETHER: Attendees at the event.

THE EAGERLY awaited 10th anniversary UK Diversity Legal Awards took place on November 28 at the prestigious Leonardo Royal Hotel in St Paul's, London.

These are the only industry awards which focus solely on recognising and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across the legal profession. Showcased this year was an impressive line-up of finalists representing a broad spectrum of diversity, including gender, ethnicity, social mobility, mental health/wellbeing and access to justice.

PERFORMANCES

Over 350 guests attended the event, which was presented by barrister and TV personality (ITV's *The Chase*) Dr Shaun Wallace. There were also stand-out performances from the classical violinist and cellist duo, Braimah and Mariatu Kanneh-Mason, and soulful singer/songwriter, Amahla.

Highlights from the glittering ceremony included the triple win by Duncan Lewis Solicitors in the categories of BSN Rising Star (Ahmed Aydeed), Law Firm Diversity & Inclusion Initiative of the Year and Access to Justice.

Their success is attributed to the firm's demonstrable commitment, as the largest provider of legal aid services in the UK, to providing access to justice for the most vulnerable and

marginalised members of society in the UK.

INSPIRATIONAL

Other wins on the night included Jacqueline McKenzie (McKenzie Beute & Pope) in the Small Law Firm award category. An immigration and asylum specialist, Jacqueline works tirelessly to serve and assist people in the community who cannot afford legal

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services.

A founder of Windrush Action, she has helped and supported hundreds affected by the Windrush saga through pro bono surgeries and immigration status filings. A thoroughly deserving win for Jacqueline on the night.

Of the many inspirational highlights of the ceremony, the one that stood out was the presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award to the trail-



blazing icon, Gina Miller.

Miller - business leader, campaigner and change maker - has paid a huge personal price for the pursuit of justice and to uphold the rule of law, which is the cornerstone of existence for lawyers in this country. For all that and more, Gina was recognised and celebrated as the worthy winner of the BSN's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Paulette Mastin, chair of the Black Solicitors Network (BSN) and awards host had this to say about the event: "Our 10th anniversary awards ceremony was a celebration of excellence in equality, diversity and inclusion across the legal profession. The work and achievements of the winners this year truly inspire us and others in the profession to follow their lead in driv-

ing positive change".

Event sponsors were: LexisNexis, Linklaters, Thomson Reuters and the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

For a list of all the 2019 finalists, those highly commended and winners, please visit www.diversitylegalawards.org.