

## LEGAL AID LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

This year the prestigious Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year (LALY) awards mark the Silver Jubilee of the Legal Aid Practitioners Group (LAPG), which organises the event, and 60 years since the inception of legal aid.

# LAPG Silver Jubilee Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards

Legal aid's Oscars® were presented by Cherie Booth QC at a ceremony held in central London last month. Speaking at the ceremony, Cherie Booth said: 'Legal aid is under threat at the moment. It is a big problem for the people in our country who need access to justice.' She also expressed concern about government plans to introduce best value tendering for criminal defence work.

This year, to mark LAPG's Silver Jubilee, rather than making awards in individual categories of law, there were five awards for Outstanding Achievement to recognise legal aid practitioners who have made an exceptional contribution to access to justice over the life of the legal aid scheme, which celebrates its 60th anniversary. The event's compère was former BBC radio presenter John Howard.

### The LALY judges were:

- Fiona Bawdon (freelance legal affairs journalist and LALY co-ordinator);
- Cherie Booth QC (Matrix Chambers);
- Rob Brown (partner, Corker Binning);
- Yvonne Brown (principal, Legal Management Consulting);
- Sara Chandler (associate professor, College of Law);
- Richard Charlton (chairperson, Mental Health Lawyers Association);
- David Emmerson (partner, Edwards Duthie);



### David Gray Solicitors

Newcastle upon Tyne

The firm has provided a wide range of the highest quality legal aid services to its local community for 30 years. One of the firm's clients said: 'Words cannot express how much your help and belief has meant to us. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts ...'

- Wesley Gryk (senior partner, Wesley Gryk Solicitors LLP);
- Mr Justice Andrew McFarlane QC;
- Roy Morgan (chairperson, LAPG);
- Stephen Orchard (former chief

executive, Legal Services Commission); and

- Felicity Williams (barrister, 6 King's Bench Walk).



**Edward Fitzgerald CBE QC**

Doughty Street Chambers, London

Edward acted for the Gurkhas in their recent legal battle against the British government. The LALY judges said that it was hard to think of another lawyer of his generation who has worked so selflessly and successfully to protect the rights of the weak and dispossessed.



**Michael Burdett**

HCL Hanne & Co, London

Michael has been a criminal defence solicitor for almost 45 years. Michael was instrumental in setting up the court and police station duty solicitor schemes. One LALY judge said: 'He has worked locally and nationally to establish, administer and improve court and police duty schemes and has served on any number of committees.' Michael was for several years a member of Legal Action Group's (LAG's) board of trustees.



**Angela Jackman**

Fisher Meredith, London

Angela spearheaded the development of education law to ensure justice for many disadvantaged children. A LALY judge said: 'It is rare to find a lawyer dedicated and committed to seeking excellence in the field of education law but Angela's legal skills shine brightly in this area of the law where few reach the limelight.' Angela is co-author of regular 'Recent developments in education law' articles in *Legal Action* and a former trainer for LAG.



**Young Legal Aid Lawyers**

Young Legal Aid Lawyers (YLAL) is a group of young solicitors and barristers committed to publicly funded work whose drive and enthusiasm has helped reinvigorate the entire legal aid profession. 'The drive and enthusiasm of YLAL is remarkable and stimulating for us all,' said a LALY judge.

The LALYs are non-profit-making and are only possible because of the generous financial support of organisations which share LAPG's commitment to access to justice for all. The sponsors this year were:

- Allen & Overy
- Bindmans LLP
- The Criminal Law Solicitors' Association
- The Law Society
- Legal Action* (media partner)
- The Legal Services Commission
- Matrix Chambers
- Resolution
- Trimega Laboratories Limited

- [www.allenoverly.com](http://www.allenoverly.com)
- [www.bindmans.com](http://www.bindmans.com)
- [www.clsa.co.uk](http://www.clsa.co.uk)

- [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)
- [www.lag.org.uk](http://www.lag.org.uk)
- [www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk)
- [www.matrixlaw.co.uk](http://www.matrixlaw.co.uk)
- [www.resolution.org.uk](http://www.resolution.org.uk)
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