

2014 African Legal Awards winners announced

Eversheds, Linklaters' alliance firm, Webber Wentzel, and GE were among the big winners at this year's African Legal Awards. Eversheds was named International Law Firm of the Year, also securing the litigation and dispute resolution team award.



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Webber Wentzel was named African Law Firm of the Year, with the Linklaters alliance firm also walking away with two other gongs: the team awards for banking, finance and restructuring and transportation and infrastructure.

Meanwhile, GE's Africa legal team, led by GE Africa general counsel Bruce Campbell, won the Legal Department of the Year (large team) category.

George Bizos awarded

The night saw a total of 18 awards handed out, including prizes for seven practice areas. The event also saw the presentation of the CLASA Achievement Award to the leading South African human rights lawyer George Bizos, who spent a lifetime campaigning against apartheid and was part of the legal team that represented former South African President Nelson Mandela at his 1964 trial.

Bizos, who received a standing ovation from the 250-strong gathering, praised the South African legal profession for the role it played bringing about the end of apartheid and heralded the subsequent constitution for "upholding the fundamental rights of ordinary people".

He added: "Some of my fellow South Africans say that nothing has changed - they are quite wrong."

Bowman Gilfillan was another of the night's big winners, carrying off three awards. The firm won the coveted M&A team of the year prize - for its work advising on Marriott International's acquisition of the Protea Hospitality Group in a £115m deal - as well as awards for competition and regulatory team of the year and for its CSR project, which saw it set up a network helping fledgling businesses and black entrepreneurship.

Kurt Drieselmann, group legal officer for Aspen Pharmacare, was named general counsel of the year, while Anglo-American's Bridget van der Bijl took the legal counsel of the year prize.

The legal team AFGRI won the in-house award for small teams. The South African agriculture company also took the innovation award after establishing the continent's first regionally integrated commodity exchange outside of South Africa.

The awards was hosted in Joburg on Friday, 31 October, by Legal Week in association with the Corporate Lawyers Association of South Africa (CLASA).

2014 African Legal Awards winners

Corporate Lawyers Association of South Africa (CLASA) Achievement Award - Sponsored by ENSafrica

Advocate George Bizos

International Law Firm of the Year - Sponsored by Chadwick Nott



Eversheds

African Law Firm of the Year

Webber Wentzel

General Counsel of the Year - Sponsored by Eversheds

Kurt Drieselmann, Aspen Pharmacare

Legal Department of the Year - large team - Sponsored by Eversheds

GE Africa

Legal Department of the Year - small team - Sponsored by Whipping the Cat

AFGRI

Legal Counsel of the Year - Sponsored by Maponya

Bridget van der Bijl, Anglo American

Innovation Award - Sponsored by LexisNexis

AFGRI

CSR Award

Bowman Gilfillan

Diversity Initiative of the Year

LEX Africa Exchange Programme, Werksmans

M&A Team of the Year - Sponsored by without prejudice

Bowman Gilfillan

Banking, Finance and Restructuring Team of the Year

Webber Wentzel

Competition and Regulatory Team of the Year

Bowman Gilfillan

Litigation and Dispute Resolution Team of the Year

Eversheds

Energy and Natural Resources Team of the Year

Bracewell & Giuliani

TMT Team of the Year

ENSAfrica

Commercial Team of the Year

Herbert Smith Freehills

Property and Construction Team of the Year

DLA Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr

Transportation and Infrastructure Team of the Year

Webber Wentzel

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