

WINNER

Maura McGowan QC

2 Bedford Row

Assured handling of Bar Council chair role

Throughout 2013 McGowan QC impressed opponents and peers alike with her astute handling of the role of chair of the Bar Council during one of the most turbulent periods in the profession's history, where she championed the Bar's cause with an acutely pitched campaign.

During the year, she was faced with fundamental and emotive issues, such as wrangles over new standard contract terms at the start of the year before fighting the Ministry of Justice's controversial proposals to slice £220m off the £1.2bn annual criminal legal aid budget and proposing price competitive tendering (PCT). She was particularly emphatic on PCT, clearly stating: 'These proposals would move us from having a justice system which is admired all over the world, to a system where price trumps all'. After listening to the voices of discontent from practitioners, the MoJ scrapped plans for PCT in September.

Methodical and assured, McGowan will go down as one of the most effective and popular Bar Council presidents in recent memory.



(L-R) 2 Bedford Row's Maura McGowan QC with Beverly Landais of Saunderson House

HIGHLY COMMENDED

LORD GOLDSMITH QC

Debevoise & Plimpton

Former Attorney General Goldsmith QC has succeeded in putting Debevoise's London disputes practice firmly on the map during the last six years, handling some difficult and important cases himself in the process. This includes successfully challenging the legality of the arrest and search warrant issued by the Serious Fraud Office against Vincent Tchenguiz as well as acting pro bono in a Belize Supreme Court action challenging the criminalisation of homosexuality in the country.

JULIA ONSLOW-COLE

PricewaterhouseCoopers Legal

Onslow-Cole is one of the UK's foremost immigration law experts and regularly consults

the Government on policy changes. During the Algerian hostage crisis last year, she played a notable role in leveraging her global relationships with senior government officials to ensure the safe return of more than 400 highly distressed employees of clients caught up in the situation.

ROBERT WEIR QC

Devereux Chambers

Weir QC is singled out for his work representing relatives of soldiers killed in Iraq seeking to recover damages from the MoD in negligence for failing to provide adequate equipment. The Supreme Court ruled that the Human Rights Act applies to soldiers wherever in the world they may be and refused to strike out any of the families' claims for breach of Article 2 of the act and for negligence.

FIONA WOOLF

CMS

In addition to more than 40 years as one of the country's leading regulatory lawyers, Woolf has capped an extremely full career – which includes five years working at the European Commission, a CBE and a tenure as a well-regarded Law Society president – by becoming only the second woman ever to become Lord Mayor of the City of London – yet another remarkable achievement.

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“I have the highest regard for their professionalism and would happily recommend them to any potential client, however exacting.”

Partner – City law firm

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