

2023 African Legal Award winners

By  Shan Raddiffe

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The winners of the 10th annual African Legal Awards were announced at a gala ceremony emceed by popular comedian and television presenter, Sivuyile 'SiV' Ngesi, at the Hilton Sandton on Friday, 1 September 2023.



Image: [African Legal Awards](#)

Hosted by Law.com International, in partnership with the Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa (CCASA) and Africa Legal, the awards seek to honour the industry's brilliant talent across the continent, engaging more of a pan-African audience each year.

This year's prestigious judging panel was made up of a collection of corporate and independent legal minds: Gary Berndt - independent legal consultant; Bertrand Delpont - SSA | BT's Global; Gail Evans - Steinmüller Africa; Nastacea Faber - Empact Group; Sonia Guerra - HKA; Yolandi Jukes - JD Group; Alison Lee - Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa; Lusani Nelufule-Mugivhi - Discovery Health Medical Scheme; Sandy Oberholzer - independent legal consultant; Karen Pinheiro - independent legal consultant; Shivani Singh - independent legal consultant; Mark Spinner - MV Spinner Incorporated; Ben Smit - BJS Alliance (Pty); Jaco Theunissen - ACTOM; and Lameez Vania - Reckitt Benckiser.

This year, the awards were broken up into three main categories: In-House Awards; Private Practice Awards; and Awards Open To All.

In the In-House category, Sappi SA was named the best small team legal department, while Takealot won for best large team legal department.

Webber Wentzel was the most decorated private practice of the evening with a total of five awards, which included ESG Initiative of the Year Award for the third consecutive year. This award is for the pro bono advice the firm is providing to the Minerals Council of South Africa's Partnership to tackle gender-based violence in mining communities. In their comments, the judges noted that "Webber Wentzel is the continent's driver in ESG".

Said Christo Els, Webber Wentzel senior partner and chair, "Congratulations to Tobia Serongoane, our very own trailblazer, for winning the Private Practice Most Promising Newcomer Award. This award highlights the work done by Tobia on prominent cases, as well as his assistance to a large mining company in conducting an ESG risk assessment of its mining operation in sub-Saharan Africa and for contributing to the wider community by offering pro bono assistance as an Advisory Board Member for various NGOs."



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Other firms that all won two awards each were Aluko & Oyeboode, Allen & Overy, G. Elias, DLA Piper Africa, as well as Olaniwun Ajayi, which took the coveted African Law Firm of the Year award.

Bowmans also took home two awards, which included East African Partner of the Year for Paras Shah, while Dreny & Partners' Sherine El Menyawy and Imane Raouf were named Private Practice Rising Star and North African Partner of the Year respectively.

Other special awards were the Robert Legh Excellence in Leadership, won by Isobel Boaten from AB David, with Professor David McQuoid-Mason winning this year's Lifetime Achievement Award.

See the full list of award winners below:

In-House Awards

Category	Winner
Legal Department of the Year - Small Team	Sappi Southern Africa
Legal Department of the Year - Large Team	Takealot Group
General Counsel of the Year	Hermien Uys, Vedanta Zinc International
In-House Rising Star Award	Songezo Maqubela, Mining Qualifications Authority
Risk & Compliance Department of the Year	Storage Technology Services trading as Nexio
Lifetime Achievement Award	Professor David McQuoid-Mason

Private Practice Awards

Category	Winner
Competition and Regulatory Team of the Year	Webber Wentzel
M&A Team of the Year	Bowmans
Banking & Finance Team of the Year	Aluko & Oyeboode
Capital Markets Team of the Year - Medium Sized Firm	Bentsi-Enchill, Letsa & Ankomah

Capital Markets Team of the Year - Large Firm	Fasken
Employment Law Team of the Year	Webber Wentzel
IP Team of the Year	Adams and Adams
Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Team of the Year	Allen & Overy
Litigation and Dispute Resolution Team of the Year	TripleOKLaw Advocates
Property and Construction Team of the Year	G. Elias
Restructuring Team of the Year	Allen & Overy
Specialist Law Firm of the Year	LNP Attorneys Inc.
TMT Team of the Year	Covington
Private Equity Team of the Year	Aluko & Oyeboade
Transportation and Infrastructure Team of the Year	Webber Wentzel
Private Practice Most Promising Newcomer Award	Tobia Serongoane, Webber Wentzel
Private Practice Rising Star Award	Sherine El Menyawy, Dreny & Partners
Tax Team of the Year	G. Elias
African Network/Alliance of the Year	LEX Africa
East African Partner of the Year	Paras Shah, Bowmans
East African Law Firm of the Year (Medium Sized)	Africa Law Partners
East African Law Firm of the Year (Large Sized)	DLAPiper Africa
North African Partner of the Year	Imane Raouf, Dreny & Partners
North African Law Firm of the Year	DLAPiper Africa
Southern Africa Partner of the Year	Lerisha Naidu, Baker McKenzie
Southern African Law Firm of the Year (Medium Sized)	Mulenga Mundashi Legal Practitioners
Southern African Law Firm of the Year (Large Sized)	Norton Rose Fulbright
West African Partner of the Year	Nana Ama Botchway, N.Dowuona and Company
West African Law Firm of the Year (Medium Sized)	Thiam & Associés
West African Law Firm of the Year (Large Firm)	Olaniwun Ajayi
International Law Firm of the Year	Clifford Chance
Robert Legh Excellence in Leadership	Isobel Boaten, AB David
African Law Firm of the Year	Olaniwun Ajayi
Lifetime Achievement Award	Professor David McQuoid-Mason

Awards Open To All

Category	Winner
Best Use of Technology	Sheria Kiganjani Company Limited
Innovation Award	Afriwise
ESG Initiative of the Year	Webber Wentzel
CSR, Diversity, Transformation and Economic Empowerment Award	Lawtons Africa

ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

Shan Radcliffe is the editor of Bizcommunity HR, Education and Legal.

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