



Per Asbjorn Nielsen, Danske Bank; John Glynn, President DSBA; Colin Duignan, Danske Bank



Miriam O'Callaghan, Nora Owens

# DANSKE BANK 2013 IRISH LAW AWARDS

IN WHAT HAS NOW BECOME AKIN TO THE OSCARS FOR THE LEGAL PROFESSION, PARCHMENT EDITOR **JOHN GEARY** ATTENDED THE LAVISH AND GLITZY CEREMONY WHICH HONoured THE GREAT AND THE GOOD OF THE PROFESSION

**A**lthough only in its second year, the *Irish Law Awards* has nailed its place in the annual legal calendar with more and more law firms and practitioners now competing for the coveted prizes.

The Four Seasons Hotel, Ballsbridge was the venue for the prize-giving ceremony on May 3rd last where broadcaster Miriam O'Callaghan took centre stage as host and compere.

The awards recognised excellence within the legal profession in Ireland through 22 various categories. They provide an opportunity for those working at the forefront of the law to be recognised alongside their European and international peers.

The ceremony commenced with an opening address by Minister for Justice, Mr Alan Shatter, TD who paid tribute to the legal individuals, teams and firms who have

made an outstanding contribution to Irish law in the year.

The winners in each of the 22 categories were selected from a distinguished group of nominations from more than 100 practices across the country by an esteemed adjudication panel headed by chairman, Dr Eamonn G Hall.

Children's rights advocate Geoffrey Shannon was awarded a *Special Merit Award* for his contribution to Public Interest Law. I had the privilege of being a law student of Geoffrey's at the DIT in the late 1990s and I cannot think of a more worthy recipient of this award. A solicitor and senior lecturer in family and child law at the Law Society of Ireland, Geoffrey regularly provides the Children's Rights Alliance with invaluable pro-bono advice and support, and his commitment to children and their rights is truly outstanding.

The prestigious *Lifetime Achievement Award* went to solicitor Rory O'Donnell

who has worked as a lawyer for more than 50 years since founding one of the country's premier law firms, Eversheds (formerly O'Donnell Sweeney).

Mr O'Donnell was a council member of the Law Society of Ireland for two decades during which time he helped countless solicitors and those training for the profession. Director General of the Law Society Ken Murphy provided an excellent tribute to the man simply known as 'Rory'.

One of the most sought-after awards of the day was *Law Firm of the Year*, sponsored by Danske Bank. The winner of this pinnacle award was Mason Hayes & Curran who demonstrated exceptional achievements in 2012 offering high-quality legal services with an impressive depth of expertise within the firm. Managing partner Emer Gilvarry received the award on behalf of everyone at the firm.

Notably absentees from this year's awards were the categories of *Senior Counsel of*





Mary Grogan, Richard Grogan, Lorraine Eagers, Richard Grogan & Associates



Aisling McGowan, Roger Murray, Anna Maria Toolan, Callan Tansey, Sligo



Conor McKenna, Catherine Ghent, Denise Reynolds, Aidan Reynolds



Suzanne Rossney, Maura Smyth, Thomson Reuters



Michael Lavelle, Vanessa Lynch, Kantar Media



Deirdre Waldron, Edel O'Connell, Fuzion PR



Suzanne Stevenson, Diane Donegan, Aishling Branagan, Sabina Horgan

#### *the Year and Junior Counsel of the Year.*

Apparently there wasn't an appetite from our colleagues at the Law Library to single out or honour individuals at this year's awards ceremony.

Additional winners of note included Hughes and Associates in Dublin who were named *Sole Practitioner Law Firm of the Year* despite very tough competition. This award acknowledges a firm of solicitors headed by a sole practitioner; some of the qualities required for this award are impressive services and communication with clients as well as the local community.

Also among the recipients was the Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC) which was awarded in the *Pro Bono and Public Interest* category. This independent human rights' organisation is dedicated to the concept of equal access to justice to all.

The Law Awards are now very much part of the annual legal diary and interest in future years is only set to rise.



Jenny Robertson, Tina Noonan, Susan McLoughlin, Joan O'Mahony, O'Mahony Solicitors