

Sole Trader of the Year



Jayne sets precedent for success

When Jayne Adams looks back to when she started as a lawyer almost 35 years ago, she recognises a “huge” difference in the treatment of women. Back then, there was no support in place for new mothers coming back to work or flexible working policies, while finding a woman who had passed the bar was a rarity.

The twin pressures of work and raising a family meant that the self-employed barrister only recently submitted the lengthy application required to become a Queen’s Counsel and she took silk in January this year.

Mum-of-three Jayne, believed to be the only female QC practising from chambers in the East Midlands, said: “The difference between now and 35 years ago is huge – it’s really difficult to describe what a totally demanding environment it was back then but it really has changed.

“There was no maternity leave and no vision for flexible working. You worked absolutely full-time, flat-out at the bar.

“I worked until two days before I had my eldest son and was back doing paperwork after four weeks, which I wouldn’t advise anyone to do now.

“It’s an environment that wasn’t women-friendly so we had to deal with it in the same way as the men to succeed, but now it’s much more flexible and a profession in which women can excel.”

Jayne, 57, is based within Ropewalk Chambers, having joined in 1982, but only earns an income through the work she generates herself.

She specialises in industrial disease cases at civil courts and is one of the country’s leading practitioners in that field – as well as one of the only female QCs who works in that area.

In June, she was a key part of a team that unanimously won the Zurich Insurance PLC v Colin Hayward case in the Supreme Court, which has since been hailed as a landmark in the fight against fraud in personal injury claims.

After taking home the sole trader of the year award, Jayne said: “I was quite shocked because I don’t see myself as a businesswoman, but as a lawyer.

“But it’s great for women and I’m really pleased because this area of the law isn’t well represented by women.”

Jayne, who lives in the Vale of



Managing Director from Virtual Runner, Susan Wheatcroft (left) with winner, Jayne Adams, QC.

Belvoir, is also eager to point out that taking silk isn’t just the preserve of privately-educated, wealthy individuals with connections.

She added: “I was born in West Bromwich, was a first generation university student and knew no one who had done this job previously.

“Yet I still managed to do it and I’d like to highlight how you don’t have to be from a certain background to make it.”

Women in Construction



Maria hopes others will build great jobs in construction field

Maria Coulter was named the first winner of the women in construction Award for her business Construction Coach, which trains others in the industry. Alongside the digital ambassador accolade, the award was one of two new categories.

Maria said it was great to have regional awards to recognise the work of women in the industry.

She said: “I’m absolutely overwhelmed. I’m used to judging, not being in for an award.

“I was really excited when I saw that the Nottingham Post was doing this category because there is nothing regionally like this.

“It is great to get the

The 45-year-old, who lives in Leicestershire, said that one of the biggest challenges in the industry was women getting their voices heard, but admitted that it was getting better.

She added: “I hope the recognition will help promote the industry to young people, especially young girls.

“I want to get the message out to parents and teachers that there are some amazing and varied opportunities, so please look our way when it comes to careers options.

“I started my business two years ago and I have come from nowhere – who knows where I’ll be in another two.”

Maria has more than 20 years’ experience in the construction industry and set up her own business, Construction Coach, in 2014 after leaving construction consultancy firm Gleeds.

The company provides business coaching to individuals and organisations on performance, strategy, business planning and team building.

Maria also writes and delivers training courses to help businesses get the best out of their people.

She is currently working with the Chartered Institute of Building Academy – the body that represents construction management professionals – to write an online course for them on ethics, which is to be launched after Christmas.

She added: “I feel really passionately about the construction industry and making a difference, which I hope comes across.

“For me, I do what I can to attract the next generation into the industry so maybe this has been picked up on.”

Runners-up



Nicola Millward.

SECOND generation engineering consultant and managing director Nicola Millward has overseen a period of impressive growth at Millward Partnership, as the firm as double its turnover and tripled profits in four years.

Serving the civil, structural, geotechnical and highways industries, the business – which employs 15 staff – was established by Nicola’s father in 1993.

She joined the company in 2003 and took over the reins nine years later making it, she claims, the only civil and structural engineering consultancy in the region to be owned and run by a woman who is not an engineer.

Nicola did not take a trophy home but said she was flattered to be shortlisted. She added: “Within my industry, people know that I came into the world of construction with no technical skill and no contacts.

“Yet despite this, I have managed to build a business that today is successful and thriving.

“Everything that I have done though has been driven by quality and a desire to achieve very high standards, particularly when it comes to service.

“I am a woman who stands by her principles regardless of commercial impact.

“My approach to business is that I am here for the long haul. I love what I do and want to do it for a very long time.”

Gleeds’ Ann Bytheway-Thomas made up the final three in the Women in Construction category.

She said that the industry has a reputation for being male dominated but that the Awards provided a perfect platform for encouraging women to join.

She added: “I like to see myself as a bit of a trailblazer, someone other women can look up to.

“When I started at Gleeds, there really wasn’t many other women working in the industry and this has changed dramatically across the industry, but there’s still some way to go.”



Ann Bytheway-Thomas.

Runners-up



Sally Hilton.

GETTING the public fit was the goal for Sally Hilton when she started her business five years ago – and she has certainly made a difference with more and more people turning up to her classes.

In the past year alone, Buena Vida Fitness, in Sherwood, has grown its active membership from 122 to 400 people and the number of classes will almost double from 11 to 20 in 2017.

At the same time, the company, which runs Zumba, fit steps and clubbercise sessions, has doubled revenue and hired a small team of instructors.

Sally, 31, of Woodthorpe, said: “I feel that all the hard work and effort I’ve put into growing and developing the business has shown in my increase in revenue, high retention rates and very high membership conversion rates.

“My goal for the future is to become the number one provider in Nottingham for great value, inclusive health and fitness.

“I want to inspire as many people as possible to become healthier and more active long-term by bringing communities together and promoting social

interaction with fun and varied health and fitness sessions.”

Also in the business of activity is Leah Price, who has significantly grown her company Leah’s Dance Academy since opening in April 2000.

It has moved to bigger premises on three occasions and is currently based at The Eagleworks, in Carlton, where 15 classes in disciplines ranging from cheerleading and street dancing to freestyle and gymnastics are run for about 100 students.

Leah, 35, said: “Many would say being a dance teacher is not a ‘proper job’, being paid to dance around all day.

“What those doubters do not see is the hours and hours of unpaid work I do out of the studio in session planning, production, dress making, letter writing, organisation, music editing, chauffeuring, and choreography.

“Long term I hope to have built an empire to pass down to my daughters so that the academy will continue to teach and train my current pupils’ great, great grandchildren and their great-great grandchildren.

“Leah’s Dance Academy need not ever die.”



Leah Price

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Proud to have Sponsored the
Women in Construction Award

Congratulations to Maria Coulter

A great role model for women considering or embarking upon a career in construction

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