

WINNER

Withers

GILL DORAN; DIANA PARKER
Miller v Miller and S v S



L-R: Diana Parker and Gill Doran accept the Private Client award from Punter Southall's Julia Whittle

Chair of the firm Diana Parker and family department head Gill Doran have set the standard among private client practitioners. Put simply, Withers is involved in the best family law cases.

In 2005, Parker and her team successfully defended the wife's claim in *Miller v Miller* in the Court of Appeal. In 2006 it will be the first big money, short marriage case to go to the House of Lords since *White v White* defined divorce law in 2000.

Meanwhile, Doran and her team made new law in retaining 60% of the assets for the husband in *S v S*. It was the first post-*Lambert v Lambert* decision to allow exceptional contribution and justify an unequal division of assets. It was also the largest adjudicated decision post-*White*.

On a strategic level the firm is also streets ahead. The US merger in 2001 provided a platform for further office expansion; there was always Milan, but now also Geneva and Greenwich, Connecticut. Withers Worldwide won't stop there. In the near future there are plans for opening on the west coast of America and in Asia.

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Previous winners of this award have included: **CLINTONS** in 2005; **OGIER** in 2004; **MACFARLANES** in 2003.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

ALLEN & OVERY

Clare Maurice

Clare Maurice and her team, which includes senior associate Arabella Saker, completed a piece of work that would usually have taken six months in just four days. The client was facing the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in capital gains in his South American home country, from the disposal of some of his businesses. A crack-team of private client, corporate and tax specialists worked around the clock to ensure that a comprehensive tax plan was in place in time to avoid his potential financial exposure.

BERWIN LEIGHTON PAISNER

Ron Downhill; Jonathan Kropman

Berwin Leighton Paisner succeeded twice for its client. Not only did Ron Downhill's team manage to defer the tax on the gain that would have been triggered by the sale of their client's shares, but it also managed to reduce the rate of tax that would ultimately be payable. This twofold approach exemplifies the standard of technical trust and UK tax expertise that the firm has a reputation for delivering. It meant the team was able to restructure the private ownerships of a fully listed real estate Plc in the most tax-efficient way possible.

FORSTERS

Julian Washington

It's one thing to spot an opportunity, but another to really take advantage of it. Julian Washington and his team at Forsters have approached the new Civil Partnership Act with real tenacity. Needless to say, lawyers were trained in the intricacies of the new law. But over and above that, the firm ensured that existing clients in same-sex relationships were aware of the Act, it directly targeted referrers of business who didn't have private client expertise and it embarked on an impressive public relations campaign in the legal and mainstream press.

IRWIN MITCHELL

Colin Ettinger

Irwin Mitchell was one of the firms that volunteered to help the victims of the London bombings and their families pro bono. In total, Colin Ettinger's team, which included Keith Barrett and Megan Goodyer, managed to fast track claims to ensure that awards could be applied for as quickly as was necessary. The firm also leapt to action on additional work that included assisting bereaved families with claims on life insurance policies and helping with media demands put on known victims and ensuring anonymity for those who preferred not to be named in the press.

Legal Business Awards 2006

Private Client Team of the Year



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