

Inspirational Women in Law Awards 2021 puts a spotlight on Browne Jacobson lawyer and social mobility ambassador

Lynette Wieland, a health and social care advisory and inquests lawyer at Browne Jacobson, and a social mobility ambassador for The Law Society has won the 'Champion of the Year' award at this year's Next 100 Years Inspirational Women in Law Awards.

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The awards put a spotlight on trailblazers who are making positive change around equality in the legal profession and is part of the First 100 years project which was launched in 2014. The project celebrates the historical journey of women in the legal profession since the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 paved the way for women to become lawyers.

Lynette won the Champion of the Year award because of her commitment to driving change within the legal profession, working with a myriad of organisations externally to promote diversity and social mobility.

Internally, Lynette has also been pivotal in helping to steer Browne Jacobson's diversity and inclusion agenda over the last 12 months with a key role on the firm's Disability Network and the D&I group.

Earlier in the year she was named as one of the Law Society's social mobility ambassadors. The Law Society's social mobility ambassadors' scheme, which is made up of a small network of 13 UK based solicitors, promotes role models from non-traditional backgrounds who are committed to sharing their stories and raising the aspirations of students and graduates interested in joining the legal profession.

In addition to her social mobility ambassador appointment, Lynette is also a champion for Neurodiversity In Law, an organisational network whose purpose is to promote and support neurodiversity with the legal professions. Lynette who has dyslexia, dyscalculia and Meares-Irlen Syndrome (a visual stress condition which can lead to difficulties around reading and spatial awareness), regularly gives talks on neurodiversity.

Lynette generously shares her own non-traditional route into law and circumstances which meant that university and a career in law seemed an unlikely option for her, having left school without A Levels and living and working in a socially disadvantaged area. Lynette then took on an apprenticeship, working at a vocational training provider, where she became an advocate of learners studying through apprenticeships. She decided to pursue her passion and interest in the legal profession, successfully applying to the Law Society's Diversity Access Scheme (DAS) which provided both LPC funding and invaluable work experience opportunities. Lynette then secured an apprenticeship with Browne Jacobson in 2014 and secured a position as a paralegal in the Clinical Negligence team before qualifying as a lawyer in the Health Advisory and Inquests Team.

Lynette has various mentoring responsibilities externally through her involvement with the Law Society's Lawyers with Disabilities Division, as a Social Mobility Ambassador, and via the University of York's widening participation group. She regularly gives aspiring students advice on disability disclosure and how to access a career in law.

Lynette Wieland commented on her win:

"I am delighted to have been named as Champion of the Year. I was blown away by the inspirational work of the other finalists in this category, so to be included alongside them was a real honour in itself.

"Championing diversity and equality for people of all backgrounds is what I am passionate about. I would like to say thank you to all those I am lucky to have in my fantastic support network and to Browne Jacobson. They have been a cornerstone in supporting and striving towards a collective vision to create a more level playing field within the legal sector.

"I will continue to dedicate time and energy to breaking down barriers and, as an advocate, amplifying the voices of those with underrepresented characteristics around me. I also want to take the opportunity to thank Next 100 Years for being a powerful changemaker for women in law. I am immensely proud of the important work we are all doing!"

Senior partner, Caroline Green who also co-leads the firm's D&I group added:

"Lynette is a talented and well-respected female lawyer as well as an exemplary role model at the firm. Her inspiring journey into the legal profession and her passion for pushing for change and empowering aspiring solicitors from all walks of life to build self-confidence so that they can thrive and succeed in the profession are impressive. A true trailblazer, we are very pleased and proud that she has won this award."

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