

FIRST 100 YEARS



We are using this month's column to raise awareness of some exciting new initiatives from First 100 Years, the ambitious video history project celebrating women in the law, which Serjeants' Inn is privileged to support.

First 100 Years is showcasing the contribution of women to the legal profession over the five years leading up to the 2019 centenary of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, which paved the way for women to enter the profession.

To date over 20 video stories featuring women who have shaped the legal profession have been filmed. The list includes Baroness Brenda Hale, Dame Linda Dobbs, Shami Chakrabarti, former Simmons & Simmons senior partner Dame Janet Gaymer, and Rosemary Martin, general counsel at Vodafone. Videos can be viewed on the First 100 Years website at <http://first100years.org.uk/>.

In August, First 100 Years launched its Inspirational Women in Law Awards, which will identify and celebrate 10 female legal trailblazers who will provide an inspiration to the next generation of lawyers, driving change to ensure a strong and equal future for women in the profession.

The awards are truly inclusive; nominees have been sought from across the legal sector, including solicitors, barristers, in-house legal counsel, judges, magistrates and members of the IBC, CILEx, and the Institute of Paralegals.

The award winners, who must have been working as a legal professional for less than ten years, will feature in a special chapter celebrating the next generation of pioneers in the digital exhibition that First 100 Years is curating for the British Museum.

The first winners will be announced at the project's second annual conference, SPARK21, on Wednesday 9th November at Simmons & Simmons' offices in the City of London.

The conference will include a series of panel discussions chaired by BBC Woman's Hour's Dame Jenni Murray. If you, like us, are committed to diversity within the legal profession, we would urge you to attend. Full details are available on the website.

Serjeants' Inn is proud to work closely with First 100 Years: with both Bridget Dolan QC and Katie Gollop QC taking silk this year, it underlines our commitment to equality and diversity in tangible terms. We have supported the initiative not just financially but also in practical ways, for example by becoming involved in the organisation of many of their events. As Director of Client Care at Serjeants' Inn, I am delighted to be a Champion of the project and a trustee of Spark 21, the charity running the campaign. Please do contact me - or indeed the founder, Dana Denis-Smith - if you would like to support this excellent, inclusive project. ●

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