

# MT Access to the Bar Awards

by Masters David Bean and Andrew Hochhauser

Consider two hypothetical candidates for pupillage, both women (so that we don't have to keep writing "he or she") and with the same class of degree. A has spent her university vacations doing mini-pupillage, placements in solicitors' firms or voluntary organisations with a legal connection, or marshalling for High Court judges. B, meanwhile, was working in a shop or behind a bar.

*The awards will consist of one week's mini-pupillage in a set of chambers and one week sitting in court with a judge, each paid £250*

Anyone involved with the selection of pupils will have come across these two types of candidate. It is tempting to prefer A on the grounds that she has "shown an interest in the law" or "acquired relevant experience". But it is potentially unfair. A may have prosperous parents who live in Central London and subsidise their daughter's vacations. Perhaps one of them is a successful member of the legal profession who can arrange marshalling or mini-pupillages by picking up the phone.

B, on the other hand, has no such subsidy or networks. She needs to earn whatever she can in vacation to make ends meet. She may, for all you know, have greater potential than A. She is disadvantaged particularly by not having done mini-pupillages since they operate both to tell chambers about the mini-pupil and the other way round. Her choice of chambers to which to apply is likely to be less informed than A's.

The Bar has taken great strides in improving diversity in recent years, yet this is still a worrying gap, hence the new Middle Temple Access to the Bar awards. With the help of our Fellows and other academic members of the Inn at nine different universities or colleges of the University of London, the Inn has invited applications for awards from students who satisfy each of the following criteria: having achieved or being likely to achieve a first or good 2:1 degree; success in mooted or debating; references evidencing intellectual ability, strong communication skills and the motivation and determination to succeed at the Bar; secondary education in a state school; neither parent with professional qualifications; and little or no family history of higher education.

The awards will consist of one week's mini-pupillage in a set of chambers and one week sitting in court with a judge, each paid £250. To get the scheme started the two of us have provided sufficient funds for eight awards per year for five years. We hope that other Benchers and members of Hall will contribute, either in cash or by offering sponsored placements, to enable the Inn to expand the project in future years.

At a time of increasing financial hardship for many students we are keen not to lose sight of the great importance of diversity to the future health and strength of the profession. The sums involved are not enormous. We are confident that it will be money very well spent.

If you would like to know more about the Middle Temple Access to the Bar Awards, please contact Christa Richmond, Deputy Under Treasurer (Education), on 0207 427 4800 or [c.richmond@middletemple.org.uk](mailto:c.richmond@middletemple.org.uk).



**Mr Justice David Bean** was Called to the Bar and awarded an Astbury Scholarship in 1976. He was elected a Bencher in 2001 and the following year was Chairman of the Bar, before becoming a High Court judge (Queen's Bench Division) in 2004 and a Judicial Appointments Commissioner in 2010. He has been Chairman of the Inn's Education Committee since 2008.



A member of Essex Court Chambers, **Andrew Hochhauser QC** was Called to the Bar and awarded a Harmsworth Scholarship in 1977. He has been the Chairman of the Inn's Scholarships & Prizes Committee since 2008 and runs the Middle Temple Civil New Practitioners' Programme together with Master Colin Edelman.