

Wonder women

■ As Women in Property celebrates the winners of this year's student awards, it is already looking forward to the awards' 10th anniversary

For a select group, the Women in Property (WiP) National Student Awards represent a huge opportunity to get ahead of the game. At a stage when many undergraduates and students are only just contemplating life in the working world, a nomination can prove to be the slingshot that propels them into a plum job.

This year is no different, as the winner and finalists (detailed on these pages) will no doubt find. Property may still be a male-dominated profession, but, as John Forrester, chief executive - EMEA at Cushman & Wakefield (C&W), says, a WiP commendation can open doors that might otherwise remain closed. "The old-boy network died long ago," he says. "It's truly not who you know but who you meet and impress, because that network will then speak for you."

WiP launched the National Student Awards nationally in 2007 to mark the organisation's 20th anniversary. In the last nine years, more than 75 universities from across the UK have nominated 622 students, many of whom have gone on to successful careers

in some of the most prestigious companies working in the wider built environment industry.

Now, as WiP looks forward to its 10th student awards next year, the organisation will be looking back over the past decade to see what its nominees and award winners have been doing and where they are now.

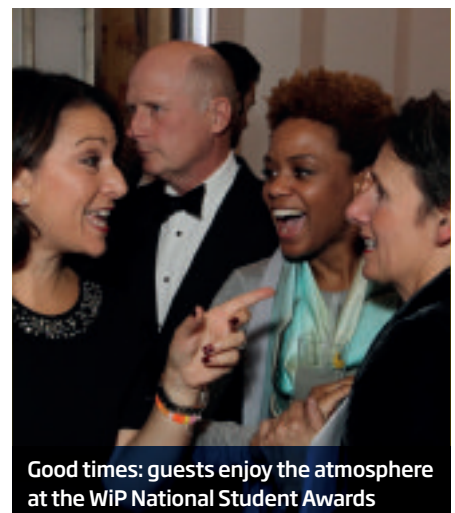
Lisa-Jane Risk, the incoming national chairman of WiP, says the organisation is hoping to find out how the awards gave students the extra push they needed in achieving success, whether in work placements during their university years or later as they entered the job market.

"Ten years on and we know many of 'our' students are making an impact on the industry, not only through their day jobs but by encouraging other young women to follow in their footsteps through volunteering in schools and universities and becoming the role models of the future," she says.

If you are a former WiP National Student Awards nominee or finalist, please get in touch with WiP. For more information see PropertyWeek.com ■



Highly commended Rhiannon Jones, right, with Cathy Stewart and Carole Ditty



Good times: guests enjoy the atmosphere at the WiP National Student Awards

THE WINNERS AND FINALISTS 2015

Overall winner

Angharad (Harri) John, studying real estate management at Oxford Brookes

John said: "I'm so pleased and amazed to have come away with the top award, particularly as I know how skilled and deserving my fellow contenders are. I'd like to thank my tutor for having faith in me, and the judges for their time and consideration in reaching their decision. I couldn't be happier."

The nine other 2015 finalists were: Central Scotland

Hannah Simpson, studying civil engineering at the University of the West of Scotland

Midlands

Maria Mensah, studying architectural engineering and design at Loughborough University

Northern Scotland

Julija Lebedinec, studying for a masters in

architecture at the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture

North West

Rachel James, studying architecture at the University of Liverpool

South East

- Niralee Carson, studying architecture at London Metropolitan University
- Lily Webb, studying for a masters in civil engineering at the University of Surrey

South West

- Victoria Godsen, studying landscape architecture at the University of Gloucestershire
- Megan Peeks, studying architecture and planning at the University of the West of England

Yorkshire & North East

Rebecca Brett, studying interior architecture and design at Leeds Beckett University



Pinsent Mason's Nell Shaw (centre), with Grainger's Tracey Hartley (left) and Michaela Hancock



Overall winner Angharad John from Oxford Brookes University (second from right), with John Forrester from C&W (left), Carole Ditty from Bouygues UK (second left) and David Corry from Turner & Townsend

Elsbeth Burrage, outgoing WiP national chairman, on the importance of diversity



The diversity agenda began in earnest in early 2014 with Open Plan, a *Property Week* initiative to improve the image of our industry. *Property Week's* Diversity Charter followed earlier this year, just as other campaigns such as the RICS' *Surveying the Future* were also taking off. We are delighted to be involved with this series of initiatives on the diversity platform.

These initiatives are a culmination of many years of effort by Fiona Alfred, our indomitable executive director, and Sandi Rhys Jones, our lead on mentoring and mid-career task force, who have been driving this agenda through channels both informally and formally - and definitely vocally.

There can be little doubt the initiative is needed. Among chief executives and chairmen of FTSE 100 companies, there are 17 men called John or Jean. Conversely, there are a total of seven female bosses. Men called David or Dave also outnumber women by 2:1.

Why should business care about the gender of board members? Because boards consisting of suitably experienced men and women can better guide companies. Thanks to cognitive diversity, brain structures and cultural expectations, men and women approach business differently, and their collaboration can lead to more informed decisions.

At another level, we are all aware that we have an enormous skills shortage and that we cannot ignore the research by EY in Australia, which said: "[The property industry] can linger in its current status as a male-dominated industry with a handful of women in executive leadership positions and gender diversity policies or programmes, or it can open the floodgates to greater profits and better returns for investors."

The skills shortage and the talent pipeline are two good reasons why we launched and continue to run our National Student Awards. The awards have been running for nine years, offering students the opportunity to get ahead of the game and, for the sponsors, that all-important moment when they find the talent ahead of their competitors. In my view, it's a no-brainer.



Making merry: Elspeth Burrage (left) and guests get into the spirit of the evening

