

South Africa's leading women honoured at 11th Annual Standard Bank Top Women Awards

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The moment we had all been waiting for, the nation's leading women in business and government reigned supreme at the 11th Annual Standard Bank Top Women Awards on Thursday, 14 August at Emperors Palace.



Kick starting the individual award category was the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award, which was proudly presented to Juby Mayet by the Awards' platinum sponsor, Standard Bank. Mayet was recognised for her outstanding contributions in advocating freedom of speech for women in South Africa as well as her role as a journalist for *Golden Post City* and *DRUM* magazine.

She paid tribute to fellow women who were imprisoned with her at Number Four and have not received public recognition for their strength and sacrifice as South African women. Mayet expressed that winning the Lifetime Achievement Award was in honour of them all.

Other headlining accolades in the individual category awards were the Top Young Female Entrepreneur of 2014 Award, proudly sponsored by Tumi, which was won by Recruit Group Founder and CEO Laura Reynolds.

"It is an absolute privilege not only to win, but just to be nominated in a category with such incredible business women," said Reynolds. "These women are leaders in their industry and it is most humbling to be announced as the winner. I am so proud of my team at Recruitgroup on what we have achieved together and I thank them for their hard work and dedication as well as all at Topco Media for hosting such a fantastic event."

Top Businesswoman of the Year Award won by Nonkululeko Gobodo. The award was proudly sponsored by Standard Bank, along with the Top Gender Empowered Company in the Financial Sector Award, swooped up by Gobodo's company, SizweNtsalubaGobodo.

"It is a huge honour being nominated for both these prestigious awards in the company of some of the country's greatest gender empowerment leaders and organisations," said Gobodo. "As a firm, we are deeply committed to building South Africa as a cohesive nation, and view job creation as a key lever to addressing the socio-economic imperatives of the country."

For the full winners' list, click [here](#).

Over 180 companies entered the awards this year, each demonstrating an excellent contribution towards gender inclusivity in the workplace. Winners were revealed not only based on the implementation of policies around gender empowerment, but by the degree of which entrants embodied gender equality at the core of their business practices.

Gunkel-Keuler explained how, as a judge at the awards, she was looking for leadership and excellence in what finalists are currently doing to put women at the forefront of their business practices. "It's not necessarily about awareness anymore, but more around implementation. What are the various companies doing to drive gender empowerment strategies within their own organisation? That is key for these awards," she said. "



Jayshree Naidoo, Specialist in Innovation Excellence at Standard Bank, was the keynote speaker for the evening, representing the platinum sponsor of the awards, Standard Bank. She noted the important personal experiences she gained from other leading women in her field, praising the awards for celebrating the nation's female role models.

Minister of Justice and Correctional Services Advocate Michael Matusha attended the Awards ceremony, advocating gender empowerment initiatives geared towards curbing corruption in South Africa. Deputy Minister for the Department of Small Business Development Elizabeth Thabethe was also in attendance, supporting the advancement of gender empowerment in small enterprises to better the economy as a whole.

Courtesy of SABC 3's esteemed magazine programme *Top Billing*, the seating arrangements have broadened to include the rest of the country, allowing an opportunity to witness the country's female role models be crowned champions.

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