

# LOCKE LORD DIVERSITY AWARENESS

April 2019: **First 100 Years of Women in UK Law**

This month we celebrate the 100-year anniversary of women lawyers in the UK. In 1919, the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act removed legal barriers for women to work as lawyers. For the first time, women in the UK could apply to the Law Society (to become solicitors) or to one of the four Inns of Court (Lincoln's Inn, Middle Temple, Inner Temple or Gray's Inn) to become barristers without fear of rejection based solely on the grounds of their sex.

We are proud to showcase just a few of these incredible women lawyer firsts paving the way for UK women lawyers.



**1888** - Eliza Orme was the first woman in the UK to earn a law degree at the University College London. By then she already was unofficially "practising" law out of an office in London's Chancery Lane, where she and a colleague prepared the paperwork for property transactions, patent registrations, wills, settlements and mortgages.



**1892** - Cornelia Sorabji was not only the first woman to graduate from Bombay University but also the first Indian national admitted for a postgraduate BCL degree at the Oxford University. She was the first female advocate in India and the first woman to practise law in India and Britain.



**1919** - Ada Summers was the first female magistrate, sworn in as the Justice of the Peace on 31st December 1919, just one week after the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act. She was also the first female councilor and mayor of Stalybridge.

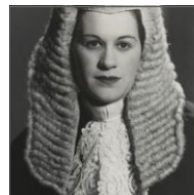


**1922** - Helena Normanton became the first woman to practise as a barrister in England. She was also the first married British woman to be issued a passport in her maiden name in 1924.

## Did You Know?

In 2018, due to a decades-long influx of junior women to the profession, the total number of women lawyers in the UK reached 50.1% of the practising certificate (PC) holders, and 48% of the solicitors in private practise.

Today, more than half of the judges under 40 in the UK are female and over the course of the last five years more women than men have been admitted to the profession.



**1949** - Rose Heilbron was a woman of many firsts. She was one of the two first women appointed to the King's Counsel at the English Bar in 1949 (at the age of only 34) and the first woman to lead an English murder case in 1950. In 1972, she became the first female judge to sit at the Old Bailey.



**1984** - Lady (now Baroness) Hale is a woman of outstanding achievements. In 1984, she was the first woman to be appointed to the Law Commission. She was also the first female to join the House of Lords as a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary in 2004. In 2009, she became the first woman Justice of the Supreme Court continuing to become the first woman President of the UK Supreme Court in 2017.

*The heart of Locke Lord lies within our people and the many different experiences and perspectives we share. We recognize, embrace and celebrate our differences and believe we can only provide our clients with the best possible representation if we reflect the diversity of the clients and communities we serve.*

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