

October 2017 - Winner of the EDUcatering Life Time Achievement Award

Our 2017 Lifetime winner has had a long and varied career, with many professional achievements, but they have also made many lasting impressions through their personal connections to people in our industry, making them a well-liked and respected individual.

Our winner began their career at the Acton Hotel School, now part of the University of West London, and moved into a trainee manager role at the Mount Royal Hotel in London, before moving into the public sector, working in local government restaurants and banqueting in St Albans, Coventry and Southend.

A career change then came about, selling prepared foods to colleges, prisons and hospitals – getting their first taste of working away from the day-to-day hustle and bustle of the kitchens. They then worked as director of flight catering at Trust House Forte, then managing director of airport services at Grandmet. But the days of airlines were over when they joined Aramark in 1983, where they won the catering contract for Wembley Stadium from a contractor that had held it for 57 years.

In 1986, this individual set up their own consultancy company where they helped to create Mediclean – now ISS – and Taylorplan (which became part of Sodexo).

The end of the decade saw this person begin their work with school meals, becoming administrator to LACA for many years. Their dedication to school catering has been witnessed first-hand by many colleagues in this room, always there to offer advice but there to challenge, too. At conferences and seminars, when it comes to the time for questions, our recipient can always be relied upon to ask searching questions and make the speaker sweat a bit!

While this is a Lifetime Achievement Award, implying our recipient is of a certain age, they are particularly au fait with technology and followers on Facebook and Twitter are witness to almost daily updates informing us of where this individual has been and made jealous of the numerous posts of the epicurean meals they have eaten. Along with images of a rather nice new red motor they have just taken receipt of!

Our individual likes a good meal out and likes nothing better than drinking champagne, even better when they get to sabrage; opening bottles of champagne with one thrust of a sword is their special skill!

Their personality and work ethic towards the hospitality sector hasn't gone unnoticed, with this person being awarded an MBE for their services to the catering industry. Outside of school meals, they are a restaurant ambassador for the Clink Charity, helping to set up the restaurant at High Down Prison and the roll-out of three other Clink prison restaurants. They are a member of the Institute of Hospitality and the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts.

Ladies & gentlemen, I am sure that many of you will have guessed already, and will be delighted that the winner of the EDUcatering Life Time Achievement Award 2017 is Vic Laws MBE.