



**Aberdeen &
Grampian
Chamber of
Commerce**

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Media Release

Pioneer of oil and gas engineering firm honoured at Northern Star Business Awards

A LEADING North-east entrepreneur who founded and built a hugely successful global asset management group has been honoured with a lifetime achievement award at tonight's Northern Star Business Awards for his outstanding contribution to the region.

Martin Gilbert, co-chief executive of Standard Life Aberdeen, received tributes from North-east business leaders Sir Ian Wood and Stewart Spence as well as US and European Ryder Cup captains Jim Furyk and Thomas Bjorn during the glittering black tie ceremony at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre.

Organised by Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce and now in their fifteenth year, the Northern Star Business Awards recognise companies in the North-east for their exceptional accomplishments across a range of fields from energy and innovation to people development, customer service and environmental action.

41 finalists joined the 600 guests at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre, all eager to find out who would lift the award in each of the 13 award categories.

Winner of one of the top awards on the evening was WM Donald Ltd which received the Business of the Year award. The company, which marked its 40th anniversary last year, has focused its successful strategy for growth on the pillars of diversification, education and innovation.

Building on a legacy of sea outfall, landfill and sewer construction, its core market has evolved and the company is now the contractor of choice for housing developers, working on a number of high profile projects which are integral to Aberdeen City Region's future. The approach also generated an 8% growth in its workforce and 26% increase in turnover to £34m during a period of significant economic challenge for the region.

Chief executive of the Chamber Russell Borthwick said: "We see a big part of our role being leading the celebration of our city region as a great place to live, work, study, invest and do business. Companies of all sizes, from all sectors and across the length and breadth of this fantastic region are renowned for their innovation and entrepreneurial spirit and these awards provide a great stage to

showcase and celebrate this. If we're not prepared to talk ourselves up, no-one else is going to do it for us.

"The Chamber congratulates the winners and finalists who have again raised the bar across a whole range of disciplines from exports and marketing to their commitment to staff development and impact on the community. We should draw inspiration from everything we saw and heard during these awards and redouble our efforts to create the economic conditions that will ensure the long-term success of the North-east."

The winners in the 14 categories were as follows:

- Lifetime Achievement (*sponsored by Dandara*)
 - Martin Gilbert, Standard Life Aberdeen
- Going Global (*sponsored by Aberdeen City Council*)
 - Bio Technics Ltd
- Marketing Magic(*sponsored by the Business Bulletin*)
 - Big Partnership
- Inspiration from Innovation (*sponsored by The Oil & Gas Technology Centre*)
 - Return To Scene Ltd
- Staff Matter (*sponsored by Thorpe Molloy*)
 - Phil Anderson Financial Services Ltd
- Customer First (*sponsored by Stewart Milne Group*)
 - Breakout Games Ltd
- Family Business (*sponsored by Aberdeenshire Council*)
 - Laings Bathrooms & Kitchens
- Making the Difference (*sponsored by Balmoral Group*)
 - Aberdeen Performing Arts
- Business of the Year (*sponsored by ScotRail*)
 - WM Donald Ltd
- Rising Star (*sponsored by University of Aberdeen Business School*)
 - Melanie Gilmour, Hall Morris Corporate Finance
- Student Placement (*sponsored by Robert Gordon University*)

- BW Offshore
- Eco Hero (*sponsored by Circular North-east*)
 - Grampian Housing Association
- Inspiring Futures (*sponsored by DYW North East Scotland*)
 - Glen Tanar and Aboyne Academy