**Moray Businesswoman in line for national awards success.**

Moray businesswoman Faith Simpson will be rubbing shoulders with Sir Richard Branson, Sir Tom Farmer and Michael McIntyre at a national awards ceremony in Edinburgh in May.

For the second year running Faith Simpson, founder and MD of Faith Simpson Accountants Ltd., has been shortlisted for the Scottish Business Awards’ Female Entrepreneur of the Year.

It has been a nerve-wracking wait for the Elgin entrepreneur, who was thrilled to have been nominated two years in succession, and who took inspiration from last year’s keynote speaker, former US President Bill Clinton.

Speaking about her nomination for this year, Faith said: ‘I was absolutely blown away when the panel contacted to say I’d been recommended again for nomination. And meeting Richard Branson will be the fulfilment of a life's ambition. I applied for a position with Virgin shortly before graduation so I might see if he still needs a good accountant!’

Faith has seen her accountancy practice expand to a portfolio of over 200 clients in just six years. She puts her success down to hard work, investment in staff development, and employing a jargon-busting attitude to finance. In a break from traditional accountancy firms, Simpson’s clients enjoy the flexibility of evening and weekend appointments, and she finds that increasingly they are taking advantage of the hands-on ‘financial director’ role she is now offering. Little wonder, then, that the majority of new business comes to the firm via word of mouth.

This flexible business model also suits the firm’s all-female workforce, which has expanded in number from four to six in the past year. All six employees are currently undergoing professional development in tax, further accountancy or management qualifications. The firm has recently expanded into a new hub in Fife in order to service clients in Scotland’s central belt, and is currently in negotiations for the purchase of a rival accountancy practice, which would immediately double the size of Faith Simpson Accountancy.

In 2013 Faith won Highland Business of the year and Moray Business Women’s Club Member of Achievement, as well as being shortlisted for two other national awards.

As President of Moray Businesswomen’s Club she doubled the club’s membership, attracted high calibre speakers in the form of First Minister Alec Salmond and Ali Smeaton (founder of Morphsuit) and introduced a mentoring scheme for new members, which has been so successful it has been replicated nationwide by the Association of Scottish Businesswomen. Under her presidency the club raised over £14 000 for Moray charities.

Expressing his delight at hearing of Faith’s nomination for the Scottish Business Award, Moray MP Angus Robertson praised her involvement with ex-military personnel, saying, ‘Her work following the closure of RAF Kinloss has helped to contribute to the recovery of the local area’.

 [ends]

**Notes to editors:**

1. The winners of the Scottish Business Awards will be announced in front of a crowd of 2000 entrepreneurs and business leaders at a ceremony in the Edinburgh International Conference Centre on 12th May. They keynote speaker will be one of Faith’s business idols, Sir Richard Branson, and the evening will be hosted by top British comedian Michael McIntyre. Sir Tom Hunter is chair of the judging panel.
2. Faith Simpson Accountants was established in Elgin, Moray in 2008. Website [www.faithsimpson.co.uk](http://www.faithsimpson.co.uk).

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Photograph attached.