



David Greene

Senior Partner of Edwin Coe was recently named Legal Personality of the Year 2017, recognising his 'outstanding public contribution' to the profession.

David describes 2017 as a really good year marked mainly by the Article 50 litigation but also by his challenge to the Conservative/DUP agreement for £1bn to be spent in Northern Ireland in return for voting support. He also recently started proceedings against Uber and HMRC in relation to their VAT position which now proceed in the FTT and is working on tax claims and claims arising from the trucks cartel.

David became the public face of the profession in the high-profile and politically charged Article 50 case, representing hairdresser Deir Dos Santos. The Dos Santos claim was the only issued application for judicial review until Gina Miller joined the fray. The case charted new territory in constitutional law and the relationship between parliament and government.

"It was absolutely fascinating" says David "When we started the litigation in early July 2016 we had no idea how big it was going to be or how the public and press would perceive it. It became a fulcrum of the whole Brexit debate with 'violent' reaction on both sides. I've never had to sit in court with bodyguards before. But it was the law and the constitutional questions which were the truly fascinating part of the process. For good or bad, a case like this comes along once in a lifetime."

Following the case David leads the Law Society's work on Brexit giving evidence throughout 2017 to the European and UK Parliaments and in discussions with European bars. "I may be a Remainer but we have to prepare to leave. We know the outcomes we want and we are working to achieve those ends. The trouble comes when they come up against the negotiating and realpolitik wall. The clock is ticking and securing what we want is becoming very difficult."

As part of his practice David has worked in Eastern and Southern Africa for 30 years and as a development of his work there David acts as a consultant to Aid Agencies, Donors and Governments on civil justice and human rights. "As well as allowing us to give something back to society, aided work broadens experience and allows us to have a dialogue with practitioners and governments in different circumstances on the issue of access to justice and the rule of law. It's important to leave at home certain attitudes and work with local policy makers on achievable change."

"I wanted to be a politician but the law took over and I've loved it."

David has worked for Edwin Coe in Lincoln's Inn, Holborn for over 40 years; 'man and boy', from articled clerk to senior partner. He is a long standing member of the old Holborn Law Society and now CWHLs. David is on the Council of the national Law Society and chairs one of the Law Society Boards and the International Committee. As a litigator David has always been involved heavily in the policy development of civil process and was on the original Woolf Committee and then the Civil Justice Council. He's worked on the Jackson reforms and writes and lectures on civil justice. He is consultant editor of the New Law Journal and has a regular column.

As to his practice David tells us that he has been very lucky and describes it as 'so far so good'.

David has pioneered the use of group actions in the UK since the 1988 Lockerbie bombing. As head of arguably the UK's leading collective action litigation firm, he has been the champion for the combined rights of disparate groups of claimants who might not have had the opportunity to see their cases get to court as individuals, as accessing justice via the courts still remains beyond the reach of the average person. "We seek to provide access to justice for individuals joining together to try to match the resources of Governments and multi nationals. It's not easy and the Jackson reforms have made it much harder but it's great to be able to practice as a claimant's lawyer and campaign for individual rights at the same time."

Since the Lockerbie Inquiry David has acted for many groups including sex workers, shareholders in Railtrack and Northern Rock, corner shop owners against the big supermarkets, CAMRA and pub tenants, SME's in relation to VAT import charges and South American flower growers suing British Airways for a cartel fraud. He's also litigated in many other jurisdictions including the CJEU and the ECHR.

"I've been lucky" repeats David "One may make one's own luck by putting yourself in the right place at the right time but the great thing about the life of the litigator is that you simply do not know what will come through the door."

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