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Just A Minute: Richard Grogan

This week employment law solicitor Richard Grogan of Richard Grogan & Associates Solicitors speaks to Irish Legal News for our regular Just A Minute feature.



Richard Grogan

ILN: What has been your best experience as a lawyer?

I will have to say there are more than one. The first is where colleagues believe, for whatever reason, that I am the person to approach for advice and then take the time to thank you for giving you that advice. Equally where colleagues send clients to me knowing that I am only going to act for that client in the particular case referred to me. This level of trust is humbling. I am a great believer that colleagues are there to help colleagues. I had that experience when I was both an apprentice solicitor, and I am showing my age now, and when I was newly qualified. There are still colleagues whom I can phone to bounce some idea off the wall with them. Equally satisfying is when a client takes the time to actually come and thank you for the service they have received. It may simply be a card but saying "Thank You" actually means an awful lot.

ILN: What has been your worst experience as a lawyer?

I suppose the worst experience was when another solicitor said that I was a disgrace to the profession because I represented a foreign national against Irish employers. I found that hurtful. I represent employers and employees. I make no distinction between people because of their race or nationality or any other ground. To me a client is a client. What most upset me was that there would be anybody in the profession who would believe that somebody regardless as to their race or nationality, creed, religion or otherwise would not get representation from a solicitor.

ILN: Why did you choose the law?

I chose law because my parents said I should go to University. I didn't choose Arts as I thought the only route was to become a teacher. I didn't choose Commerce because I thought that would mean that I would become an accountant and, at the time, I was not exactly top on the class when it came to maths. The last choice I had was law. Professor Hand was Professor of Law in UCD and was a friend of my father. He called to the house and started talking about law and started by saying in law there was a lot of history. I said I liked history. I do not remember much more of what he said and I admit that it was the third year in University before I worked out what the difference between a Solicitor and a Barrister was.

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ILN: Who or what has been the greatest professional influence in your life?

Apart from my parents who instilled certain values in me I would say that the greatest influences in my professional life was Laurence Cullen who was my Master who was a great believer in looking at legislation rather than commentaries or case law. I equally include Claire Connellan. I worked in PwC for a number of years and John Kelly and John Blake impressed upon me the importance of section and subsection when dealing with tax law and they encouraged me to write on tax law which has developed into writing on other areas of law.

ILN: What advice would you give to anyone considering a career in the law?

Law is not a Perry Mason profession. A career in law means finding an area of law which interests you. Looking to find an area that will pay the best will never be a successful for you as finding an area of law which interests you. Find an area of law that interests you. Get trained in that area by the best people you can. Learn from them. Never overestimate your own ability and never underestimate the ability of a colleague opposite you. Be tenacious in representing your client but always be available to assist a colleague, especially a colleague in need. At some stage you will need a favour and if you are known as one who assists others then you are more likely to get that favour.

ILN: What would you want to be if you were not a lawyer?

I have no idea what I would be if I was not a solicitor. I sort of fell into law. I found I liked it.

ILN: How do you relax after work?

Gardening, golf and spending time with my family but not necessarily in that order. To me golf is a religion. I am not great at it but I am certainly devout. Having a great wife and a son to share time with is probably the greatest gift I have.

ILN: What is your favourite holiday destination and why?

I have two. West Cork for its food, scenery and the fact that I can do uninterrupted gardening and have access to some very nice golf courses. The second will be Cascais in Portugal again because of great food and fantastic golf courses. Give me a golf course, a place with good food and not to long of flight, or no flight, as I hate flying, and I am happy.

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