



60-SECONDS WITH:

CONSTANCE MCDONNELL QC BARRISTER SERLE COURT



Q What do you like most about your job?

A At the heart of it is being able to help clients solve (or at least, resolve) their problems. That's ultimately what we are here for. It's an added bonus when there is a chance to develop or clarify the law.

Q What would you be doing if you weren't in this profession?

A I would love to have been an architect, creating something permanent and hopefully tasteful.

Q What's the strangest, most exciting thing you have done in your career?

A The strangest was finding myself appearing for the New Zealand government in the Privy Council on my first day in practice, collecting a judgment and trying to remember to bow in the right direction. Most exciting was opening the letter which announced that I was being appointed a QC.

Q What has been the best piece of advice you have been given in your career?

A "Preparation, preparation, preparation."

Q What is the most significant trend in your practice today?

A I have noticed more interest in trust and estate disputes being brought to a conclusion privately, whether by arbitration or private FDR. If this escalates, it will have a huge impact not only upon the costs and efficiency of resolving disputes, but also upon the development of case law in this practice area.

Q What personality trait do you most attribute to your success?

A Staying cool under pressure.

Q Who has been your biggest role model in the industry?

A My former pupil supervisor Sarah Asplin (as she then was), as an example of the women who made it at the Bar. I was inspired never to doubt that women barristers can and should be equally as successful as their male colleagues. Having that experience at the outset was invaluable.

Q What is something you think everyone should do at least once in their lives?

A Scuba dive, for a glimpse of a world we otherwise never get to see.

Q What is the one thing you could not live without?

A My husband and our two boys are Number One. My Nespresso machine is in second place.

Q What is a book you think everyone should read and why?

A Pride and Prejudice, not just because it's funny but because of the wonderfully precise way in which Jane Austen used English.

Q What would be your superpower and why?

A Indefatigability. I wish I had limitless energy.

Q What are you most looking forward to this year?

A Moving out of London and starting to restore the wreck of a house we bought last year in the countryside. It's a daunting prospect, but it will be worth every moment to be able to live in tranquil green space and to be able finally to get a dog.

