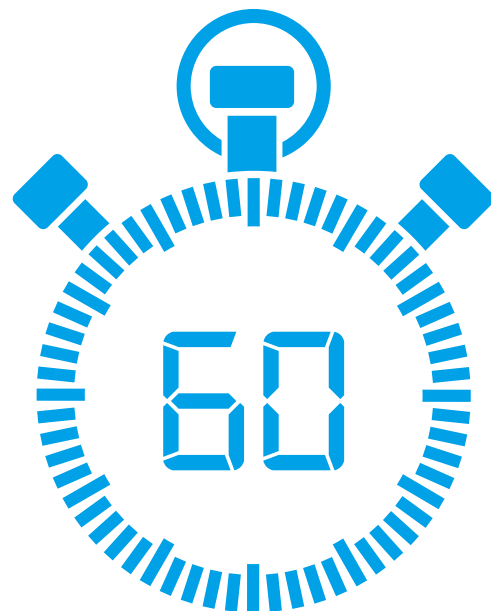


60-SECONDS WITH:

PROFESSOR
SUZANNE RAB
BARRISTER
SERLE COURT

Q Imagine you no longer have to work. How would you spend your weekdays?

A I would spend more time enjoying my passion for musical theatre. I am lucky to live near the West End, so theatre land is not too far away. But as an unfulfilled actress, I would like to get closer to the stage (that is to say, performing in more amateur shows!). Having more time for rehearsals would allow that.

Q What do you see as the most exciting thing about your job?

A Seeing my cases in the news and knowing that they can have a real impact on people's lives. I do not have a difficulty explaining to friends and family what I do because competition law is something we can all relate to. Competition law and regulation touch every sector of the economy. Whether it is the price we pay for groceries, the battery life on a mobile phone, or access to clean water, these are issues that make the world go round but can be highly controversial. I was first asked by the BBC to talk about a competition case on TV back in 2008 at the height of the financial crisis. That my practice area has such a direct link with the people and prosperity of a country, adds another level of excitement, purpose and reality.

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

A These relate to my rather niche space law and communications practice which can be strange and exciting all at the same time. I have not yet been to the Moon (it is on my bucket list) but I have experienced a vertical bed designed for astronauts while attending clients on location at a space centre. I have also discovered how to track down lost satellites with the help of experts.

Q What is the best life lesson you have learned?

A No-one is perfect or invincible and it is fine not to be. I have found that selectively revealing your imperfections and even vulnerabilities, makes you more human and more relatable. I am speaking as a recovering perfectionist and inspired by work for client Hewlett-Packard and Carly Fiorina's book *Perfect Enough*.

Q What is one important attribute that you think everyone should have?

A Emotional intelligence, the ability to recognise and manage your own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. It helps you build relationships and navigate difficult situations – in law, and life.

Q What film do you think everyone should watch, and why?

A *Matilda* (the 1996 film version). This is considered more a family film and there is much to like for adults. My favourite quote from Danny DeVito (also known as Mr Wormwood) is a clarion call to action for anyone with a problem: "I'm smart, you're dumb. I'm big, you're little. I'm right, you're wrong, and there's nothing you can do about it."

Q Dead or alive, which famous guests would you invite to a dinner party?

A I would assemble some of the best critical thinkers, from different times and places. #1 – Albert Einstein - if something looks wrong, then it's probably worth finding out why. #2 – Martin Luther King – the art of persuasion. #3 – Simone de Beauvoir - don't be afraid to think differently, even if that means challenging what other people think and assume.

Q What is the best novel of all time?

A E.M. Foster's *A Passage to India*. The novel is about an Indian doctor and his relationships with an English professor and a visiting English schoolteacher. It speaks to my own cultural heritage and mixed parentage. I think it can be considered an enduring work of great fiction beyond the specific setting where it shows friendship and connection between people despite political and cultural differences.

Q What legacy would you hope to leave behind?

A I would like to hope that people remember me not just for what I did but the values I stood for or tried to live. Many of my clients work in the public sector. They have taught me that skills and attributes often undervalued in other contexts are important: candour, judgement, balance, neutrality, patience, perspective, calmness, grace under fire, dignity, emotional intelligence. I would like to be remembered for at least one of those things.

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

A The growth in competition law collective actions in the Competition Appeal Tribunal (for non-competition lawyers, known as the "CAT"). Part of my motivation in transferring to the Bar from private practice as a solicitor in 2013 was the attraction of this newer area and where I felt that my skills as an advocate could be developed. Added momentum came with changes under the Consumer Rights Act 2015 allowing for opt-out collective actions covering an entire market. The growth has been considerable in the last two years and it is exciting to be part of this where in the middle of 2024 the average claim value is over £3.2 billion. Many small business claims currently pending would not have justified individual actions and many consumer to business claims would not have been brought at all, but for this regime.

Q Do you have any hidden talents?

A I am still looking. If descending a near-vertical surface by using a double-coiled rope counts as a talent, I have abseiled off a number of tall buildings. This includes Guy's Hospital Tower which remains one of the tallest buildings in London and is the world's fifth-tallest hospital building. Quite exhilarating and all in aid of charity.

Q What is one work related goal you would like to achieve in the next five years?

A I tend to have a plan for almost everything but for the next five years, I am aiming for doing more of the same after what has been some years of build-up. I transferred to the Bar just over 10 years ago after 15 years as a solicitor. This was already the fulfilment of a long-standing life ambition and inspired by my father. I knew him only for a short while but his encouragement that I would one day become a barrister proved strangely prophetic. He did quip that I would become the next female prime minister. That was said in 1979 so is no longer possible, even if I wanted to or had the skills. In the next five years I would like to see some of the pipeline collective damages cases I am working on deliver the benefits the regime set up to achieve. The life of these cases is measured in years, and some are not yet announced – watch this space!

