

## THE TIMES' LAWYER OF THE WEEK

### HOWARD EPSTEIN, WHO ACTED FOR QATARI EMBASSY EMPLOYEE

DEANNE KINGSON

NOVEMBER 28 2019, LINDA TSANG

Howard Epstein, a partner at McFaddens, acted for Deanne Kingson, 58, a personal assistant at the Qatari embassy in London. The central London employment tribunal awarded her £388,920 for suffering a campaign of sex and religious discrimination. The Qatari government was not represented at the tribunal.



Howard Epstein

#### WHAT WERE THE MAIN ISSUES?

The level of compensation for sexual harassment and religious discrimination suffered over eight years' employment. Had my client suffered the same abuse in four different jobs, she would have recovered substantially more. Perhaps a change in the law is required.

#### WHAT IS THE BEST DECISION YOU HAVE TAKEN AS A LAWYER?

To major on negotiating, whether matters are contentious or otherwise.

#### WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU?

Lord Denning for his determination to modernise the law, even if it meant having to stimulate parliament to do so. A striking example of intellectual ambition.

#### WHAT IS THE ODDEST THING THAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU?

Acting in regard to a strikebound ship with a consignment of avocado pears that my client needed offloading before they went bad. We lost our application in the morning and were before the Court of Appeal after lunch. Lord Denning refused the appeal on the basis that he had never encountered a ripe avocado.

#### WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED?

Parse every phrase of every key document.

#### WHICH THREE QUALITIES SHOULD A LAWYER HAVE?

Tenacity: sometimes you're in it for the long haul. Courtesy: especially in litigation matters. Humour: break the ice at the start of every meeting.

#### WHAT LAW WOULD YOU ENACT?

Tighten up section 10 of the Powers of Attorney Act 1971 — which is potentially a rogue's charter — with a system for having the execution of general powers of attorney verified by a solicitor of five years' standing or similar, approaching what they do in Canada, Australia and the US.

#### HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED?

For telling clients: "Every case gets settled. Sometimes the settlement is imposed by the judge." In the six disputes I failed to settle which, accordingly, went to trial, my clients prevailed.

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