

Q: Who is a historical woman that you admire?

A: Dorothy Hodgkin who was one of the first women to get a first-class chemistry degree from Cambridge and was the person who invented X-ray crystallography, a technique I used during my PhD. During which I discovered a new form of niobium disulfide and using some of the X-ray crystallography techniques that she pioneered.

She was quite a big proponent for social mobility, which has helped a number of women into science and into positions where they could achieve their potential. So I think she's quite inspirational.

And then Katherine Johnson the human calculator, was one of the women profiled in the movie Hidden Figures, a true story about black women working for NASA. There was so much discrimination against her and her colleagues but they were there on the front line to ensure the astronauts got to space and back safely. She had a purpose and was dedicated to achieving that. Parts of her story echo the stories my grandfather shared around his experiences coming from Antigua to Britain in the 1950s. Even after they had computers that could make the computations for the rockets, astronauts still wanted one of the human computers to check all the calculations manually. So I think overcoming that kind of social adversity, being in that position, doing that job and having the bandwidth to actually focus on the job with all of that going on around was pretty amazing.

Q: What do you love about your job?

A: There are two things that I think make this job quite special.

I would start with the people and the team at Deminor, as there is a genuine collegiate atmosphere here, without egos and where everyone is working together and pulling in the same direction, in what is quite a pressured and entrepreneurial environment.

Secondly, it's the role itself, in terms of the variation it brings me on a daily basis. For example, speaking to so many different lawyers across such a diverse number of jurisdictions and cultures, discussing different ideas, strategies, negotiations, approaches to the different is fascinating to me.

I think I'm quite lucky in both respects in terms of internally working with great people and externally having the opportunity to speak to great people every day and different people.

I think in the last three years, I've spoken to more lawyers than I have ever in my career in the previous seventeen years or so.




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In addition, seeing so much litigation strategy and then how we work internally in pairs, provides a sparring partner and often a completely different perspective on a case as everybody's so different. There is really good diversity in the team.

Also, I've not worked in an entrepreneurial environment before. It's interesting being involved in something that's moving so quickly and testing so many boundaries.

Maybe there are three things!

Q: What career achievement are you most proud of?

A: I think the things that I'm most proud of are probably some of my work at Spectris. I had a number of different paralegals who came in and got experience, alongside training with me and others in the team, later moving on to training contracts and now have successful careers.

At Spectris, at that time, there weren't that many in-house training contracts. We faced the question of how to train someone without the law firm infrastructure where you can easily just move around between departments. We also had to think about the type of training to emphasise to ensure people have a really good experience.

That was one of the great things that happened when I left Spectris, where my trainee qualified, was able to step into parts of my role.

So, you can see the continuity and can be part of helping people progress in law, which is fulfilling as it is such a competitive industry. There are really good and motivated people who aren't getting the opportunities and to be able to help a small selection of people to start that journey... I think those are things that, when I retire, I'll still be proud of.

Everybody does loads of cases, and there's fun stuff in every case. I've enjoyed working on cases, underwriting cases, assessing cases, putting in place processes and policy, training people at Spectris and managing litigation. Although, at the end of the day, those things are ongoing.

Whereas, when you can help somebody, help them develop by doing what you can within your skill set, and then you see them go on to become a lawyer, it's a different feeling then. I think you can somehow see your work continuing rather than the case being closed, and then you're done, on to the next case. And there's always a next case.





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Q: What does success mean to you?

A: I look at success as a series of micro successes; it's the little things that happen on a daily basis that give you daily joy (or pain) that define success for me. For example, being presented with a new issue or case, thinking about what to do and then working out ways to achieve that. That might be at work with a new case or deal to structure or outside work in working out room purpose and the best way to restructure a property in my house renovation hobby. And it's identifying the problem and then the sort of micro steps to solving that problem. And then, at the end of the day looking back and feeling proud that you've actually pushed to do that. I think over a career, and if I read my CV, I think, 'Oh yeah, I have done some quite cool things', but it's those small individual achievements which are most meaningful and motivating to me.

Q: What's a small thing everyone can do to embrace equity?

A: This is the question that I found the hardest to answer, but I think it's approaching everyone at the same level, with the same level of respect.

Everybody has a skill set, and being able to appreciate that it may be different from yours is important. It may not be useful in whatever you're doing, but they have skills in other places and trying to really recognise the value in other people rather than just you.

I think that if everybody just approached each other on the same level and looked at the skills and strengths of the person regardless of who they are and what their potential is, then we would all end up in the right places.

People would play to their strengths and end up in a place where they're happy and actually making the most of their unique skills wherever they are.

