COLLAS CRILL

60 seconds with... Cerisse Fisher

FEBRUARY 2024

This article was first published in issue 16 of TL4 HNW Divorce Magazine.

Get to know Private Client and Trusts Group Partner Cerisse Fisher in 60 seconds...

Q: Why did you choose a career path in the legal industry?

CF: Whilst I'd have loved to have had a "creative" profession (in the artistic/design sense) I realised fairly early on that my strength lies more in the written word. A couple of visits to the Old Bailey to watch some live proceedings and some experience at a local solicitors alongside a healthy dose of Ally McBeal and This Life cemented my interest

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

CF: Private client practice should always be all about looking after your client and their particular interests. Whether that client is an ultra-high-net-worth (UHNW) individual with a large structure to maintain or a local family looking to plan for future generations, each client's circumstances and needs are different and relevant. One size does not fit all, so it's about applying the law to work for them and steering them through their specific problems in the most helpful, clear and efficient way.

Q: What motivates you most about your work?

CF: It does and always has interested me, every day. The trust and fiduciary world is a diverse and broad practice area. The human element makes things wonderfully complicated, emotive and a constant learning curve.

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

CF: To be more involved in helping others rise in their careers. I have a lot of gratitude for others around me that have helped me along the way, whether they've known it or not. Unless you are a naturally astounding and inspiring person (which I have never been accused of) being a role model and making a difference is, I think, something you have to consciously make time to do.

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

CF: To keep a healthy perspective. Lawyers tend to be naturally driven, hardworking, competitive and don't want to accept failure. This easily leads to work overtaking life in all other respects. Yes; it's so important to succeed for our clients and for ourselves. But stepping back and - (cliché) not sweating the small stuff - helps us win in the healthiest way possible.

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

CF: Not a new trend, but an on-going issue to navigate in the offshore trust world is disclosure/transparency, and the continuing criticism of the offshore world in general. There are some great proponents for the offshore trust industry and lots of organisations and industry bodies who ensure what we do is well regulated and that the best standards are upheld. It takes a lot of work and commitment from everyone in the industry but the intermittent bad press will continue (often politically motivated, of course).

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

CF: There are lots of well-known legal professionals who inspire me, but really, I don’t know how they do what they do. So it's those people around me in practice over the last 20 years that I've looked to and learnt from, to see exactly how they do what they do and why it works.

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

CF: In life? Listening. In the legal profession? Giving clear and practical advice. Something that is helpful to the client, rather than just a display of technical prowess.

Q: What cause are you passionate about?

CF: No one particular cause, but I try to do what I can to support those people who dedicate their time to the innumerable causes that affect the world around us. With busy work and family lives, it's easy to make addressing causes someone else's problem and responsibility. Like most people, I could do more.

Q: Where has been your favourite holiday destination and why?

CF: I've been fortunate enough to have had a few fantastic holidays over the years, but my favourite is and has always been my family's home in Southern Spain. I've been holidaying there since a young child and now take my own children there; it's full of very happy memories and a place to make lots of new ones.

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Q: Dead or alive, which famous person would you most like to have dinner with, and why?

CF: My celebrity dinner party guests (in no particular order) would be: David Attenborough, Alan Partridge, Michelle Obama, Frida Kahlo, Margot Fonteyn, Stevie Nicks. Oh, and Ally McBeal obviously.

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