

HELEN MCCARTHY

What is your job title?

Barrister

What route of education and qualification did you take to get to your now chosen career position?

I studied Law in UCD graduating with a Bachelor's in Civil Law in 2003. I then attended the King's Inns between 2003-2005 where I obtained a Barrister at Law Degree. I was called to the Bar in 2005 and have been practicing for 15 years.

Why did you choose this career?

I always did well in school and got good exam results. I hoped that I would get good points in my Leaving Cert and had no interest in Medicine, Veterinary etc. so I aimed for Law as it was one of the top points and I thought it would be a good career.

I did some work experience in a Solicitor's office in Transition Year and it was interesting. I also did work experience in Clery's Department Store as I was interested in fashion or something creative as an alternative.

What is a typical work day like?

I specialise in Property Law and my work-day can vary greatly. My days depend on whether I am in Court or doing Opinion or drafting work in the office. I may also have consultations with Solicitors and Clients depending on the day or case I am involved in.

How long is your work day?

Again, the length of my day will vary. If it is an office day with nothing urgent it will be typically 9am-5pm. If I am involved in an urgent matter and preparing for Court the next day I will also be working at night. The Courts close for vacations at Christmas, Easter and the Long Vacation for August and September. When the Courts are closed my days are easier and more predictable.

How much variety is there in your work?

There is huge variety in my work in terms of office and court. I also have a variety of clients and would be dealing with different issues and situations depending on the case I am briefed in.

What do you love about your job?

The flexibility that it gives me and sense of achievement when I can solve a problem for someone.

What is the best career decision you have ever made?

To concentrate on the area of law that I was interested in and stick with it.

What is the worst career decision you have ever made?

To allow people to use my time and not insist on being paid.

What do you read?

I love to read novels and always read the newspaper.

What do you think are the secrets behind getting to where you have got to?

Perseverance and hard work. I also think that it is important to find your own voice and be authentic. Ultimately that will bring you the most success.

Would you recommend your career choice to others?

Yes, it is a very fulfilling career and the flexibility has allowed me to create a good work/life balance.