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Lawyer of the Week: Louisa Ghevaert

Linda Tsang

Louisa Ghevaert, a partner at Gamble & Ghevaert, acted for Melanie and Robert Gladwin in a case that won a last-minute change to the law in Parliament, extending the time limit for storing frozen embryos used in surrogate pregnancies from five to ten years.

What were the main challenges in this case and the implications?

The law relating to embryo storage is immensely complex. Robert and Melanie (who stored embryos after she was found to have cancer six years ago) ended up on the wrong side simply because they had stored their embryos a few months too soon to benefit from rules coming into force today that would have given them 55 years' storage.

We helped them to persuade the Healthy Secretary to make a special order in Parliament extending the storage term from five to ten years. We are continuing to work with the Department of Health to ensure that they will benefit from the new laws giving them full extended storage.

What was your worst day as a lawyer?

Being involved in a minor accident with a lorry on the M25 as a trainee solicitor in my first seat while driving to court to sit behind counsel. Needless to say, I arrived at court somewhat dishevelled and shaken.

What was your most memorable experience as a lawyer?

Launching the UK's first specialist fertility law practice this year. Also, receiving baby photos from clients we have helped to become parents — it makes my day every time . . .

Who has been the most influential person in your life and why?

My business partner and friend, Natalie Gamble, whose pioneering fertility law work and unwavering support has been an inspiration not only to me but to so many others as well.

If you had not become a lawyer, what would you have chosen and why?

Work involving foreign travel, perhaps in marketing. Alternatively a professional handbag shopper!

Why did you become a lawyer?

To make a difference to people's lives at a personal level and to offer hope and support at times when they need to make critical legal decisions about their families.

What would your advice be to anyone wanting a career in law?

Be prepared to think creatively and go that extra mile.

Where do you see yourself in ten years?

Continuing to spearhead a thriving and dynamic firm in this fascinating and cutting-edge area of law, which helps people to manage intensely personal legal issues and to improve the law to meet the challenges posed by assisted conception and more complex 21st-century family relationships.

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