



Jonathan Nicholls

Interest in the law comes full circle

We hear from our latest addition to the education team, Dr Jonathan Nicholls. He provides insights into what it's like to join a law firm as a 'non-lawyer', what makes him tick and career moments he is most proud of.

What sparked the decision to change industry at this stage in your career?

I have always loved the law. It was the career I nearly entered into before being seduced by the charms of literature and medieval history. It feels like I've come full circle and have managed to fulfil an old dream of mine.

What do you bring to the sector?

My career has been centred on the very businesses that Shakespeare Martineau is advising and this puts me in a strong position to offer my advice and knowledge. I'm confident that I can offer universities, colleges, and schools practical solutions and sound advice based on my own experience of the problems they face and the successes they wish to achieve in what is an ever more complex world.

Why Shakespeare Martineau?

The firm has got an identity and personality which is lacking in so many other businesses. Shakespeare Martineau is characterised by its values, its collegiality, and it has a secret ingredient of dedication coupled with innovation, which is a winning combination for the business, its people and of course, the clients. From an education perspective, it has an outstanding reputation already. It is inspired by values that I hold dear - spirit, talent and enterprise. The firm's grip on this sector has huge potential and a compelling strategy and I can't wait to begin to help deliver it.

What is it like being a 'non-lawyer' at the firm?

Well I'm not the first non-legal hire, nor will I be the last, that's for sure! The firm understands that clients are looking for business solutions that are grounded in robust legal rigour, and to achieve that you need people who can view the full commerciality of each client situation as well as top class legal services.

What's your proudest achievement?

Helping gifted junior colleagues to fulfil their potential and see so many of them overtake me on the fast lane!

What has been your most memorable moment?

There are so many memorable moments to choose from but here goes...

Work: the consequences of wearing a CND badge as a junior administrator during a visit from then PM, Margaret Thatcher, in the 1980s - but this probably stands out for the wrong reasons!

Play: Running the London Marathon in 2012 to raise significant funds for cancer research in the name of a dear colleague.

What three words describe you?

Insight, integrity and influence...

How would your wife describe you?

'Energetic, wise, kind, and think I have a sense of humour!' (Do I believe her?!)

Memorable career moment

Establishing the leadership structure and governance arrangements for the largest capital project in the University of Cambridge's history.

Project details: The North West Cambridge development boasts of 3,000 homes, 2,000 student rooms, 100,000msq research space, major community facilities e.g. schools, shops, hotels etc.

Outcome: Providing affordable and other homes in an innovative community in order to support the University's need to attract the best staff.