



TIME OUT WITH...

Giles Emmanuel

Dispute Resolution Partner and Advocate, Viberts

When the stakes are high, use the art of persuasion



Football is in Giles Emmanuel's blood. It started with his grandfather who, as Parish Constable, helped St Lawrence Football Club set up at its current ground. Although he would say that he's had to slow down in recent years, Giles still plays for the club, most recently for the club's reserves.

"Football has always been the sport I love the most," he began. "I've probably played far too much of it over the years as my knees will tell you. But I still play now from time to time. My grandfather helped set up the club in its present form and my son now plays for them too. So, we've kept it in the family for many years."

As a new Partner in Viberts' Dispute Resolution team, Giles spends his time in a vastly different type of arena to the football pitch. But as he's quick to explain, it's not always about courtroom battles.

"litigation is a lot wider than just going to court," he explains. "Our department is called Dispute Resolution because the idea is not to go to court, and we work extremely hard on making sure matters don't. Although sometimes court cannot be avoided, the costs and time involved can be really prohibitive. When a client seeks to claim under £30,000, you have to explain that they may need to spend more than that arguing in a court of law, and therefore the best thing to do is to try and negotiate a way around it. That is where the real skill lies, persuading people that they'd be better off not going to court."

Giles' interest in law began as a teenager but when he was looking at A Level subjects, he discovered his school didn't offer A Level Law. However, after completing his A Levels, he spent a year studying Law at Highlands.

"I think it's quite difficult at the age of 18 to decide which career you are going to choose. There's certainly a lot of pressure, especially

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with the impetus about what you are going to do at university. I can see that now with my nephew and niece who are agonising over what they want to do with the rest of their lives.”

After a Law and Business degree, Giles started at one of the largest law firms in Jersey where he could have taken one of several routes available in a legal career.

“There were two people in particular who really influenced me who are in the judiciary now. I went to court with them on several occasions and it made me realise that, yes, I want to do law, and litigation is the type of law I want to do. Law is vast and I think the problem my nephew and niece are facing is that law has such a broad spectrum. I worry that people start off on their journey in law, but they don’t really know which direction they want to go.”

For Giles, who is often dealing with the matters that are at the sharp end of legal practice, the trick is to take the heat out of a situation while also getting the best outcome for his clients. And while that means being prepared to go to court, that has to be done with sensitivity and keeping a close eye on costs and tactics.

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into the matter, and because of that you can be adversarial but do so without anger. There is no need to cause other people discomfort or distress. You can get past all of that and do the job without being unnecessarily aggressive.”

Giles has worked in other areas of the law during his career. As part of his preparation to become an English Solicitor, he worked in the corporate and trust worlds. He’s a Jersey Advocate and he is currently completing a STEP qualification. Giles acts as a mentor and has a leading role in his team’s business development.

“The work-life balance is a tough gig, but my wife and I work through it,” he laughs. “I’m lucky because my son plays football and I have a great time with him at training. Our daughter goes to swimming and loves walking. We make sure we have time with our children and each other. It’s very important.”

Giles and his team, work across a wide range of dispute resolution areas including personal injury, construction, property, estate, criminal cases, trusts and insolvency. In a full service firm like Viberts, there is often an overlap with other departments and the Dispute Resolution team are often drawn into a variety of cases.

“My ethos is prevention is better than cure,” says Giles. “We’ll talk to those departments and ask them to let us know early on if there may be an issue, as Litigation cases can become lengthy and expensive battles because people don’t intervene early enough. But we have a good solid base at Viberts for keeping things away from court litigation.”

Being a litigator may not be everyone’s first choice when considering a career in law, but Giles says it’s the excitement that drives him. Thinking about what he would say to his niece who seems keen on a career in law, his advice is to consider all areas of law.

“Dispute resolution may not be for everyone because you do need a thick skin at times, and even within this area, there are specialisms. You might want to do construction or contentious trust law. You might even consider criminal law, and young people will ask which is the best way to go. I would say to anyone thinking about doing this to keep options wide to start with so that you don’t pigeonhole yourself down one route. When you find your niche, go for it but don’t jump in too quickly. Unless of course, you really know you want to.”

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