

Lawyer of the week Mark Brealey, QC

Mark Brealey, QC, a tenant at Monckton Chambers, acted for Sainsbury's in the Supreme Court. In one of the largest competition damages claims heard in the UK, the justices ruled unanimously that the interchange fees charged by Mastercard and Visa to major retailers restricted competition.

What were the main issues in this case?

The legality of the fees that the card schemes and banks charge retailers for accepting cards, and the extent to



which, if at all, retailers then charge their customers higher prices.

What is the best decision you have taken as a lawyer? As a teenager, watching the TV series *Crown Court*. For me, that was a career-defining moment because from that time on I wanted to be a barrister arguing cases in court.

Who has inspired you in your career? The late David Vaughan, QC, was a kind and remarkable lawyer who instinctively knew the merits of a case. His enthusiasm for

the law was infectious and he inspired many current members of the Bar.

What is the oddest thing that has happened to you in the law? When acting for international nature organisation WWF (the World Wide Fund for Nature) against WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment Federation Inc, then also known as the WWF) on the use of the initials, the courtroom was packed with the wrestlers wearing suits and sunglasses.

What is the best advice you have received? From my father: "Always be polite, never afraid." I had told him I was nervous about my first appearance in the European Court of Justice. It's good advice for a youngster in any walk of life.

Which three qualities should a lawyer have? Objectivity, clarity and humour — in that order.

What law would you enact? The Tottenham Hotspur Guaranteed to Win the Premiership Act — appreciating that once enacted, it would likely be repealed. As for why? Because I am running out of time.

How would you like to be remembered? For being in a seminal case, one that really developed the law and improved the rights of individuals. Hopefully I have been in some that are up there.

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