

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS RECEIVES TWO JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS IN LONDON

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Firm news

Herbert Smith Freehills Disputes Partner [Tom Leech QC](#) has been appointed as a Deputy High Court Judge and Senior Associate [Graeme Robertson](#) has been appointed Recorder (Deputy Circuit Judge), it has been announced.

Tom's appointment, by The Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, is a four year-term and was made upon the recommendation of the independent Judicial Appointments Commission. He is expected to sit for approximately 30 days a year.

The role of Deputy High Court Judge is reserved for those who have the experience and expertise to deal with very complex cases and will include work which would otherwise be undertaken by full-time High Court Judges.

Tom, who has heads the firm's Advocacy Group. He will continue in practice at Herbert Smith Freehills, whilst undertaking his judicial responsibilities.

Described by clients as a "forceful and robust advocate", Tom has carved out a successful career with the firm and advises and appears for clients with commercial disputes, professional negligence, trusts, company and real estate disputes. He has experience in multi-jurisdictional disputes and offshore jurisdictions, including Bermuda, Gibraltar, Singapore, Hong Kong, DIFC and the Isle of Man.

Tom has appeared in a number of leading cases including *Target v Redferns* and *Mannai v Eagle Star* in the House of Lords, *AIG Europe Ltd v OC320301 LLP* in the Supreme Court and the long-running *Thyssen* litigation in Bermuda. He is also one of the authors of the leading textbook *Flenley & Leech on Solicitors' Negligence* (fourth edition, 2019) and a co-editor of *Spencer Bower: Reliance-based estoppel* (fifth edition, 2018).

Meanwhile, Graeme joined Herbert Smith Freehills as a Trainee in 2006, qualifying into Real

Estate Disputes in 2008. Since 2011, he has been an Associate in the Advocacy Group, where he has a broad practice encompassing fraud, professional negligence, commercial litigation and real estate disputes.

He has been described by those in the firm who have led him as "outstanding" and "one of the best juniors I have worked with", Graeme has begun to carve out a successful career at the firm. He has appeared in the High Court and the Court of Appeal, with highlights including: *Bacciottini and Cook v Gotelee*, *Unaoil v Leighton*; *Ridgeway Properties Group Ltd v Valero Energy Limited*; and *Standard Life v Topland*. Graeme also regularly undertakes advocacy in pro bono matters for the Whitechapel Legal Advice Clinic and the Asylum Support Appeals Project.

Graeme was appointed as a Recorder by HM The Queen on the recommendation of the Lord Chief Justice and the Judicial Appointments Commission following a four-stage application process. There were over 1,200 applicants, from which 159 appointments were made nationwide. Graeme was one of only four Recorders to be appointed to the civil jurisdiction in the South Eastern Circuit. It is intended that Graeme will be based at the Central London County Court hearing trials, applications and case management conferences that would otherwise be heard by a Circuit Judge.

Commenting on his appointment, Tom said: *"It is a great honour to be appointed a Deputy High Court Judge and to follow my partner, Adam Johnson QC, last year and I am very grateful to the firm for its support. I am also very pleased for Graeme on his appointment which is, if anything, much more exceptional and is, I hope, testimony to the great talent within the HSF Advocacy Group."*

Graeme said: *"I am delighted to have been appointed a Recorder, and am very grateful to all those who have supported, encouraged and assisted me in the application process. I look forward to the new challenge that being a Judge will bring, and to seeing cases from the other side."*

Justin D'Agostino, Executive Partner and Global Head of the firm's Disputes practice, said: *"This is a richly deserved professional appointment for both Tom and Graeme and we are all very proud of them. It is also a tribute to the strength and excellence in advocacy which we have nurtured for many years."*

Both Tom and Graeme will continue in practice at Herbert Smith Freehills, whilst undertaking their judicial responsibilities.

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