

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS RENAMES EXCEL SCHOLARSHIP THE ROGER LEYLAND MEMORIAL EXCEL SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOUR OF THE FIRST BLACK PARTNER AT THE FIRM

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News

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Roger Leyland was a partner at Herbert Smith until his death in October 1996 at the young age of 43 – 20 years ago. He was the first black partner at a leading City firm and chaired The College of Law's ethnic minority subcommittee.

Commenting on the renaming of the scholarship James Palmer, Herbert Smith Freehills' Senior Partner, said:

“Roger was a great lawyer and colleague and I am delighted that he will be remembered through this scholarship. I was lucky enough to work directly for him as a trainee: he was technically brilliant and commercially astute, but even more he was enormous fun to work with.

"Roger was deeply committed to supporting the development of young lawyers, including sitting as a governor on the Council of the College of Law. His commitment to mentoring, high standards and teamwork meant he broke down biases effortlessly, with wit, charm and ability. It is an honour to have been his partner and I can think of no more fitting role model for young lawyers of all ethnic backgrounds."

The Excel Scholarship is an exclusive scholarship, developed by Rare Recruitment and Herbert Smith Freehills, to provide exceptional black and minority ethnic students with a high level of financial support and unique access to work experience opportunities. The scholarship, open to first year black and minority ethnic students interested in a career in City law, launched in 2014 and is now in its third year. Successful candidates are offered: an award of £9,000 over three years of study; a guaranteed place on Herbert Smith Freehills' first year workshop; two weeks' paid work experience during the summer of their first year; a guaranteed interview for the summer vacation scheme; and personal study sessions with Rare Recruitment's Melissa Andrews.

Announcing the renaming of the scholarship, Herbert Smith Freehills' Regional Managing Partner, UK, US & EMEA, Ian Cox said:

"I am delighted to announce the renaming of the Excel Scholarship after our former partner Roger Leyland. Roger was a fantastic role model for all lawyers, me included, in his approach to life as well as the law and he would, I'm sure, have been both hugely honoured and flattered."

"We are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace at Herbert Smith Freehills and this scholarship is an important part of our programme, and one of the many initiatives that are helping us increase the number of BAME trainees we take on each year. We have already seen a significant step-change going from 18 per cent of trainees from BAME backgrounds in 2012 to 32 per cent in 2016 and this will continue to be a focus going forwards."

The recent recruitment of the first trainee, Corinna Cherrie, from the scholarship has further validated its success. Corinna, who studied at Cambridge University and will join the firm in 2019, commented on her experience as an Excel scholar:

"I have thoroughly appreciated all the support that I have been given as part of being an Excel Scholar. Being an Excel Scholar was instrumental in my decision to accept my training contract offer from Herbert Smith Freehills as the people I have met throughout the past two years and the information I gathered on what it would be like to work here, made it impossible for me to choose to do my training contract anywhere else. I am looking forward to my future with the firm as I am excited about getting involved in all the different networks and pro bono work."

About Herbert Smith Freehills

Operating from over 26 offices across Asia Pacific, EMEA and North America, Herbert Smith Freehills is at the heart of the new global business landscape providing premium quality, full-service legal advice. We provide many of the world's most important organisations with access to market-leading dispute resolution, projects and transactional legal advice, combined with expertise in a number of global industry sectors, including energy, natural resources, infrastructure and financial services.

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