



Claire Hogan

Hosted by: Michael Atkinson; Tulsa, OK

Claire Hogan is a junior barrister at the Bar of Ireland. She has a mixed civil practice, and specializes in Commercial, Public, Personal Injuries and Family Law litigation and advice.

She graduated from Trinity College Dublin with a degree in Law and French, having been elected a Scholar of the College. This degree involved a year spent as a student of French law in Université Panthéon-Assas Paris II.

Claire also holds the master's degree of LL.M. (commercial) from the University of Cambridge. She qualified as a barrister in 2009, and was awarded the John Brooke Scholarship for first place in the exams of the Honorable Society of King's Inns.

In 2012, Claire completed her Ph.D. in the area of Constitutional Freedom of Religion Law. Her thesis was entitled, "Towards Reasonable Accommodation of Islam in the Irish Legal System: A Focus on Employment, Education and Healthcare". She received funding from the Irish Research Council for Humanities and the Social Sciences as a Government of Ireland Scholar.

Claire lectures aspiring barristers in Civil Procedure in the Honorable Society of King's Inns. She also lectures Constitutional Law in the Law Society, which trains solicitors, and Administrative Law in the Institution of Public Administration.

She was elected a member of the Council of the Bar of Ireland in July 2015, and currently chairs the Young Bar Committee, which represents the interests of approximately 750 junior members of the Bar of Ireland.

In her free time, Claire enjoys running, hiking, cinema, baking and travel. Last summer she walked all of the Camino de Santiago in Spain; notwithstanding bruised feet and bunk bed fatigue, it was an unforgettable experience.



Francis Kieran

Hosted by: Robert Finnerty and Tom Girardi; Los Angeles, CA

Frank is Barrister at Law, practising at the Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin. He trained at the Honorable Society of King's Inns, and was called to the Bar of Ireland in 2010 as winner of The Society's Exhibition. He studied law at University College Dublin and Oxford University. As an undergraduate at UCD he won the Irish National Debating Championships.

Frank practises in civil litigation, with particular emphasis on commercial matters, insolvency and professional liability. Frank also practises in public law and on behalf of professional regulatory bodies. He has previously taught in the Law School at Trinity College Dublin.

Frank has a longstanding interest in the United States and the Irish-American relationship. As a student, he spent a summer as an intern in the Capitol Hill office of Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Separately, he was also a summer intern with the Solidarity Center of the AFL-CIO in Washington, DC. On graduation, he worked for a year in Washington, DC, with the US-Ireland Alliance. Three of Frank's five siblings are naturalised US citizens.

In addition to his legal practice, Frank is also active in Irish politics. In 2014 he ran for and was elected to Dublin City Council as a candidate for the Fianna Fáil party. Frank is one of 63 elected members of Dublin City Council, which is the authority responsible for local government in Ireland's capital.

He is a keen supporter of the fortunes of Leinster Rugby and of the French club, Stade Toulousain, the latter affinity stemming from a year spent living in the city of Toulouse, and especially many Friday nights at the Stade Ernest-Wallon. He also loves hiking in the mountains of Ireland.



Sarah Hansen

Hosted by: Bob Martinez; Coral Gables, FL

Charlotte Simpson hails from County Donegal. This is the most Northerly County in Ireland and is almost entirely landlocked by Northern Ireland. She had the unique experience of attending primary school in the Republic of Ireland and secondary school in Northern Ireland. In her final year of school she was elected Head Girl of Foyle and Londonderry College.

Charlotte attended Trinity College, Dublin where she was awarded an Entrance Exhibition Scholarship in 2004. She graduated with a First Class Honours Degree in Law in 2008. In the third year of her degree she spent a year studying at the Law School at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia. This experience cemented her desire to practice law as a trial advocate (and her love for country music!)

She completed the Barrister-at-Law degree in the Honourable Society of King's Inns and was called to the Bar of Ireland in Trinity term 2009. Charlotte practices predominately on the Northern Circuit where she has developed a diverse and varied practice. This can involve criminal trials, personal injury actions and bitterly fought land disputes – all in the one week! She also represents the Irish State in defending employers liability and public liability claims.

Charlotte has a keen interest in travel and has spent time in Nepal, Vietnam, India and Central America. She also enjoys theatre and is a qualified speech and drama teacher.



Paula McKernan

Hosted by: Paul Le Vay; Toronto, ON, Canada

Paula McKernan was called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in 2005 and to the Bar of Ireland in 2012. Her practice at the Bar is primarily in Family, Matrimonial and Children Law. Prior to being called to the Bar, she gained an LL.B.(Hons) from Queen's University Belfast and obtained her professional qualification at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies.

Paula is originally from a small rural area called Middletown, County Armagh but has been living in Belfast for approximately 12 years. She is married to Chris, who is a Public Affairs Consultant. She has a close relationship with her parents and two brothers and also enjoys spending time with the new additions to her family – two nephews and one niece.

Paula enjoys travelling and has spent time in the United States in Washington D.C., New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Las Vegas. She also enjoys visiting European cities.

Paula has an interest in performing arts. She is an examiner in Speech and Drama for the London College of Music at the University of West London. She enjoys going to the theatre and tries to fit in a West End show when she travels to London. She likes to exercise and attends her local gym a few times each week. She has recently taken up yoga and finds it a great way to unwind.