

# THE TIMES

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## Lawyer of the week Neil Todd

Neil Todd, a partner at Thompsons, successfully acted for the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers in a Supreme Court case against Tesco over “fire and rehire” policies. The judges unanimously ruled that Britain’s biggest retailer should be blocked from dismissing staff at some distribution centres and rehiring them on lower pay.

### What were the biggest hurdles you had to overcome in this case?

Securing an injunction to stop the proposed exercise as courts are generally reluctant to order specific performance in relation to a contract of employment.

### What is the best decision you have taken as a lawyer?

Leaving

commercial law after I finished my training contract. It wasn’t for me, although I did meet my wife — and some fantastic friends — there.

### Who do you most admire in the law?

Richard Arthur, my firm’s head of trade union law, who has offered me support and encouragement since I joined.

**What is the best advice you have received?** To be resilient, to keep going and that tomorrow will be another day. It is important to keep this in mind at times when things go wrong.



### What is the funniest thing that has happened in your job?

I was recently interviewing over Zoom for a junior position and one of the candidates surprised us by joining the video call from his local park. He, and the interview, were then interrupted several times by enthusiastic passing dogs.

### What are the best and worst elements of being a lawyer?

The best thing is having the opportunity to pursue cases that can make a genuine difference to people’s lives by

advancing workers’ rights. The worst is the legislative framework that does so little to provide adequate protection from decisions taken by unscrupulous employers.

**What law would you enact?** I hope the new employment bill will redress a legislative framework that in so many respects is anti-trade union and anti-worker.

**What is your favourite book?** I was born in Ashington and therefore the play *The Pitmen Painters* has always had a special place in my heart, particularly as my uncle spent a part of his life painting with them.

**Catherine Baksi**

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