Sir Wyn Williams FLSW

Call: 1974 | Silk: 1992

EMAIL: clerks@civitaslaw.com TELEPHONE: +44 (0)2920 375020

Sir Wyn Williams accepts appointments as an arbitrator and mediator, for both domestic and international disputes. He is one of a few High Court Judges in England and Wales to offer mediation and arbitration services for lawyers, businesses, public and private bodies and individuals. Upon his retirement as a High Court Judge, Sir Wyn joined Civitas Chambers as a door tenant in February 2017 to offer his unique experience to Wales.

Prior to taking up a full time judicial career, Sir Wyn had a broad and highly successful practice at the Bar. He was called to the Bar in 1974 and practised from chambers in Cardiff until 1998. He took silk in 1992. In his later years as a silk he practised principally in personal injury, clinical negligence, sports and public law but developed a particular interest in sporting disputes.

Expertise

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

As an Arbitrator & Mediator

- In 2013 Sir Wyn was appointed as the independent chairman of a committee constituted by the Welsh Rugby Union and the four regional clubs in Wales to oversee professional rugby in Wales. Subsequently Sir Wyn was asked to facilitate the negotiations and soon became treated as if he was mediating to help conclude a new agreement between the Union and the regional clubs. He performed that role voluntarily for six months during a very complex negotiation that culminated in a new six-year agreement. Under the agreement, a Professional Rugby Board was constituted. Sir Wyn is the independent member of the Board.

As a High Court Judge

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Cardiff CF11 9LL

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- Sir Wyn has tried a claim by a football club against its manager (Crystal Palace FC (2000) Ltd v Ian Dowie [2008] EWHC 240 (QB) and disputes between boxers and their agents/promoters relating to their contractual arrangements including a bitterly fought claim brought by a company controlled by Frank Warren against Joe Calzaghe (Sports Network Ltd v Calzaghe [2009] EWHC 480 (QB)).
- Sir Wyn sat regularly in the Administrative Court throughout his career as a High Court Judge and he was authorised to hear all the various types of cases litigated in that court. Upon the creation of the Planning Court Sir Wyn became of judge of that Court. Sir Wyn has presided over public law cases involving human rights, terrorism, extradition, immigration, planning, education, community care and mental health. Sir Wyn has also done a considerable amount of regulatory work when sitting in the Administrative Court. He has presided over challenges/statutory appeals from bodies such as the Bar Standards Board, the Solicitors Regulation Authority, the General Medical Council, the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Health Care Professional Council and the governing bodies of dentists, accountants and teachers.
- Sir Wyn has presided over trials in the Queen's Bench Division relating to a wide variety of legal topics. Examples of such cases are Chandler v Cape Plc [2011] EWHC 951 (QB) (liability of non-employer for exposure to asbestos), Kynixa Ltd v Hynes and others [2008] EWHC 1495 (QB) (claims arising from alleged breaches of restrictive covenants in employment contracts), Romantiek BVBA v Simms [2008] EWHC 3099 (QB) a claim alleging that a public official had committed the tort of misfeasance in public office when discharging a licensing function, OOO and others v The Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis [20011] EWHC 1246 (QB) (claims by young foreign females that they had been trafficked into the UK by foreign nationals for the purpose of slavery and that officers of the Metropolitan Police Force breached their human rights in failing to investigate their complaints adequately or at all) and Mouncher and others v The Chief Constable of South Wales Police [2016] EWHC 1367 (QB) (claims by retired and serving police officers for false imprisonment, misfeasance in public office and malicious prosecution against South Wales Police arising from an investigation by officers of that force into alleged criminal conduct on the part of the claimants during the course of an investigation into a notorious murder in South Wales.
- During his time as the specialist Chancery Circuit Judge for the Wales and Chester Circuit Sir Wyn tried most of the important chancery cases arising throughout Wales and Cheshire. He also sat as a deputy High Court Judge in the Chancery Division in Wales, Chester and London. Amongst the cases over which Sir Wyn presided were shareholder disputes and other company law disputes, real property disputes, disputes arising from wills and intestacy, partnership disputes and a wide range of claims relating to or arising from insolvency. Following his elevation to the High Court Bench Sir Wyn sat occasionally in the Chancery Division of the High Court both in London and in Wales. He also tried public law cases that had a strong Chancery element. Examples are Cameron and others v Commissioner for HM Revenue and Customs [2012] EWHC 1174 (Admin) (a dispute between the Inland Revenue and seafarers about taxation provisions) and Evans v Wimbledon and Putney Commoners [2013] EWHC 3411 (Admin) (a dispute about the extent of the power to grant property rights such as easements over Wimbledon Common.

Appointments

- Appointed a Recorder of the Crown Court in 1992.
- Appointed Deputy High Court Judge in 1999.
- Appointed as a senior circuit judge and specialist Chancery Judge for the Wales and Chester Circuit in 2004.
- Appointed to the High Court in 2007 and was immediately authorised to sit in the Administrative Court.
- Between 1 January 2012 and December 2015 Sir Wyn was a presiding judge for Wales becoming the Senior Presiding Judge in January 2014.
- Deputy Chairman of the Boundary Commission for Wales between September 2012 and July 2016.
- Chairman of the Wales Committee of the Judicial College between 2103 and his retirement in 2017.
- Elected to a fellowship of The Learned Society of Wales (FLSW) in 2013 in recognition of his services to the law in Wales.

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- Retired as a full time judge in 2017: remains authorised to sit as a deputy High Court Judge.
- Joined Civitas Chambers as an Arbitrator & Mediator in 2017.

As an Arbitrator & Mediator

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As a QC

Sport:

- Sir Wyn was regularly instructed on behalf of the Welsh Rugby Union in a variety of disputes. His cases included appearing for the Union at a disciplinary tribunal convened by World Rugby when the WRU was accused of selecting ineligible players for the national team (so called 'Grannygate') and at a tribunal constituted by World Rugby to ascertain whether an Australian born player was eligible to play for the Wales national team and, if so, whether compensation was payable to Australia for the development costs it expended during the formative years of the player.
  He was appointed a judicial officer by World Rugby, Six Nations Rugby and European Cup Rugby in which capacity he conducted may disciplinary hearings. He was a judicial officer at the 1999 Rugby World Cup in Wales and the 2007 Rugby World Cup in France. He was invited to act as judicial officer at the World Cup in Australia in 2003 but other work commitments prevented him taking up the invitation.
- He advised in and conducted a number of cases involving claims by injured sportsmen.

Public Law:

- Sir Wyn acted for private clients and planning authorities in a large number of planning cases. He was instructed at planning enquiries and appeals for and against promoters of road schemes, housing developments and other major projects. He also acted for developers and planning authorities in legal challenges brought in the High Court relating to planning decisions made by planning authorities and inspectors on appeal.
- Immediately prior to taking up the first of his full time judicial appointments Sir Wyn acted as leading counsel for the Secretary of State for the Home Department in appeals brought before the Special Immigration Appeals Commission by persons who had been detained on suspicion of engaging in international terrorism. The legislation authorising detention was highly controversial and brought into force as one of a number of counter-terrorism measures in the aftermath of 9/11.

Common Law:

- Sir Wyn had an extensive practise in personal injury and clinical negligence claims. In clinical negligence claims he was usually instructed on behalf of the Claimant but in personal injury claims arising from industrial accidents or road traffic accidents he was instructed by both Claimants and Defendants. In the main, the cases in which Sir Wyn was involved related to catastrophic injuries but he also undertook work in relation to industrial disease, especially disease caused by exposure to asbestos.

Education

- Educated at Rhondda Grammar County School
- MA Oxon: Corpus Christi College, Oxford
- Bar Finals at the Inns of Court School of Law, London

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General

- Sir Wyn was given an Honorary Doctorate (LLD) from the University of South Wales in 2010, conferred on him for his contribution to legal services in Wales.
- President of Pendyrus Male Choir.
- Trustee & life member of Tylorstown RFC.
- Appointed as an independent chairman of the Professional Regional Game Board (a voluntary role) in 2012, an organisation set up by the Welsh Rugby Union to restructure the sport in Wales.
- Member of Cardiff Business Club.

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