

Lawyer of the week Julian Ribet

Julian Ribet, a partner at Ribet Myles, represented a man, known only as Mr Williams, in a High Court case in which a computer error made by another law firm resulted in him and his wife wrongly being divorced. The High Court backed his argument and refused to overturn the mistake, which meant Mr and Mrs Williams remained divorced.

What were the biggest hurdles you had to overcome in this case? The main problem was that these circumstances hadn't arisen before, so we were breaking new legal ground.

What is the best decision you have taken as a lawyer? Acting pro bono for one of the most seriously injured British veterans from the war

in Afghanistan. The courage shown by him and his family was inspiring.

Who do you most admire in the law? My great-great-uncle Maurice Ribet, who was a French barrister. At great personal risk he successfully defended Édouard Daladier, the former French prime minister, during the Riom trial in 1942. Widely regarded as a show trial by the Vichy regime to prove that the leaders of the French Third Republic had been responsible for France's defeat by Germany in 1940, the trial was



supported by the Nazis, with Maurice and his wife having to hide from the Gestapo, which turned up at his home after the trial to arrest him.

What is the best advice you have received? Trust your gut instinct, listen to your client, never give up.

What is the funniest thing that has happened in your job? A few times I've been instructed by a woman on her divorce, then years later instructed by her former husband when his subsequent marriage has gone wrong.

What are the best and worst elements of being a lawyer? The best: meeting a wide range of people. The worst: the need to be constantly available.

What law would you enact? I would abolish the Child Maintenance Service and transfer all its resources to the courts to provide a rigorous, fast-track, court-based determination process with prompt and punitive sanctions for nonpayment.

What is your favourite song? *Nessun dorma* from *Turandot* by Puccini — an incredibly moving, beautiful piece of music.

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