



Inaugural Annual Conference of the Tax Bar Association

The newly formed Tax Bar Association held its inaugural annual conference on Saturday morning, 8th October 2022 during the first week of the Michaelmas term. The theme of the conference was Recent Developments in Tax Litigation and the Association was delighted to welcome the Chief Justice, Mr Justice Donal O'Donnell, Ms Justice Stack, Judge of the High Court, Ms Marie-Claire Maney, Chairperson of the Tax Appeals Commission, Ms Grainne Clohessy SC and Mr Michael Ashe SC KC to discuss recent developments in the area.

The Gaffney Room in Distillery Building at the Law Library was at capacity and there were in excess of eighty in attendance. Ciaran Ramsay SC, Chair of the Association, opened the Conference and on behalf of the Committee of the Association extended a very warm welcome to colleagues at the bar and tax professionals in attendance.

The Association was privileged to open the conference with Mr Justice Donal O'Donnell as keynote speaker. Mr Justice O'Donnell gave a very entertaining dissertation covering some of the recent Supreme Court judgments dealing with the statutory interpretation of tax legislation. He was very warm in his enthusiastic comments about the formation of a specialist tax bar association and noted the value brought by barristers from their general litigation experience to the specialist area of tax litigation.

Ms Grainne Clohessy SC received a very warm welcome as an esteemed member of the tax bar. She echoed the Chief Justice describing how the bar has developed over the years and that now there is a specialist tax bar that sits within the bar generally. Ms Clohessy SC brought the audience on a whistle-stop tour of the tax appeals system before focusing on the jurisdiction of the Tax Appeals Commission and the role of judicial review within the tax context.

Coffee and pastries provided an opportunity for attendees to meet and chat in person; many for the first time since before the pandemic. This return to in-person events was very welcome for those attending.

Following the coffee break, the Association was privileged to be addressed by Ms Marie Claire Maney, the Chairperson of the Tax Appeals Commission. She gave a very informative talk on the transformation of the Tax Appeals Commission following



her appointment in a newly formed role as Chairperson of the Tax Appeals Commission during the pandemic in 2020. She shared some of the impressive statistics from the Commission.

The Association was also delighted to welcome Michael Ashe, KC SC, another esteemed member of the tax bar. Mr Ashe gave a very practical overview of the importance of focusing on evidence and the question of proofs. He also gave some practice insights into evidence and the importance of proving the case drawing on some amusing anecdotes from practice.

The Association was honoured to welcome Ms Justice Stack as a speaker. Her contribution was eagerly anticipated as she brought her insight into the case stated procedure, the chancery list and appeals to the High Court. Her comments on the Association also mirrored those of the other speakers in terms of the importance of the barrister as a generalist as well as a specialist tax barrister.

The conference closed at 1pm and the Association was very appreciative of all those who took time out on a Saturday morning to attend what was a rare opportunity to hear such esteemed speakers discuss recent developments in tax litigation.

The Association is committed to informing and educating in the area of tax litigation. To this end, its early months were marked by two seminars and there are plans to hold seminars on a regular basis. The Association has a growing membership and if you are interested in joining, the link to join can be accessed [here](#).

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