



A Tribute to Catherine Rawles

Lester Aldridge is saddened to announce the death of Partner Catherine Rawles, who passed away on Friday 26 November.

Catherine's legal journey started in her native north-east in 1993 when she studied law at Teeside University. After attending law school at the University of Northumbria, Catherine joined Watson Burton in Newcastle as a trainee solicitor in 1997, shortly after she met her future husband Rob.

It was soon apparent that Catherine was an extremely talented lawyer, and Watson Burton offered her a permanent job on qualification after only 12 months. Within a month of qualification as a solicitor, Catherine was lured to Garretts in Leeds (which was acquired by DLA) before moving to Addleshaw Goddard, where she worked for 4 years, developing a specialism in real estate corporate support work.

In 2005, Catherine and her family relocated to the south coast, with Catherine joining Blake Lapthorn (now Blake Morgan) as an associate. Her work focus shifted to development, in particular housebuilding and affordable housing.

Catherine joined the LA family in 2013, initially as an associate in the Real Estate Development team before being promoted to partner in 2016.

Catherine was a hugely successful, determined and passionate lawyer, and effortlessly forged special relationships with her colleagues, clients and contacts. Her work ethic and professionalism were second to none. She battled illness for a number of years without complaint and never lost her wicked sense of humour, which was testament to her strength of character.

Who better to quote but Catherine herself, in a note written earlier this year for the staff at LA:

"My motto throughout this whole episode has been to take a deep breath and get on with it and not to worry about things you cannot change. There have been challenging moments and I am not known for my ability to accept help and I am even less equipped to deal with sympathy and concern. Despite this, my wonderful friends at LA, especially those in the Real Estate team have been with me throughout this long journey and have kept me sane and smiling. Work has been a sanctuary, I have been blessed with great clients, interesting work (yes, real estate can be interesting!) and a lot of fun memories – special thanks to McCarthy & Stone for the year end dramas and the annual conference frolics!"

Catherine loved the cut and thrust of transactional real estate, but her proudest moment as a lawyer was her involvement in recruitment and training at LA, in particular when she helped to inspire a number of trainees (some of whom initially had a dislike of real estate work) to return to qualify into the team. Catherine was a mentor to many at LA and readily shared her invaluable knowledge, experience and guidance. She always had time to give advice and help to those who asked for it, never seeking thanks, but simply doing what came naturally to her.

Whilst work was very important to Catherine, she always found time for her family and friends. She was a talented baker, producing countless birthday and celebration cakes, and could be found most weekends at a running track in all weathers, either watching or training her two children (both extremely talented athletes) and their clubs.

Catherine will be sorely missed by everyone that knew her. We naturally offer our deepest condolences to Rob, their children and wider family and friends.