

Open Letter: Garrick Club

21 March 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

We, the undersigned, are barristers, solicitors, and legal professionals in England and Wales. We write to set out our concerns about recent news reports that name senior members of the judiciary as current or former members of the Garrick Club (see [here](#) and [here](#)). We are aware from Who's Who that High Court Judges are members.

Criminal, family, civil and immigration courts often deal with extremely serious allegations of domestic abuse and violence against women, including rape, sexual assault, coercive and controlling behaviour, stalking and financial abuse. Many cases reflect the diversity of the society in which we live; we are proud to call clients women from all walks of life, many of whom are impecunious or in low-paid work. We represent women from all over the country, including the most deprived areas. Many do not have English as their first language or secure immigration status.

The Garrick Club, along with its associated ethos, embodies a social and gendered ideology that starkly contrasts with the reality of the modern courtroom. It stands as a symbol of an entrenched anti-woman tradition comprising predominantly white male membership. We are concerned that membership perpetuates systemic discrimination against women within the highest echelons of societal influence. In our collective assessment, maintaining membership at the Garrick Club is fundamentally incompatible with the core principles of justice, equality, and fairness, particularly for senior members of the judiciary who significantly shape jurisprudence on gender-based discrimination and inequality and gendered crimes of violence and abuse.

Like the Garrick Club, the highest levels of the judiciary do not reflect our society. Female judges remain a minority, particularly women of colour, despite efforts to increase greater diversity and inclusivity. Jemima Olchawski, the chief executive of the women's rights organisation the Fawcett Society recently commented on the Garrick Club membership: "You've got to look at what is the motivation for keeping women out? I can't see anything other than sexism and misogyny at the root of that... All these senior professionals know that there is a problem where women, and in particular women of colour, are systematically disadvantaged and underrepresented. Theoretically, the organisations they work for are committed to challenging that. So to have senior influential people still indulging in the mechanisms that we know keep that system in place does feel at best careless and at worst arrogant."

There has been public debate and controversy about membership of the Garrick Club by male KCs and judges for many years, including by Baroness Hale, who once said at a law diversity event: "I regard it as quite shocking that so many of my colleagues belong to the Garrick, but they don't see what all the fuss is about." She said judges "should be committed to the principle of equality for all." Dinah Rose KC commented, "If you're a judge, publicly committed to the principle of equality, it is incompatible with that, to be a member of that type of club."

Membership in the Garrick Club is not compatible with the tenets of access and fairness that are cornerstones of our legal system. We therefore ask that any judge, whether they are a full-time member of the judiciary or fee-paid, resign their Garrick Club membership with immediate effect.

If you would like to add your signature, please email: GarrickClubJudges@gmail.com

England and Wales Legal Professionals

Dr Charlotte Proudman
Elisabeth Traugott
Jolyon Maugham KC
Leslie Thomas KC
Jenny Beck KC (Hon)
Dr Ann Olivarius KC (Hon) OBE
Liz Davies KC
Michael Mansfield KC
Professor Jo Delahunty KC
Brie Stevens-Hoare KC
Kate Brunner KC
Caroline Shea KC
Liz Isaacs KC
Hannah Markham KC
Keir Monteith KC
Nicola Braganza KC
Stephen Simblet KC
Lucy Reed KC
Caspar Glyn KC
Joel Donovan KC
Jerome Lynch KC
PJ Kirby KC
Mary Prior KC
Marc Willers KC
Nigel Meeson KC
Leon Kazakos KC
Sara Chandler KC (Hon)
Charley Pattinson
Manveet Chhina
Julia Needham
Melanie Bridgen
Stephanie Hayward
Naomi Wiseman
Jane Heybroek
Reuben Solomon
Emma Harris
Alan Robertshaw
Charlotte Bayati

Yaa Dankwa Ampadu-Sackey

Daniel ShenSmith

Stephen Swan

Rudolph Spurling

James Presland

Matthew Moriarty

Harriet Johnson

Rebecca Martin

Shila Keshwari

Michael Marsh-Hyde

Hatice Kisa

Julie Okine

Natasha Rattu

Dr Adrienne Barnett

Natalie Page

Val Easty

Maria Moodie

Edward J Fitzpatrick

Paul Clark

Lorna Cservenka

Emma Sherrington

Dr Mary Hughes

Sarah Forster

Sarah Pinder

Rachel Spearing

Ann Thompson

Rachel Bale

Peggy Ray

Michael House

Piers Mostyn

Ronan Toal

Anna Hefford

Helen Foot

Naheed Ghauri

Hilka Holman

Josephine Fathers

Amy Stout

Emma Fielding

Laura Williams

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Carolina Marín Pedreño
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Una Morris
Louise Hunt
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Marguerite Russell
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Mandip Ghai
Roda Hassan
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Sara Ibrahim
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Diana Jordan
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Philip Henson, President of the Westminster & Holborn Law Society
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Scottish Legal Professionals

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