3PB BARRISTERS



Michael George

Year of Call: 1990
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Overview

Michael George is a specialist family practitioner with over 30 years experience. He has a reputation for a good humoured and robust forensic approach with careful analysis.

Reported and Notable Cases

T v T: Medium to medium large asset case. Analysis demonstrated £1.2M of assets not accounted for in the SJE report. Successful submissions on trust issues at FDR. Negotiated settlement.

X v X: Medium asset case where proper analysis of police pensions and retirement dates by counsel increased pension pot for distribution to client by £350,000.

S v V: Jurisdiction and forum issues in context of internationally wealthy family with offshore tax structures. Contested issues of billionaire financial resources. Successful LSPO and MPS appeal leading to successful negotiated settlement covering multiple jurisdictions.

Re T: High net worth member alleged billionaire family issues of offshore trusts, family bounty, jurisdiction, forum, and circumstances of the marriage. Successful MPS and LSPO appeal.

Re T: Asset base circa £6M. Intervener claims whether constructive trusts or estoppel, inaccurate business accounts, liquidity issues. Opposing Leading Counsel.

Re X and Re Y: Two unrelated cases involving topflight motorcycle racers. Issues earnings structure of professional service company. Tax efficient strategies for extracting monies.

Re M: Asset base circa £6M multiple corporate entities in UK and republic of Ireland, dividend accounting irregularities breach of directors' duties, Reduction of Capital / Liquidation Reconstruction Demerger issues. Opposing Leading Counsel.

Re S: Children private law, international contact issues and historic domestic violence. Opposing Leading Counsel.

Re H: Farming case and commercial operation asset base circa £8M. Multiple plots, synergistic values, easements, demerger of asset base for tax implications.

Re B: Farming case asset base £6M with overlapping family farming partnerships, leases, differential ownership of ransom strips, easements affecting valuations and caravan businesses.

Re H: asset base circa £13M interim property portfolio reallocation before end of tax year to defer £600K of CGT. Opposing Leading Counsel.

Re C: Variation of maintenance application. Husband was major shareholder in 8 private companies that had merged into one under complex and opaque arrangements. In original financial relief Wife alleged Husband had undisclosed offshore funds. No forensic accountant instructed – Wife's original Counsel had failed to penetrate the web of arrangements and advised there was no evidence to pursue matter. On a variation application under cross examination Husband eventually accepted he was a beneficiary of a hitherto undisclosed Lichtenstein trust and that he had concealed assets from Court in earlier proceedings. Further inquiries revealed the existence of a secret trust to which Husband was a beneficiary and a further trust holding cash and loan notes against Husband's company and a holding company incorporated in further offshore tax haven in the British Virgin Islands. Given these disclosures Wife capitalised her maintenance claim and the case settled on advantageous terms.

Re L: Family business was valued at about £5m. Negotiated settlement using a variety of tax efficient methods including dividend waiver and share buyback and cancellation. Opposing Leading Counsel – now Judge of Family Division. Post consent order Wife alleged Husband had concealed a £200,000 policy and threatened to reopen proceedings. Persuaded Wife's advisers that it was not worth the litigation risk to reopen.

Re O: Complex portfolio of vested and unvested share options and LTIP scheme with differential tax regimes depending upon when options exercised. Client relocated from Kazakhstan to India during negotiations. Complex schedules of assets and contingent tax liabilities and international taxation considerations.

B v B: Departure from separation agreement based upon Husband's false representation that his retirement was imminent.

AK v RB and MB [2011] EWHC 3317: Relocation to Kyrgyz Republic, expert evidence on socio political situation in the absence of international social services or diplomatic relations.

Askey v Woods [2005] EWCA 574: Contributory negligence and causation where there is no evidence that the Claimant's negligence would have contributed to the accident that did happen.

Recommendations

Michael George is an accomplished junior with experience in a range of matrimonial finance cases, including those that involve high-value assets such as farms and pensions. He is well equipped to deal with matters where offshore assets are involved.
Strengths: "Michael is so very knowledgeable. He is extremely thorough, but approachable."
"Michael is a really good advocate, his attention to detail is off the scale. He is careful and methodical."
"Michael is knowledgeable, industrious and conscientious. His cross-examination and advocacy ability are superb."

Chambers UK 2024/Family/Matrimonial Finance/Midlands Bar

Strengths: "Michael is a brilliant advocate who fights hard for his clients."
"He is a very technical lawyer, who is knowledgeable and popular with clients."

Chambers UK 2023/Family/Matrimonial Finance/Midlands Bar

Strengths: "He is experienced and insightful, as well as approachable and thoughtful." "He's very concise and gets to the point quickly. His knowledge of business is also strong and he knows relevant papers back to front."

Chambers UK 2022/Family/Matrimonial Finance/Midlands Bar

Michael George is praised for being `proficient in all aspects of financial remedy proceedings with his knowledge of the law and practice second to none'.

`Michael is a leading junior in this area of work. He understands his subject inside and out. He routinely speaks at seminars concerning complex areas, including pensions. He is collegiate and constructive.'

Legal 500 2024/Divorce and Financial Remedy/Leading juniors/Midlands Circuit - Ranked in Tier 1

Michael George is experienced at handling big money financial remedy cases.

'Michael is an exceptional advocate. He is well prepared and gives clear advice and guidance to clients. He is a safe pair of hands and will fight the client's corner.'

Legal 500 2023/Divorce and Financial Remedy/Leading juniors/Midlands Circuit - Ranked in Tier 1

'Michael is a robust negotiator and an excellent advocate and drafts-man, who repeatedly achieves excellent outcomes for clients. '

Legal 500 2022/Divorce and Financial Remedy/Leading juniors/Midlands Circuit

'He combines sound judgement and excellent knowledge of the law with an approachable and reassuring manner.'

"Michael George is praised for his 'exceptional aptitude for financial remedy work, particularly cases involving company law, complex accounts and pensions'."

Legal 500 2021/Divorce and Financial Remedy/Leading juniors/Regional Bar/Midlands Circuit

Professional bodies

- Family Law Bar Association
- Chancery Bar Association
- British Association for Adoption and Fostering
- Association for Lawyers for Children
- British Library – Reader
- Library of Congress – Reader