

Lawyer of the Year

WINNER

MICHAEL NAPIER QC

Irwin Mitchell

A lifetime of achievement

After 40 years at Irwin Mitchell, Michael Napier QC will be stepping down as chairman of the firm this April. The former president of the Law Society has been instrumental in developing the firm to the brink of becoming a pioneering alternative business structure. Having spent 30 years as the firm's senior partner, he is widely regarded as having spearheaded its growth from a three-partner Sheffield operation in the 70s to the 570-lawyer powerhouse it is today, which employs over 2,000 people in the UK. Napier established the firm's personal injury, clinical negligence and group litigation practice, which is now the firm's defining service line.

Having turned 65 in 2011, Napier has continued to contribute far more to the wider profession than most. He was the first solicitor-advocate before the European Court of Human Rights. He was joint founder, secretary and then president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers. Since 2002 he has also been the Attorney General's pro bono envoy, promoting pro bono work and culture across the legal profession. A key contributor in every sense.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

JONATHAN BERKSON

Hill Dickinson

Berkson advised the successful appellant on a conditional fee arrangement in the high-profile, landmark *Jivraj v Hashwani* case in the Supreme Court last year. The judgment related to a case that centred around an arbitration clause in a joint venture agreement. The verdict overturned a controversial Court of Appeal decision and has confirmed that arbitrators are not employed and, therefore, fall outside of UK equality laws, which could have significant implications for arbitration proceedings in the future.

JOHN HENDY QC

Old Square Chambers

2011 was a prolific year for Hendy QC, which included making an application to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) on behalf of RMT challenging much of the UK's strike legislation, as well as acting for members of Unite in litigation

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(L-R) Irwin Mitchell's Michael Napier QC with Ian McNally, director at Saunderson House

against British Airways in the ECtHR. He is also representing the National Union of Journalists in the high-profile Leveson Inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press.

JONATHAN LEWIS

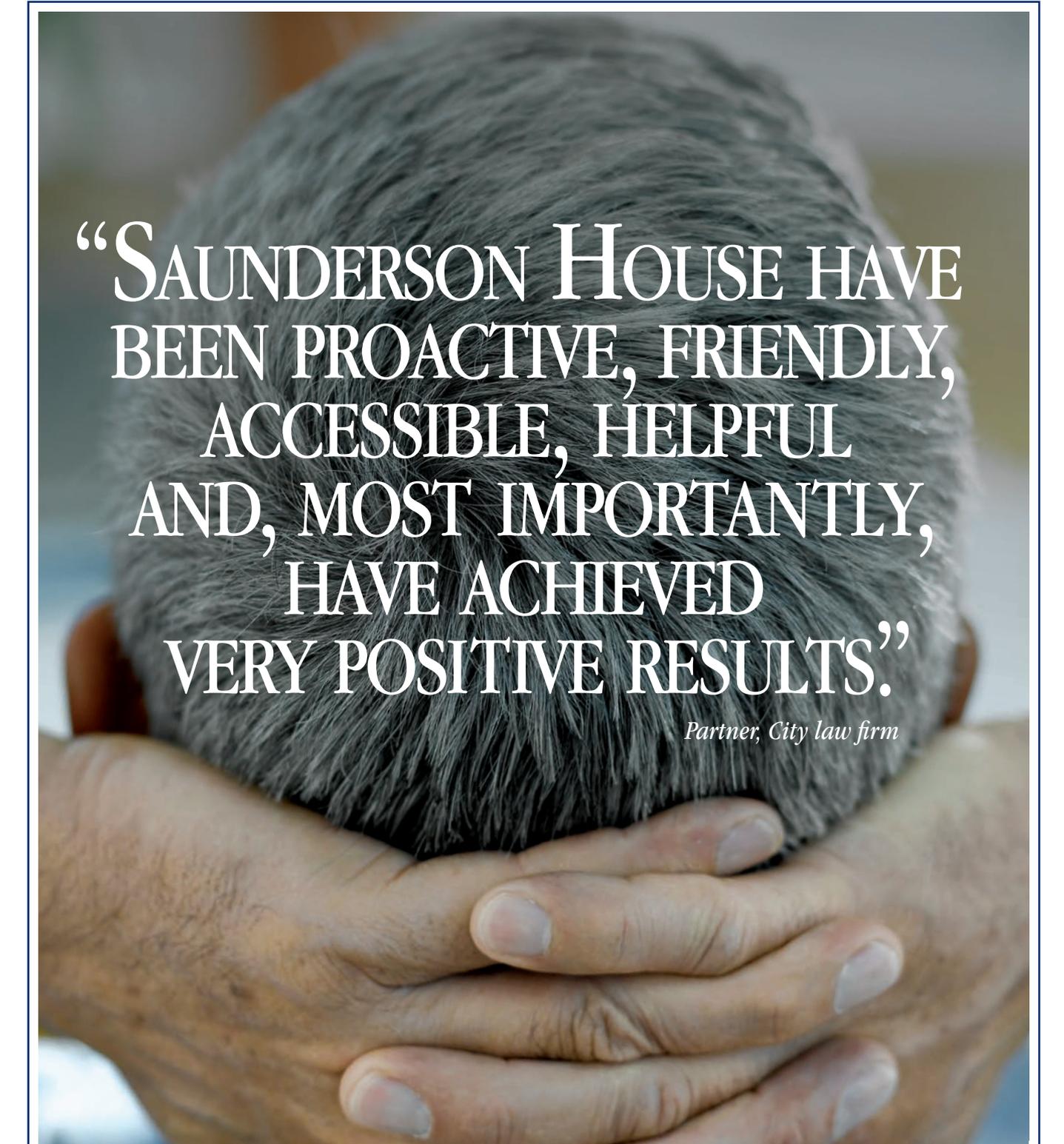
Clifford Chance

Lewis has been at the vanguard of sovereign debt restructuring in recent times, most notably designing and structuring the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) bailout fund that has dominated economic news for the last two years. A milestone was the establishment of the Debt Issuance Programme of the EFSF as a listing on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange. He was also at the forefront of the first loan agreement to Ireland. His work over the last two years has seen him apply his technical skills under intense political and public scrutiny.

JONATHAN SUMPTION QC

Brick Court Chambers

One of the country's most admired and celebrated legal minds, and one of the truly great courtroom stars, Sumption QC has had another outstanding year, beginning work for Roman Abramovich in the high-profile 'battle of the oligarchs' against Boris Berezovsky, as well as receiving the ultimate accolade - being appointed a Supreme Court judge.



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Partner, City law firm

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