

Law

Lawyer of the week Pilar Alonso

Pilar Alonso, a founder of Alonso & Haro, based in Bolton, Greater Manchester, and Murcia, Spain, acted for ten Britons who paid deposits from 2005-06 on Spanish holiday homes that were never built. The Murcia High Court awarded them £500,000 compensation, thought to be the largest award in such a case.

What were the main challenges in this case?

In many cases we win in the High Court, but the banks appeal to the Supreme Court. It is that court's 2015 ruling, which this firm won, that allowed claims against the banks which financed



the deals, instead of the property developers. And the banking lobby is in a strong position — the system can work in its favour. So our main challenge is to do justice.

What's the best decision you've taken as a lawyer? To redirect my career to help ordinary people to recover their life savings when they invested in Spain. To see my clients happy after a successful outcome is the most gratifying part.

Who has inspired you in your career? My father, who was not a lawyer but a doctor. He told me: "It does not matter what you

do for a living, but love what you do. If you have passion for what you are doing, you will give the best of yourself."

What's the funniest thing that has happened to you as a lawyer? Three witnesses were sitting solemnly in the courtroom when suddenly the leg of the bench they were sitting on broke and they fell to the floor. It was hard to resist laughing in court.

What's the best advice you've received? Do what you must and try to treat every case as unique.

Which three qualities should a lawyer have? Being honest and truthful — even if it is not what the client expects to hear. Empathy — be

able to put yourself in your client's place. And common sense — to accept the best resolution for your client.

What law would you enact? Treatment for, and criminal prosecution against, school cyberbullying — there is a gap in the Spanish legal system for protecting defenceless minors.

How would you like to be remembered? As a professional who helped those who needed it. Helping clients win brings them happiness, and lawyers have that opportunity every single day.

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