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PROFESSOR JOHN UFF CBE KC

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Areas of Practice

- Arbitration
- Adjudications & ADR
- Acting as Counsel

Clerks' Details

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Practice Overview

John Uff originally trained as a civil engineer, becoming a specialist in geotechnics but after five years practice he transferred to the Bar and became Donald Keating's last pupil.

While developing an extensive practice in all areas of engineering and construction, he has maintained close interests in writing, lecturing and academia. In 1987 he became the founding Director of the Centre of Construction Law and Dispute Resolution at King's College, London, and was appointed to the Nash Chair of Engineering Law at the University of London in 1992. Since 2003 he is Emeritus Professor of Engineering Law at King's College. John Uff's national and international reputation has led to many appointments as arbitrator in substantial disputes in most parts of the world as well as being appointed to chair Public Inquiries in the UK and abroad.

He has maintained close contact with the engineering world through the ICE and the Royal Academy of Engineering. John has been closely involved in many developments in the construction industry over the past two decades, through committees and publications and has most recently spearheaded the engineering profession's drive to establish new code of ethics in the engineering profession. In 1996 he served as Chairman of a Public Inquiry into Yorkshire water. In 1998-2001 chaired two Public Inquiries into rail accidents: first the Southall inquiry and secondly, sitting jointly with Lord Cullen, into rail safety systems, following the Paddington crash. Most recently he was invited to a chair panel of Commissioners inquiring into the activities of the public construction industry in Trinidad and Tobago. His report, which received wide publicity throughout the Caribbean, was delivered to the President in March 2010. His professional activities have included serving on the Court and appointment as a Vice President of the London Court of International Arbitration and serving as President of the Society of Construction Arbitrators and Master of Worshipful Company of Arbitrators.

Recent Cases

Appointed Arbitrator

John Uff has worked on many substantial arbitrations, as sole arbitrator, Chairman or Tribunal member throughout the world from Australasia and the Far East to the Middle East, Europe and North America of which the following is a recent selection.

- Sole Arbitrator on a wide range of disputes on an off-shore gas rig in Australia.
- Party arbitrator in an ad hoc Tribunal dealing with disputes on design and construction of a nickel and cobalt process plant in Western Australia.
- Chairman of LCIA Tribunal for major disputes on oil installation in Southern Iraq.
- Party arbitrator in ICC case concerning construction of silos in Iran.
- Chairman of a UNCITRAL tribunal dealing with disputes on major building project in Eastern Europe.

“Hugely experienced with a strong background in engineering.”

Legal 500 UK Bar, 2020

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- Chairman of ICC Tribunal for delay and defects issues on major power plant in Thailand.
 - Chairman of ICC Tribunal on disputes arising from construction of substantial oil-transfer facility in North Africa.
 - Party arbitrator on disputes arising from the construction of two high-spec oil drilling vessels.
 - Sole arbitrator in LCIA dispute in Caribbean concerning design and construction of substantial beach resort.
 - Chairman of ICC Tribunal dealing with issues of delay and defects on international construction project in Gibraltar.
 - Chairman of ad hoc Tribunal dealing with large number of disputes arising from design and construction of military air-base in Gulf region.
 - Party arbitrator in ICC Tribunal dealing with delay and determination issues arising from power transmission works, South Pacific.
 - Chairman of ICC Tribunal dealing with disputes including determination on natural gas process plant, Greece.

“He is first rate. He is also greatly experienced and has a professional qualification in engineering.”

Chambers UK Bar, 2015

Appointed in Adjudications & ADR

John Uff has been appointed on a substantial number of adjudications and ADR proceedings in recent years dealing with claims on major projects.

- Termination of manufacturing plant in North Africa.

- Delay and disruption dispute on national motorway structure.
- Termination of major bank construction project.
- Rail network maintenance contracts.
- Refurbishment works at a major national gallery.
- A major port and ferry terminal upgrade.
- Disputes arising from substantial military installation.

“Displays impressive strength in international arbitration, and is regularly appointed in disputes located across the world and held under a range of rules. He maintains a particular focus on engineering and construction matters.”

Chambers UK Bar, 2014

Acting as Counsel

- Acting for the Treasury Solicitor on projects including:
- PFI project for water services.
- Major facility for UK armed services.
- Disputes on PFI project for National Laboratory.

Also giving specialist advice on construction projects and procedures for dispute resolution, particularly involving international issues and parties.

Selected Reported Cases

Bay Hotel & Zurich Indemnity Company v Cavalier Construction [2001] Privy Council Appeal No. 32 of 2000, on enforcement of an AAA award in Turks and Caicos Islands.

John Mowlem Construction Plc v Secretary of State for Defence [2000] CILL 655 Commercial Court, on time limits for the conduct of arbitration.

McAlpine Humberoak Ltd v McDermott International Inc [1992] 58 BLR 1, Court of Appeal on the effect of variations in design in the overall interpretation of the contract and in determining entitlement to extension of time.

Department of Environment v Thomas Bates [1991] AC 499, House of Lords, on the recoverability of economic loss in the tort of negligence.

Education & Professional Career

BSc, Engineering, King's College, London	1963
PhD, Geotechnics, King's College, London	1966
Called to the Bar (Gray's Inn)	1970
Keating Chambers	1970

Fellow, Institution of Civil Engineers	1982
Queen's Counsel	1983
Director, Centre of Construction Law & Management	1987-99
Nash Professor of Engineering Law, King's College, London	1992
Head of Keating Chambers	1992-97
Fellow, Royal Academy of Engineering	1995
Fellow, King's College, London	1997
Recorder and Deputy Judge of the Technology and Construction Court	1998
President's Medal, Society of Construction Law	2000
CBE for services to rail safety	2002
Gold Medal, Institute of Civil Engineers	2002

Appointments

Council of the Institution of Civil Engineers	1982-85
Standing Committee on Structural Safety	1986-91
Dept. of Environment Committee on Latent Damage Insurance	1986-88
DTI Advisory Committee on Arbitration Law	1993-97
Chairman, Independent Commission of Inquiry into Yorkshire Water	1996
Chairman, Public Enquiry into Southall Train Crash	1999
Joint Chairman (with Lord Cullen) of Public Inquiry into Train Protection Systems	2001
President, Engineering Section of British Association for Advancement of Science	2003-4
Vice President, London Court of International Arbitration	2003
President, Society of Construction Arbitrators	2004
Honorary Member, Society of Construction Law (KL & Selangor)	2006
Chairman, Commission of Inquiry into Public Construction sector, Trinidad and Tobago	2009-10
Treasurer, Gray's Inn	2011
Master, worshipful Company of Arbitrators	2015
KLRCA Panel of Arbitrators	2017-20

Seminars, Publications & Papers

- Co-author, Keating on Construction Contracts - Tenth Edition (2016)
- Construction Law - 12th Edition in preparation (2016)
- Contributor, Keating on Construction Contracts - 4th to 10th Edition (2016).
- Joint author, Chapter on Construction Contracts in 28th to 30th Edition of Chitty on Contracts (2014).
- Principal author: Construction Industry Model Arbitration Rules (1998).
- 100 - day Arbitration Rules.
- Principal editor for a series of Construction Law publications, King's College London: Construction Contract Policy (1989), International and ICC Arbitration (1990), Legal Obligations

in Construction (1992), Risk Management and Procurement in Construction (1995), Construction Law and the Environment (1997), New Horizons in Construction Law (1998).

- Joint author, Institution of Civil Engineers Arbitration Practice, Thomas Telford (1983).
- "How final should Dispute Resolution be" paper to Soc of Construction Law, July 2010, republished in ACLN.
- The Availability of treaty Arbitrations in Construction (jointly) Int Construction Law Rev September 2010.
- "The responsibility of being an engineer": Presidential keynote address, BA Festival of Science, Exeter University (2004)
- "Legal duties at the fringe: ethics in construction law": 4th Michael Brown Lecture, King's College, London (2003)
- "Engineering Ethics: do Engineers owe duties to the public": Royal Academy of Engineering Lloyds Register lecture (2002)
- "Risk in Engineering": Thomas Hawksley Memorial Lecture, Institution of Mechanical Engineers (2002)
- Keynote paper, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators' Conference, Dublin. "Dispute resolution in the 21st Century." Arbitration r.67 p.4 (2001).