

Sally Penni:

Hello and welcome to Talking Law, I'm Sally Penni, MBE, a barrister at Kenworthy's Chambers in Manchester, the Joint Vice Chair of Association of Women Barristers and founder of Women in the Law UK.

On this podcast, you'll hear leading barristers, judges, solicitors, managing partners and more, talk about their lives and careers within the legal sector.

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Before you meet today's guest, a reminder that tickets for the Women in the Law UK Annual Dinner and Conference in Manchester this November are on sale now. Please visit [womeninthelawuk.com](https://www.womeninthelawuk.com) for more details.

I'd also love you to watch my recent Ted Talk, where I discuss whether love can conquer hate. Please head to [Ted.com](https://www.ted.com) and search for Sally Penni.

Today I'm Talking Law with lawyer and businesswoman and Margaret Casely Hayford CBE, a woman passionate about creating diversity on boards.

Previously, Margaret was Director of Legal Services and Company Secretary for the John Lewis Partnership for nine years. Before that she worked for twenty years with City law firm Dentons where she had been a partner.

I began by congratulating Margaret on the CBE she received in the Queen's honours a couple of years ago.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Yes, that's right. I was fortunate enough to be given an award in the Queen's Honors couple of years ago.

Sally Penni:

I always thought you had one, to be honest. Margaret, I think I used to call you Dame Margaret. Yeah, so I think that when it happened, I was like, 'oh, oh, I just assumed you had one for all your brilliant work', but Margaret, can we go back to beginning? And what was your CBE? And then I want to go back to your legal career really, and indeed what you are doing now.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

My CBE was for my work in charity and in promotion of diversity. So in essence when I came to the end of my term as Chair of Action Aid UK I was given it at that point. So I'm assuming that it was a reference to that, but I mean, in a way that's a little bit embarrassing because really you are just the recipient of an award that is, is ought to be shared with a huge range of people. You know, all the fantastic people that I've worked with in the charities that I've been involved with; Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, The Geffrye Museum, Action Aid UK you know, I've just, I've just been incredibly fortunate. And the diversity work, I mean, I've been promoting women and, and trying to give them support to women and, and also people of ethnic minority backgrounds and LGBTQ community for years. And I feel really

passionately that nobody should be marginalized. So yes, I think it was in recognition of those different strands of who I am and what I've been promoting for years.

Sally Penni:

Brilliant. Well, Margaret, let's go back to beginning because you started life at the bar and then you went in-house as a solicitor. Are you from a family of lawyers? How did you become a barrister who then became a lawyer?

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Well, to be honest, there were a number of lawyers before in the family. So it wasn't terribly imaginative. I mean, I actually wanted to be ballet dancer. For a long time, I, I, I told my mother I wasn't going to go to university. I wanted to go to dance school and she wasn't very impressed by that. But then I decided, 'yes, she was right. It would be a great profession to be, to enter into'. So I went off to Oxford and read Jury's Prudence and followed in the family of tradition. But as I say that, then it, it wasn't very imaginative cuz my grandfather set up Chambers in Accra. And members of the family, like my grandfather, my uncle Archie qualified as barristers in the UK and then returned to Ghana to join the family chambers. But my father decided that law wasn't for him.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

So even though he read law, studied law, he, he retrained reified as an accountant and that's the reason why my immediate family stayed here. But then something in the deans I suppose, led me to back to the law. Absolutely. But my family had a propensity for political involvement as journalists, activists, commentators, and knowledge of the law is something that I've always thought was a good basis for creating change. So for me it was, I just found it really exciting to really particular focus on the areas of the law, where it impacted on that the state impacted on individual's lives. And so planning and development, administrative law, local government law, central government law, you know all of that side of things really, really, I find very exciting. So that, that was great. But I have to say my father leaving the tradition, sort of freed up the next generation, which is how my brother Joe went into fashion, set up the Casely-Hayford label that his son Charlie's taken over.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Since Joe died and Peter went into television, he became unit manager on Panorama. He co-founded 2020 television. After he left Panorama and Gus became a cultural historian and he became executive director of one of the Smithsonian museums. And now he's here setting up the VNA east as, as executive director, which is really wonderful. So my father sort of opened the door for other opportunities for the next generation. My cousin, Michael who also read law, he then went into filmmaking. So he was really pleased about that, you know, sort of break of tradition! Because he was Archie son. So yeah. Wow. It's, it's, there's a sort of legal dynasty if you like. So I, I was probably the least boring of – sorry! - least interesting of my generation. So to speak.

Sally Penni:

Well I don't know about that when one looks at your, your career.

Margaret tell me you are the first black, you were a female partner in the city and certainly were, and that's historic, but when you came to the bar, why did you leave the bar to go and become a solicitor? And what was it like all those years ago?

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

It began with being, being a barrister in, in administrative law set of chambers 4/5 Grazing Square. 4/5 Grazing Square is actually really interesting because whereas most of the chambers focused on administrative law were solely that, or that the planning side attached to a sort of a landlord and tenant side. So very focused on property development. 4/5 Grazing Square had the commercial side. So it was administrative law and commercial, which I think is wonderfully rounded. And I love that mix. But I mean really it was just for me incredibly daunting. I, I was like a I was like a rabbit in the headlights.

I think I'd aspired to it for such a long time that I built it up in my head and it became bigger than I could handle.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

So I, I went into working as a solicitor, still in an administrative law, focusing on planning and development. So still the same area of law. And the funny thing was that I did advocacy in planning inquiries. So in other words - the range of my work was the same, but it just felt more manageable. It just felt less daunting. And - it's interesting because you know, now as chance of university, I, I stand on my Trotters and talk to the students every year at the graduations as Chair of the Shakespeare's Global give talks all the time. And you know, I don't find any of that daunting. And I think that it was just, it was just at the wrong time in my life. And I could probably have gone back into, you know, being a barrister later. And really, really enjoyed it and found it much less daunting. But at the time I, it just got too big for me and I was just completely just overwhelmed by it. Yes. So it was right for me to step away from it because I'd have been completely useless.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Then I went into Dentons – we built a planning team that was incredibly strong and you know, we became known as, depending on which legal chart you looked at, we were the first or second for years, you know, in, in terms of the best in the, in, in the country, the best planning, and development team. So that was wonderful. And as a leader of a team like that, I was immensely proud of my colleagues and the work that we did, and we had some terrific clients. And so that was, that was really exciting thing to do, to build a brand, to build a reputation because planning itself, wasn't really very much of a, a subject or a draw when I first went into planning and we, we sort of put planning as a concept on the map, which was just great.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

That was really exciting. And, and I, I did that for 20 years and I'm, and a number of our clients were retail clients. So I, I developed quite a knowledge of retail. And so when I was asked, whether I would go into the John Lewis partner partnership as director of legal yeah. I just thought, oh my goodness, why not such a great organization, high ethics retail, which was, you know, pretty much in my DNA <laugh>. So I went to do that. I did that for nine years. And basically I retired after what was in effect 30 years as a lawyer. And that's when I developed my portfolio career and I was asked whether I'd throw my hat in the ring to be a chair of Action Aid UK. And I thought, well, it's worth a try. I didn't think I'd land the role for one second.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

And I couldn't believe it when I got it. I was so thrilled because again, you know the ethics that I espouse the ambition to try to make the lives of others better or help others to make their own lives better was just everything that I wanted to do. So I was so thrilled and I just really loved the being at the helm of

again, a wonderful organization. So yeah, I just think I've been incredibly lucky. So that the, I suppose the thread there was high ethics organizations trying to do the best they could. And being part of that was really empowering, energizing, and just made it, you know, worth getting out of bed for. So that was fantastic. But also the, the fact that being on a board, you are really governance focused and that's something that's always dear to my heart, you know, just getting the governance. Right. So you are doing things properly trying to make sure that you're doing things with integrity. So that means a lot to me as well.

Sally Penni:

You make it sound so, so easy, but let me remind you, you were chair of the library and information association, commissioner of the rose commission, ex-director of the NHS England. I wonder if you might have forgotten some of these? Member of the board of trustees, of Ratcliff trust, you know, he's err, radically of trust, you know, lots of really interesting things. GOSH, Great Ormond street. And then you've, you've been judging and mentoring hundreds of people because we know each other because of Forward Ladies - an organization, which is trying to push female entrepreneurs and female business women.

But it's not just being legally focused, has it your career. And you know, you could have sat on the boards of law firms for example, but you haven't done. I, I just wonder where that drive came from and perhaps, you know, any advice you might have for women and men who are thinking about portfolio careers beyond the law or alongside the law?

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Well, first of all, I have been on numbers of organizations. I've been incredibly lucky because I've been asked to do so many interesting things and I, I actually, I like a challenge. So when I'm asked to do something it's really exciting that my first thought is to say, 'yes, I'll give it a try' and then just do as much homework as I possibly can to make sure that I can actually accommodate it and do it, do it, you know, do it to the best of my ability. But being on, on, on for example a member of the, The Rhodes Commission, considering whether the statue of Cecil Rhodes ought to stay or, or not, yeah, those sorts of activities are because I think that I want society to be the best it can for everybody within it.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

And I recognize that there are some tasks that are really challenging that and that but, but somebody needs to do it. So that's why I'm really happy to help out with that sort of task and organizations like the British council, you know, the review of the British Council. I love the British Council. My mother worked for the British council. So we grew up understanding its reach and its its importance - almost a sort of public PR person as well as educator about Britain. And the links that it has with the Commonwealth and beyond to me are really important. So I, it was a, it was a privilege to be part of that. The Libraries Association asked me to review their diversity, the diversity as it impacted on two of the oldest awards for children's books, Carnegie and Greenaway awards.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Yes. And I, I just thought, well, 'my goodness, me, that's huge because if children are reading books that don't actually represent them or they can't see themselves. Or if writers from diverse backgrounds, whether, you know, they're gay writers, whether they're female writers or ethnic minorities are not actually having the same opportunities or in fact male writers!! Cause I think that numbers of categories, male writers, don't far as well as female writers. So it, we should all have an opportunity to say what we

would like to say. And so the audiences can have, can, can have the widest possible range of voices to choose from or to see themselves in. So that for me was absolutely just gold dust. I loved being chair of that enterprise. And so, so the portfolio side of my career has really been to try to create a society.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

This is sort of society that gives opportunity for people to be their best. And that's really, really what I I strive for. And that came out of the fact that I realized that I'd had a relatively privileged background - I went to good school, went to, what I think it was the best university <laugh>. And I, I, you know, I just think that if you've had a good grounding and you know, I went into a good career, then the best you can do is to give other people an opportunity to, to make the best of themselves. You, you know, you've gotta send the lift back down as they say yes. So, so that's really, that's been my impetus. And it's even my impetus when I go onto boards, the type of boards that I choose to go onto the ones that have reach the ones that have integrity, the ones that are trying and striving

Sally Penni:

Yes.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

To, to, to, to, to improve society for others. So, so that's the backdrop. And then what I would say is to those who want to go onto boards is that you have to remember that you are going on with your particular skill. Whether it's IT, finance, marketing, law, whatever it is. Yes. That's why you are there. But you are not there to be operational and that's actually quite, that's quite a tough thing for people. It

Sally Penni:

Is yes.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

To think about that, 'oh my goodness, it's a different category of I'm there to be strategic and supportive and challenging, not rolling my sleeves up and getting stuck into the detail and trying to, you know, deliver the operation'. So once you've got your head into that mindset, then you, you will be able to analyze, guide, challenge and support appropriately. And then of course, you've got to demonstrate good judgment and integrity. But it's huge fun and it's it's just so essential really, because if you are actually at the cold face and delivering, it's so useful to be able to have somebody who's actually standing to one side and able to give you a view on things that you might not necessarily see because you're too close to, to it. Or to challenge you, if you, if, if, if you are heading off in a direction and you have necessarily asked yourself the right questions, really, really valuable to have that outside perspective.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

So I would encourage anyone who has a talent to take that onto another enterprise. But the other thing is that you get a lot back because you actually learn a lot from being amongst others who've been there actually do your own day job better. So the sooner you start the better it is, because it actually helps you with your own operational activities and ambitions yes. And delivery. So that, it's a two way thing. It's not just that you are giving you are also getting an enormous amount. I mean, I never cease learning as I am on as I do on boards. And for that reason, I love it as well because you just get perpetual growth, which is really exciting,

Sally Penni:

Really exciting. And do you know what, cuz I sit on a number of boards, school governor which I suppose is a, is a board of course. But the theater, the housing board. And so I'm glad you said that about, you know, doing it, it assists one's own day job if you like at the bar. And I know a number of barristers and solicitors who, who do the same, so it is really useful. And I am an ambassador for women on boards. So I'm always keen for lawyers, especially, to start their portfolio career or NED career as, as soon as.

But I wonder if we can move on to the university students. You're chancellor of Coventry University. And I think that's amazing because I follow you, you know, you're at the graduations, you're giving speeches, you're really encouraging a and from that aspect of your career, really don't worry. I'm not gonna carry on reading all your amazing achievements.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

<Laugh>

Sally Penni:

From the university side, what, what advice would you have for young people, you know, wanting to enter career in law or anything for that matter? Any advice or tips for a career in law for those who perhaps are aspiring to enter.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

I think probably the best thing that one could expect or advise young people these days to do is to be resilient. Because you, the world is changing so quickly. You dunno, what's coming. I mean, who would've anticipated any of what's happened over the last couple of years. So you've got to think about how you are going to be bounce back from adversity. You've got to think about being flexible, therefore. So in other words if you have a chosen path and external activities, external operations, external environmental changes deflect you from that we've gotta think about just how best you can bounce back. What is it you've learned from that and how will that enable you to move off in a different direction? In other words, you can't just sit there licking your wounds.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

You've really got to think about how flexible you can be. And for that reason, I think that trying to be more interdisciplinary multidisciplinary rather than univalent is really key for this generation. No one can be just one thing. And, and I, I know I'm, I'm actually preaching to the converted. So many young people I talk to these days are not only focusing on a specific career, you'll find out that they've got their own little sideline that they're also building. Yes. Which is so impressive, but is actually the right thing to do because we don't know that the profession that you are focusing on now is going to be there in five years. There is almost no profession that won't be streamlined or changed by algorithms. Yes. In due course. Yes. And if that happens and you find that you've suddenly got to go off in a different direction, it's great.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

If you've actually been thinking about where that might be, what that might look like, how you might shape your future differently. I think we're all going to have to be creatures of portfolio. We're all going to have to be really, really versatile. Yes. And quick to change. So agility, flexibility are, are really going to be important, reading around your subjects and subjects of those with whom you come contact,

whether it's your suppliers, whether it's those whom you sell, whether it's your clients really, really read around their subject. Because one of the really key things about work, the work environment is people are buying into you. They're not just buying your skills. They want to know that you are a good person to be with, to work with. And the best way to do that is to demonstrate that you've actually done your homework about who they are and what they're doing so that you can engage with them on a slightly deeper level than just, 'this is what I deliver'.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

And that's, you know, it's that engagement. And I, I do remind students that every year thousands of people are coming out of university with the same qualification as you. So you are literally one of thousands, so what is it that's going to make you special? And it is that ability to bring something deeper that something deeper can also be what makes you a fun person. So, I mean, if you are a musician, as well as, you know, your professional role or if you are really into sport or, you know, whatever it is that you are, you are really passionate about H culture and whatever it is, take that into your work so that you can talk about it with your clients who knows you might be talking to a client who had shares the same passion or yes. Might be converted by your passion.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

So that, you know, that's all, it's all really what makes you an interesting person and not dull. So and so, so that's really, really important that don't lose sight of yourself. And, and then finally, I would say in not losing sight of yourself, your friends and your family are the most important parts of your life. So don't become all work. Because one day the work won't be there. Yes. and you need to, to know that there's more to you, there's more and that you have given of yourself to them so that they want to want still to be with you and to be part of you. And not only that, if you have a really Torri and dreadful time at work, which could easily happen it's great to be able to go away and go home and be with your friends and family because they will be your strength.

Sally Penni:

Yes. Well, that's such, such great advice because of course we all forget that, but that leads me nicely to asking you about wellbeing and of course on both branches of our profession, including paralegals and Sox and so on it's long hours and there's an easy tendency to burn out. So I, I wonder what you've done for wellbeing or what would you like to do? You mentioned ballet earlier and I can see actually you've got a wonderful posture about you, which is why I forced my, yeah, my daughter's like, 'I don't wanna do ballet anymore'. I'm like 'you are going because you need to have a better posture'!

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

<Laugh>

Sally Penni:

Than me. So I dunno if you, if you are still doing any ballet at all to look after your wellbeing, but H how do you relax and what do you do for kind of, you know, mental health and, and wellbeing and agility and wellness, really

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Good question. Even now to this day I do a ballet class.

Sally Penni:

Wow. I was right.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Yes, absolutely. I went for so it's really interesting because the other women in the class, we're all of an age we've sort of grown old together. <Laugh> I noticed that that, that, that our teacher actually particularly often, if we've had a break for a holiday, she'll say 'now, now ladies are going to take us easily. We're going to have an easy class today and take, we'll go, we're gradually built up over the term back to, to strength'. And so she, she recognizes that we're not as agile as we were, but it, but even so it's that, that moment when you can just be us be in yourself and it's just the time for yourself is so important. So, so there's that I play the cello really badly, not in concerts, not for anybody else, just because I love the sound of it. It's a wonderful instrument. And I've been so fortunate. I've had great teachers in the past. And then I love my garden. I spend a few minutes here and there rushing around madly, trying to keep on top of the, of nature.

Sally Penni:

<Laugh> Yes, yes. <Laugh>.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

And then I try to cook I. I know little bit things that I do here and there that are just away from work, but I have to say that I suppose I'm a bit of a workaholic, but that's because I, I do things that I enjoy that are around the work. So if I'm, if I'm working on a specific paper I'll read around the subject because the investigation of wider areas that are tangential to the subject itself. Yeah. I find really interesting. And I have to be really quite strictly myself not to go off to down too many rabbit holes in investigation because otherwise I never leave my desk. And that's why it's really good to have these punctuations, like the dance class. Yes. That, you know, you are routinely having to do to take yourself away from work. And that as far as wellbeing's really important, and then we've got a dog say, my daughter, we walk the dog and he's just got a gorgeous sappy personality we love walks in the countryside and just, just sets just divine. And, you know, even though it rains all the time, <laugh>, it's just incredibly beautiful. <Laugh>.

Sally Penni:

You're only saying that - you should try living in Manchester. Right? You know, every time I come to London, I'm like, wow, look at the sunshine.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Absolutely. Don forget, I'm on the board of the co-op. So I go up,

Sally Penni:

Of course. Yes. You know, when you come in about the rain ever again, you're just think, thinking about your heritage of sunny, sunny climates of Ghana and beyond, that's why you was moving about the, the weather. In fact, today it's stopped raining in Manchester.

And what about Margaret books? Do you read a lot, if you got a favorite book, perhaps you could share, because we've got a book club, so we're always looking for good books or a book that's a favorite of

yours and why, and then a legal character. I'm gonna ask you about favorite legal character. <Laugh> can't say Rumpole cause that's mine!

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

OK. OK. So yes. I mean music, reading, politics, and theater of course, with the globe, I see every production at the globe. I love theater as well. So the I, my passions are wide, but I do like reading enormously and I have to say, I'm gonna be naughty here because I'm, I'm going to say that my favorite book is my grandfather's book, Ethiopia Unbound, not just for the obvious reason that he, it was written by my grandfather, but also because it is according to the publishers the first novel being published by a black African it was published in 1911. I, I mean, I don't know whether that's, that's correct, but that it's first, but it's pretty early. Yeah. And essentially he tells the story of a, a young Cambridge graduate who African heritage - basically his experience and what that does to him. And when he goes back to Ghana and meets a former friend and colleague from Cambridge who who's white and notices the way in which the white character treats him. So that sort of highlights to him the way in which he's subjugated his own heritage.

Sally Penni:

Yes.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

And so he then starts to think differently about how we ought to be proud of our heritage. And he called it Ethiopia Unbound because at that stage, Ethiopia was the only country in Africa that wasn't yet colonized. And so, and he was basically urging the whole of Africa to come out from under colonization and to recognize the importance of our own heritage. Yes. And he uses classical analogies talking about Roman, Roman and Greek influences and talks, draws analogies with our own influences. And it's a, it's a powerful little tone. It's not very long, but it says so much. And in such an easily readable fashion, because it's written as a novel.

Sally Penni:

Yes.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

And it's a beautiful little book I basically during lockdown revisited it, I hadn't read it for something like, you know, 25, 30 years and then during lockdown I revisited it and I just felt so proud. Wow. And so, so that's the book I'm going to refer to.

Sally Penni:

Brilliant. Now

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

You asked me about my favorite legal character was it?

Sally Penni:

Yeah.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

And I'm not going to go the Atticus Finch way.

Sally Penni:

Oh,

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

I see. I see. You, oh you are probably too young. When I was young, there was series called paper chase on the television.

Sally Penni:

Oh Right?

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

It was the, the lawyer was a professor called Charles Kingsfield and Charles Kingsfield was paid by this incredibly sort of crotchety old actor called Houseman.

Sally Penni:

Ah, I'm gonna look this up. I'm writing it down

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

On Houseman and it, it, it was brilliant because basically it was a story about a, a first year law graduate and the graduates sorry, undergraduate. And he just his life at, at, at law school, Harvard law school and how this incredibly demanding contract law tutor basically gave him a code for life through his legal teaching. And I remember if I remember rightly - it is such a long time ago. I think the young chap had a, had a, a crush on professor Kings field's daughter and professor Kingsfield didn't think very much on of that, about of that. But he tried, he tried to teach the young people just basically as I say, just sort of lessons for life through legal interpretation and there was always integrity at the back of it. And he tried to make them put the work in, he wouldn't spoon-feed them. And then there was always a point about self-reliance and dignity and I just thought it was wonderful. And I just remember looking at this and thinking, 'oh my goodness, me, yes. I do want to be a lawyer after all'. So, but then I have to say that there are others because I, I loved Harvey Spector in Suits who

Sally Penni:

Was just, oh yes, yes,

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Kinda sharp and witty. And you know, all these incredible one liners and a bit of a loner. And I just remember being in the city and these in, in the early nineties, when all these incredible steel and glass buildings were going up with this transparent lift and, and yeah, when we moved into our build new building with the atrium and the trees and in the city and it was all so chic and Harvey Spector in suits reminded me of those days, that Dentons. And then of course Ally McBeal.

Sally Penni:

Yes, absolutely

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Incredibly young, strong female professional who was a little bit flaky, but tried to conceal the flakiness and she, again, she wore sharp clothes and, and I was really lucky because my brother Joe is a fashion designer. I used to wear his, his incredible suits and ah, and so I felt very sort of Ally McBeal and tottering about in ridiculously high heels and

Sally Penni:

Oh, I lo I love that. I mean, I mean between Joe and you know O Oslan I mean, honestly that's my dream you know, probably have to stop being at the bar and do more Pilates to fit into any of those now, you know, three children later, but I could picture you now very smart, looking great.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

I think there's a lovely thing about Ally McBeal was sometimes she got it horribly wrong. So she was a little bit chaotic sort of the, sort of the young engineer trying to balance. So a woman's private life with a legal career and, and again, there was always that bit of the juggling and the quiet sort of panic in the loo when you say, 'did I say that'? And, and you know, so there was that real reality of, of not always getting it right. Which is completely brilliant and absolutely all of us. And yeah.

Forgive me for having three fictional lawyers!

Sally Penni:

I'll let you off, I'll let you off, you've got a CBE and you're the first black partner. So that that's the main reason. But you know, Margaret, tell me one of the things you are brilliant at, if I may say, so is using your platform, you know, using your voice and you've done a TED talk which is amazing. I've seen it is brilliant. I'll, I'll link it to this actually.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Oh, that would be perfect.

Sally Penni:

But you also use the social media platforms very well, LinkedIn, primarily, I think, but I see you on Twitter now and again. Yes. And I just wonder, you know, when did you decide to use your voice and use the modern technology for good? Often you're just sharing positive stories. Sometimes you're calling out stuff on diversity, tos and D&I initiatives. And I really like it, but I just wondered because there are other people who could do that perhaps they don't, or they're not comfortable or they didn't know how, so how did that come about that you were using, you know, beyond the tech talk, but using the modern ways to use your voice on the platforms?

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

It actually started when I was at Dentons because essentially I, on one occasion we went for a job and the client got us down to a short list of two and then we didn't get it and so when we asked for feedback, the client said, 'well, we'd heard of the other practice and we hadn't heard of you'. And that was all that was in it because in the end we couldn't decide because you know, you were both excellent. And I thought, 'oh my goodness, me, that will never happen again. We have to build our brand'. So I said

about doing talks, writing articles, speaking with journalists and so on. And that's really what started it. I just thought you have to build your brand to make sure that people listen to you. So they, they so that they know who you are and what you're doing, what you can do. And, and gradually I realized that that also once people have heard about you, they're more likely to listen. And if you then do have the platform, you can use it for other people who don't have a voice.

Sally Penni:

Yes.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

So that's where it started. And I, I have to say that being able to use the platform for those who don't have a voice is the best thing that you can do because there are so many voiceless people and life can be so cruel to the voiceless. So if you've got the privilege and ability to speak out, then why not do that? So, so yeah, that I it's been very deliberate and, and I just, in a way just rue the fact that there aren't enough hours of the day. Yeah. And I know that, that if I worked in a, you know, for an organization, I could have a team of people

Sally Penni:

Doing it. Yes.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

I have to do it or myself. So I can't do as much as I'd like, which is really why not on Twitter as much as I, I perhaps ought to be because it just takes up too much time and I've got work to do. But yes, I mean, you, you are right. I do, I do use the media because it's some way of getting things out quickly.

Sally Penni:

Yes.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

And to a wider group of people than I might otherwise, if I was just standing up and speaking because if you stand up and speak, you speak to the 50 people in the room. If you put something on line, if it resonates, it goes to everybody else who wants to share it.

Sally Penni:

Absolutely. Absolutely. Well, we're hearing you now. I think there's 110,000 people who listen to this Globally. Yeah. And I'm not very good at measuring anything. Yeah. I know. <Laugh> we, we can hear you loud and clear Margaret <laugh>. Although it says you and I talking as if we're having a coffee, isn't it.

But Margaret, tell me earlier, when I asked you about the board of ActionAid and some of the earlier boards in your career, and you said, you know, I just said, 'yes, why not? I don't think I would get it'. And it made me think about imposter syndrome and some, well, the other kind of issues that we've kind of talked about in the background and you were saying, you know just then you were talking about brand and remembering, you know, people are buying into you, you know, what's special about you.

Sally Penni:

And they're all really great advice. And I just wondered if you've suffered from imposter syndrome because you seem to be very confident, strategic go getter. But actually, you know, we don't often talk about it and imposter syndrome can act as a catalyst. You know, if someone says you can't do this, I know for me when I was told actually at an interview for a scholarship, you can't, you can't become embarrassed or black. I thought, 'what the hell', I can't swear on my own podcast. <Laugh> I didn't say that. Right? Yes. Very polite. But, and the chat was talking about privilege. He was saying, I've got a privilege you haven't got and you possibly couldn't. And that acted as a catalyst from the one of the catalyst.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

The two separate things though, aren't they? I mean, yeah. Imposter syndrome is something that's self inflicted and that you think to yourself, 'oh my goodness. I can't possibly do this'. And certainly I do have that. And in fact, to a ludicrous extent not too long ago, I was asked whether I would take on a specific role and I thought, 'oh yes, I'd love to do that'. And then they told me what the salary was. And when I saw the salary, I thought, 'oh, crikey, they're expecting somebody mighty and that's not me'. So I deselected myself and I was talking to someone else later on and laughing about it and saying, you know, I just couldn't possibly have done it cause you it's this sucking great salary attached to it. And they said, 'you're mad. You would've been able to do that'. And for this was someone whose judgment I respect.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

So I was really upset with myself that I deselected and I thought I should have left it to someone else to decide. And so imposter syndrome certainly followed one around and I, and it, and it dogs everything.

But quite separately from that, there is the detractor and the detractor is the greatest spur of my life. Like you, if somebody tells me I can't do something. Yeah. And I, I think that they're doing it. They they're just disparaging me. Because I'm a woman or because I'm black or both, I will do it. <Laugh> and I will do it to the best of my ability and I will show you. Yeah. So yes I think they're two, two separate things and they, they act in, in totally different ways. And certainly the detractor is the greatest inspirer. The greatest inspiration, the greatest motivator of my life.

Sally Penni:

Yes. Yes. Well, Margaret, we're kind of coming to the close of our interview. I mean, we could talk forever to be honest. And I hope you'll come back as I'll find more reasons to have you back I'm sure.

But I wonder what's next, you've become a governing venture of the honorable society of Greys Inn like myself. And we're so thrilled. Penton's thrilled to have you there and another woman in the words of Lady Hale which is brilliant. So I would just wonder what's next, you know, Lord Reed has been talking about still, there's an absence of an ethnic minority in the Supreme Court down to one woman again Lady Rose again a bencher at Grays Inn. But I just wonder what's next for you, Margaret, if you, is there a book, are you thinking about the bench or are you thinking I don't know what, what's the future holding or are you just content want to carry on doing what you're doing so brilliantly?

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

I, I'm very fortunate in what I'm doing and both with the Globe and with Co-op. Oh, and also with Chancellor of Coventry,

Sally Penni:

Yes. I know. See, you should, let me railed off your pages and pages of achievement instead of getting all shy and embarrassed

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

<Laugh>, but I I've got some time left to run and I'm very happy doing those. So that's great. If other things are offered to me that I think I'm capable of doing, when I come to the end of the term of any of those, any, or all of those course, I'll give them consideration, but for the time being I'm, I'm doing things I really love and really happy doing them. So that's what the future is for – just keep moving to the best of my ability.

Sally Penni:

Wow. Well, I've got one last question for you. Now, relationships you've been married for a long time. Yes. You don't have to tell us how long, very, very long.

I just wonder, you know, what do you think is the key to a happy relationship, happy marriage, family, life, whatever.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Gosh mutual respect and giving time to each other is really critical. Gosh, it's that's a really difficult one because

Sally Penni:

Yeah, it's a work in progress, right?

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

It's a work in progress. Exactly, exactly. We, we, we share each other's interests and we, we are mutually supportive of each other. But also I have to say we share the tasks at home as well. And that's really important because if one person is desperately juggling with all of the domestic tasks, as well as their day job then they're going to be just, you know, completely exhausted and probably a little bit resentful. So the best way to be able to have, and spend time with each other quality time with each other is also to share the domestic tasks so that they don't get on top of anyone. So, you know, for example, even a basic rule, like the one who cooks is not the one who clears up afterwards.

Sally Penni:

Oh yeah, we have that, yeah.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

You just enormously helpful because there's no, there's no discussion about it. It's just sort of an unwritten rule. And you know, just so we, we, we share the domestic chores. But also just because we, we are sufficiently alike that we actually like each other and that's really important. <Laugh> just, you know, do, is people get on which is just really critically important. So there's, yeah, there's the love, but there's also, there's also just liking each other as people which is so hugely important.

Sally Penni:

I know, and essential.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

Absolutely. So in other words, you are marrying your best friend. Yeah. Really just the best thing ever. And there are times when obviously, you know, you could happily throw something at your partner that <laugh> at, at the end of it, you've got to think to yourself, actually, I won't throw that cause actually really like this person, and I'm really glad that we, you, that this person's in my life. So it's about it. It's, it's so much to do with mutuality mutual respect, mutual support.

Sally Penni:

Yeah.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

And, and sharing just, yeah.

Sally Penni:

Wow. Well, I was waiting for him to come in in a moment and interrupt and say 'what we didn't like each other at all after all these years'.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

<Laugh> yeah, there is the tempting fate bit!

Sally Penni:

Oh no, I'm just joking.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

What have you done all day? You loser.

Sally Penni:

<Laugh>. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. Well lockdown showed us some of that, but that's a different, you know, we're all working, but Margaret it's been so wonderful to interview you on this podcast and hear about your career in law and the wonderful tips and advice and guidance that you've given us. Thank you so much for Talking Law with me.

Margaret Casely-Hayford:

It's been a huge pleasure and thank you very much for asking. We, I really enjoyed talking with you. Thank you.

Sally Penni:

A big thank you to Margaret Casely Hayford CBE, for Talking Law with me, Sally Penni

And thanks again to CBRE for supporting this episode. Do visit CBRE.com to find out more about the work that they do across the world.

If you would like to support Talking Law, then please get in touch. You can find me on twitter @sallypenni1 or search for Sally Penni MBE or Women in The Law UK on LinkedIn or Instagram.

Do make sure you catch up with previous episodes of Talking Law where you can hear my interviews with guests such as award-winning business lawyer and Managing Partner Tamara Box and human rights barrister Adam Wagner

Before I go, just a reminder to get your tickets for the Women In The Law UK annual dinner and watch my Ted Talk at [Ted.com](https://www.ted.com)

Thanks to our production team, Sam Walker and Michael Blades at What Goes On Media.
Bye for now.