

New Law Journal Profiles Haynes and Boone Partner Melanie Willems

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The *New Law Journal* (*NLJ*) recently profiled Haynes Boone Partner [Melanie Willems](#) and her unconventional career beginnings.

Willems trained as an opera singer and dedicated a year to musicology at the Sorbonne in Paris before changing her tune and applying for a prestigious law course – the Anglo-French Double Maîtrise, run by King’s College in London and the Sorbonne.

“I was lucky to win a place on this four-year course, which led to me gaining an LLB [undergraduate Bachelor of Laws degree], as well as a Maîtrise – a French law degree and an English law degree,” she told the *NLJ*. Willems then worked part time to earn her master’s degree in construction law and arbitration while she was employed as a newly qualified lawyer.

When Willems was still a relatively junior partner at a large law firm, she took the risk to set up her own international arbitration team that was highly successful. “I think it [thrived] because we care deeply about our clients and treat them as we would wish to be treated ourselves by professionals,” she said.

Asked if she would change anything about the legal profession, Willems said: “I want to contribute to improving diversity.”

Willems joined Haynes Boone in June as the new head of international arbitration in the London office. She has arbitrated complex matters for European, Asian and African companies under the major international rules, such as ICC, LCIA, UNCITRAL, and ICSID. She also sits as an arbitrator and represents clients in English courts.

To read the full *NLJ* profile on Willems, click [here](#).