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Emmeline Plews

Year of call: **2019**
Degree: **Classics (BA Hons, Oxon), Law (BA Hons, Cantab), BCL (Oxon)**

Emmeline's practice is focussed on employment law and employee competition, public law and human rights, and sports law. She is instructed on matters at all levels, including the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court. She also has a busy unled practice. She is recognised as a "rising star" in Employment in the Legal 500 and is a member of the Attorney General's C Panel of Counsel.

Recent highlights of Emmeline's practice include:

- Acted for the Secretary of State for Transport in the conjoined appeals to the Supreme Court in Shvidler v Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and Dalston Projects Ltd v Secretary of State for Transport [2025] UKSC 30;
- Acted for the ARC claimants in their challenge to the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 in R (ARC and others) v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government [2025] EWHC 2751 (Admin);
- Acted for the Eight Defendant in Guy Carpenter and Company Ltd and others v Willis Ltd and others, which was heard by way of speedy trial in November - December 2025.

Before coming to the Bar, Emmeline qualified and worked as a social worker in child protection services. She went on to practice in a family court team, working with children and their families in care proceedings.

EXPERIENCE

Employment

Emmeline is recognised as a "rising star" in employment law by Legal 500. Her practice spans both statutory employment law in the Employment Tribunals, focussing on whistleblowing and discrimination, and employee competition law in the High Court.

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Emmeline appears unled in the Employment Tribunal on a regular basis, frequently dealing with substantive preliminary issues and final hearings. Emmeline has particular experience of dealing with interim relief applications, and claims involving allegations of pregnancy/maternity discrimination and disability discrimination.

Emmeline taught Employment Law at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford between 2017 and 2022.

Cases

Omeniho v Uber Britannia Ltd

(2025)

Acted as sole counsel for the Respondent during proceedings and at the final hearing, successfully defending a challenge to its maternity provision for drivers on the grounds that it was directly and/or indirectly discriminatory on the basis of sex.

Hossain v Uber London Ltd

(2025)

Acted as sole counsel for the Respondent in a successful strike out application on grounds of abuse of process.

[Claimant employee] v [Employer]

(2025)

Acted as junior counsel for the Claimant bringing allegations of disability discrimination (with Craig Rajgopaul KC).

Shearing v Mr Cosmetics Ltd and another

(2025)

Acted as sole counsel for the Respondents in a successful strike out application concerning, inter alia, the scope of the protected characteristic of "marriage" under the Equality Act 2010.

Pregnancy and sex discrimination claim

(ongoing)

Acting for a financial institution and individual respondents in relation to wide-ranging and high value claims including pregnancy and sex discrimination, and equal pay.

[Claimant] v [Financial institution]

(ongoing)

Acting as junior counsel for a financial institution in response to wide-ranging whistleblowing and sex discrimination claims, having successfully defended an application for interim relief.

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[Claimant] v [Employer]

(2025)

Acted as junior counsel for an employer in response to whistleblowing allegations and an application for interim relief, raising complex issues of legal professional privilege.

Pregnancy and sex discrimination claim

(June 2024)

Acting for a company in response to claims for pregnancy, maternity and sex discrimination.

Unfair dismissal and disability discrimination claim

(May 2024)

Acted for a local authority in response to claims for unfair dismissal and discrimination arising from disability. The claim settled shortly before the final hearing.

Sex discrimination claim

(April 2024)

Acting for a financial institution in response to wide-ranging and high value claims, including sex discrimination and equal pay (with Diya Sen Gupta KC).

Hercules v Stella McCartney Limited

(November 2023)

Acted for the successful respondent in a 3-day final hearing in response to claims for disability discrimination and race discrimination. The Tribunal found that the Claimant was not disabled and that his claim for race discrimination raised issues of judicial proceedings immunity, with the result that all claims were struck out.

Unfair dismissal and sex discrimination claim

(July 2023)

Acted for the claimant bringing claims of unfair dismissal and sex discrimination.

Whistleblowing claim and interim relief application (June 2023)

(June 2023)

Acted for the respondent in response to wide-ranging allegations of whistleblowing and unfair dismissal, and an application for interim relief. The matter settled shortly before the interim relief hearing.

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Disability discrimination claim

April 2023

Acted for the corporate respondent and individual respondents in response to wide-ranging claims, including for unfair dismissal, indirect disability discrimination, failure to make reasonable adjustments and harassment.

Race discrimination claim

March 2023

Acted for an agency business in response to a claim for race discrimination and unpaid sums. Following a strike out application, the matter settled.

Abdelfattah v Profile Security Services Ltd

(March 2023)

Acted for the respondent in relation to claims for various claims of discrimination, unpaid sums and unfair dismissal. The majority of claims were struck out following a preliminary hearing to establish the date of termination and applicable time limits.

Whistleblowing claim

December 2022

Acted for the corporate respondent in response to a claim for whistleblowing dismissal. The claim was struck out.

TUPE advice

(November 2022)

Advised a regulator regarding the application of TUPE in light of its administrative powers.

Black v Imagination & others

Acted (led by Craig Rajgopaul) for the former CEO of Imagination Technologies in his whistleblowing claim in relation to his high-profile dismissal, following allegations he made relating to national security concerns about a proposed boardroom coup by appointees of the Chinese government.

Beydoun v Hummingbird Technologies Ltd

(July 2022)

Acted for the successful Respondent in a preliminary hearing to determine whether the Tribunal had jurisdiction to hear the Claimant's claims. The issues included whether the Tribunal had (a) territorial jurisdiction; (b) employment status and (c) was brought within time. The judgment can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d7cf628fa8f50c0a8a4028/Mr_A_Beydoun_v_Hummingbird_Technologies_Ltd_.pdf

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Disability and sex discrimination claim

(2022)

Acted for the respondent company, resisting claims of disability and sex discrimination by a former employee. The matter settled following several preliminary hearings.

[A Headteacher] v [Education provider]

(2022)

Acted for a headteacher in a claim for constructive unfair dismissal as a result of bullying and harassment. The claim settled.

Zarembok v BP Plc and others

(2021)

Emmeline (led by Craig Rajgopaul) acted for the claimant, a senior trader, in a 6-week trial in the Employment Tribunal during September and October 2021, bringing claims for whistleblowing and parental leave detriment.

Maternity discrimination and unfair dismissal claim

(2020-21)

Emmeline (with Kerenza Davis) acted for the employer against claims for maternity discrimination and unfair dismissal.

Employee Competition

Emmeline is recognised as a "rising star" in employment by Legal 500. She has experience of acting both led and unled in the High Court, for both employers and employees, in relation to all employee competition issues. She taught Employment Law at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford between 2017 and 2022.

Cases

Guy Carpenter and Company Limited and others v Willis Ltd and others

(ongoing)

Acting as junior counsel for the Eighth Defendant in an employee competition claim, which was heard at a speedy trial in the High Court in November to December 2025. Judgement is awaited (with Craig Rajgopaul KC).

Acquinex Ltd and others v Howden Group Holdings Ltd and others

(ongoing)

Acting as junior counsel for the First to Fifth Defendants in an employee competition claim, listed for trial in January 2027.

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Partnership dispute

(2023)

Acted for the defendant in relation to a partnership dispute (with Tom Croxford KC).

Technology company

2022-2023

Acted for a technology company in relation to potential claims for springboard relief and damages (with Tom Croxford KC).

Recruitment consultants

(2022)

Acted for one of four defendant employees facing urgent applications for delivery up, provision of information and enforcement of restrictive covenants, and an application for a speedy trial. The employer brought claims for breach of contract, misuse of confidential information, unlawful conspiracy and inducing breach of contract. The matter settled before the speedy trial.

IT supply company

(2022)

Acting for an employer in relation to former employees' potential breaches of their duties while on garden leave, their restrictive covenants, and their use of confidential information.

IT service company

(2021)

Providing advice to an employer on the availability of injunctive relief in respect of confidential information retained by a former employee and the enforceability of restrictive covenants.

Employee Competition Dispute

(2021)

Emmeline (led by Diya Sen Gupta QC) acted for the insurance broker defendants in a dispute which included claims for breach of a non-solicitation covenant and misuse of confidential information. The matter settled shortly before the expedited trial.

Digital media team move

(2020)

Emmeline (led by Diya Sen Gupta QC) acted for a digital media company where there had been a team move.

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Public & Regulatory

Emmeline accepts instructions in all areas of public law and regulation. She has experience working both for claimants and for public bodies, including government departments and regulators, and is a member of the Attorney General's C Panel of Counsel.

She has particular experience where issues of public law, employment law and regulation overlap, as well as issues relating to the rights of children and young people, whether in educational, health or other contexts.

Cases

R (ARC and others) v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

[2025] EWHC 2751 (Admin)

Acted as junior counsel for the ARC claimants in their challenge to the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 (with Monica Carss-Frisk KC and Jason Pobjoy KC).

Dalston Projects Ltd v Secretary of State for Transport

[2025] UKSC 30

Acted as junior counsel for the Secretary of State in successfully defending the claimants' appeal to the Supreme Court (with James Eadie KC and Jason Pobjoy KC).

R (TR and others) v Secretary of State for Defence and others

Acted for multiple claimant families who successfully challenged the defendants' failure to bring them to the UK, having made offers under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Programme (with Tom Hickman KC and Naina Patel).

Dalston Projects Ltd and others v Secretary of State for Transport

[2024] EWCA Civ 172

Acted for the successful Secretary of State for Transport in response to the claimants' challenge to the decision to detain the superyacht, the Phi, under the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, both in the High Court (with Jason Pobjoy) and in the Court of Appeal (with James Eadie KC and Jason Pobjoy). The case has been appealed to the Supreme Court.

R (Law Society of England and Wales) v Lord Chancellor

[2024] EWHC 155 (Admin)

Acted for the Law Society in its challenge to the Lord Chancellor's response to the recommendations made in the Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review (with Tom de la Mare KC, Jason Pobjoy and Gayatri Sarathy). The Law Society successfully established that the Lord Chancellor had acted irrationally and breached his Tameside duty.

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Prevention of harassment and sexual misconduct

(May 2023)

Advised a regulator in relation to proposals to tackle harassment and sexual misconduct.

TUPE advice

(November 2022)

Advised a regulator regarding the application of TUPE in light of its administrative powers.

R (Annington Property Ltd & ors) v Secretary of State for Defence

[2023] EWHC 1154 (Admin)

Acted (led by Monica Carss-Frisk KC and Jason Pobjoy) for the Claimants in this commercial judicial review challenging the Secretary of State's decisions relating to enfranchisement of Service Family Accommodation. The matter is currently on appeal.

C3 and C4 v Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Affairs

[2023] EWCA Civ 444

Acted for the successful Respondent in response to two habeas corpus applications brought by two British citizens detained in North-East Syria in the Divisional Court ([2022] EWHC 2772 (Admin)) and in the Court of Appeal (with Sir James Eadie KC and Jason Pobjoy).

R (AAA (Syria)) v Secretary of State for the Home Department

[2023] UKSC 42

Acted for the AAA Claimants, individuals who have sought asylum in the UK, and who were subject to decisions by the Secretary of State to remove them to Rwanda, before the Divisional Court ([2022] EWHC 3230), the Court of Appeal ([2023] EWCA Civ 745) and the Supreme Court (with Jason Pobjoy, Will Bordell and Rayan Fakhoury).

Havant Biogas and others v OFGEM

Acted for Ofgem following the judgment of Mr Justice Fordham in a judicial review of its refusal to accredit the Claimants as participants in a state subsidy scheme for renewable energy production ([2021] EWHC 84 (Admin)). A claim for compensation for breach of the right to property (A1P1) is now proceeding in the TCC.

Afghan Relocations and Assistance Programme

(2021-2022)

Acting pro bono in relation to several applications under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Programme following the collapse of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

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Statutory injunction

(2022)

Acted for a regulator in an application for a statutory injunction to enforce compliance with regulatory requirements (led by Alan Maclean QC).

RIIO-2 energy price controls

(2021)

Emmeline acted for Ofgem in the RIIO-2 energy price control appeals (with Emily Neill and Natasha Simonsen). The CMA's final determinations can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/energy-licence-modification-appeals-2021

Tavistock and Portman Trust v Bell

[2021] EWCA Civ 1363

Emmeline (with Jason Pobjoy) acted for four charities granted permission to intervene in the appeal from the High Court's decision regarding the right of children and young people under 18 to consent to puberty blockers.

Challenge to Parole Board Rules 2019

(2021)

Representing the Secretary of State for Justice in using the 21-day reconsideration mechanism introduced following the Warboys case (led by Jason Pobjoy).

G v G

[2021] UKSC 9

Successfully acted for the mother in her appeal against the Court of Appeal's decision that her daughter had to have made a separate independent asylum application in order to be entitled to protection from refoulement. The Supreme Court held that a child will be an asylum applicant, and be entitled to protection from refoulement, where he or she is objectively understood to be making an application, regardless of whether a separate application is made in the child's own name (with Jason Pobjoy).

Halabi v The Crown Court at Southwark

(2020)

Following the Divisional Court’s judgment dismissing the claimant’s challenge to the Crown Court’s decision to impose notification requirements under s.97 of the SOA 2003, the application for permission to appeal under the AJA 1962 was successfully dismissed (assisting Hanif Mussa).

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Civil Liberties & Human Rights

Emmeline accepts instructions in all areas of public law and regulation. She has experience working for both claimants and public bodies, including government departments and regulators, and is a member of the Attorney General's C Panel of Counsel. She has particular experience regarding human rights issues arising in the refugee and immigration context, and A1P1 claims arising in commercial contexts.

Cases

R (ARC and others) v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

[2025] EWHC 2751 (Admin)

Acted as junior counsel for the ARC claimants in their challenge to the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 (with Monica Carss-Frisk KC and Jason Pobjoy KC).

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(May 2023)

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[2023] EWCA Civ 444

Acted for the successful Respondent in response to two habeas corpus applications brought by two British citizens detained in North-East Syria in the Divisional Court ([2022] EWHC 2772 (Admin)) and in the Court of Appeal (with Sir James Eadie KC and Jason Pobjoy).

R (AAA (Syria)) v Secretary of State for the Home Department

[2023] UKSC 42

Acted for the AAA Claimants, individuals who have sought asylum in the UK, and who were subject to decisions by the Secretary of State to remove them to Rwanda, before the Divisional Court ([2022] EWHC 3230), the Court of Appeal ([2023] EWCA Civ 745) and the Supreme Court (with Jason Pobjoy, Will Bordell and Rayan Fakhoury).

Afghan Relocations and Assistance Programme

(2021-2022)

Acting pro bono in relation to several applications under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Programme following the collapse of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Tavistock and Portman Trust v Bell

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G v G

[2021] UKSC 9

Successfully acted for the mother in her appeal against the Court of Appeal's decision that her daughter had to have made a separate independent asylum application in order to be entitled to protection from refoulement. The Supreme Court held that a child will be an asylum applicant, and be entitled to protection from refoulement, where he or she is objectively understood to be making an application, regardless of whether a separate application is made in the child's own name (with Jason Pobjoy).

Advice on the policing of protests

(2020-21)

Emmeline (with Iain Steele) advised Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services in relation to its thematic inspection on the policing of protests. This involved reviewing existing police powers and criminal law, and advising on the compatibility of reforms with the European Convention of Human Rights.

Discrimination

Emmeline's practice in employment, public, human rights and sports law frequently raises issues under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998, whether in relation to the provision of employment, goods or services. Her clients include individuals, employers, employees, sports bodies, and charities. She is instructed frequently in claims of pregnancy discrimination in the workplace, and in claims of disability discrimination in the workplace and in the provision of services. She has particular experience in claims raising issues around neurodiversity.

Cases

Omeniho v Uber Britannia Ltd

(2025)

Acted as sole counsel for the Respondent during proceedings and at the final hearing, successfully defending a challenge to its maternity provision for drivers on the grounds that it was directly and/or indirectly discriminatory on the basis of sex.

[Claimant employee] v [Employer]

(2025)

Acted as junior counsel for the Claimant bringing allegations of disability discrimination (with Craig Rajgopaul KC).

Pregnancy and sex discrimination claim

(June 2024)

Acting for a company in response to claims for pregnancy, maternity and sex discrimination.

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Unfair dismissal and disability discrimination claim

(May 2024)

Acted for a local authority in response to claims for unfair dismissal and discrimination arising from disability. The claim settled shortly before the final hearing.

Sex discrimination claim

(April 2024)

Acting for a financial institution in response to wide-ranging and high value claims, including sex discrimination and equal pay (with Diya Sen Gupta KC).

Pregnancy and sex discrimination claim

(ongoing)

Acting for a financial institution and individual respondents in relation to wide-ranging and high value claims including pregnancy and sex discrimination, and equal pay.

Hercules v Stella McCartney Limited

(November 2023)

Acted for the successful respondent in a 3-day final hearing in response to claims for disability discrimination and race discrimination. The Tribunal found that the Claimant was not disabled and that his claim for race discrimination raised issues of judicial proceedings immunity, with the result that all claims were struck out.

Disability discrimination claim

April 2023

Acted for the corporate respondent and individual respondents in response to wide-ranging claims, including for unfair dismissal, indirect disability discrimination, failure to make reasonable adjustments and harassment.

Race discrimination claim

March 2023

Acted for an agency business in response to a claim for race discrimination and unpaid sums. Following a strike out application, the matter settled.

Reasonable adjustments duty

(2022)

Acted for a respondent company in relation to a dispute with a customer about whether it had complied with its duty to make reasonable adjustments. The matter settled.

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Disability and sex discrimination claim

(2022)

Acted for the respondent company, resisting claims of disability and sex discrimination by a former employee. The matter settled following several preliminary hearings.

Maternity discrimination and unfair dismissal claim

(2020-21)

Emmeline (with Kerenza Davis) acted for the employer against claims for maternity discrimination and unfair dismissal.

Owen v Amec and others

(2019)

Employment Tribunal, 2019

Assisted Diya Sen Gupta QC with a successful strike out application in a victimisation claim.

Tavistock and Portman Trust v Bell

[2021] EWCA Civ 1363

Emmeline (with Jason Pobjoy) acted for four charities granted permission to intervene in the appeal from the High Court's decision regarding the right of children and young people under 18 to consent to puberty blockers.

Sport

Emmeline accepts instructions in all areas of sports law. She has experience advising on the full range of commercial, regulatory and employment issues for professional sports bodies, and particular experience of issues relating to young people and sport, whether that involves safeguarding, or the regulation of the training and compensation for young players. She has appeared before a range of tribunals in first instance hearings and appeals, especially in disciplinary and safeguarding matters, drawing upon her previous experience in social work practice.

Cases

Football club

(April 2024)

Acted for a football club in relation to a contractual dispute over contingent sums under an agreement relating to a player.

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Premier League

(February 2024)

Advised the Premier League regarding the application of its rules relating to the fair market value of a transaction by a club (with Jason Pobjoy).

Brighton and Hove Albion FC v Chelsea FC

(Professional Football Compensation Committee, February 2024)

Represented Brighton and Hove Albion FC in a claim before the Professional Football Compensation Committee for compensation against Chelsea FC concerning former Academy players Zak Sturge and Shumaira Mheuka (with Nick de Marco KC).

Safeguarding appeal

(October 2023)

Successfully represented a sports safeguarding body that had banned a coach for inappropriate behaviour. The appeal was dismissed.

Advice for a sports body

(September 2023)

Advised a sports body in relation to proposals relating to young players, which raised issues of trade union law and competition law.

Appeal against funding withdrawal

(July 2023)

Acted for a sports funding body in relation to an appeal against its decision to withdraw funding. The appeal was dismissed.

PGA European Tour

(July 2022 - 2023)

Acted (with Ravi Mehta) for the successful European Tour in relation to challenges brought by professional golfers against their suspensions from playing in the Scottish Open and two other DP World Tour tournaments.

Investigation relating to U18 player

(August 2022)

Instructed by the Premier League to investigate whether a young player's move between clubs was in accordance with the Youth Development Rules.

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Advice for a sports body

(2022)

Advised a sports body regarding the participation of Russian and Belarusian players in light of the war in Ukraine (with Nick de Marco KC).

Disciplinary hearings

(2021-2023)

Represented a sports body at multiple hearings relating to charges of misconduct under the sports body's Disciplinary Code, including incidents of verbal and physical abuse.

Sports Club

(2021)

Acted for a sports club in response to a threatened claim for inducing breach of contract in relation to a player's move.

Sports Club

(2022)

Advising a sports club regarding termination of a manager's contract.

Safeguarding disciplinary proceedings

(2021)

Acting for a sports body in relation to a complex safeguarding investigation involving sexual abuse and multiple defendants.

Investigations & Inquiries

Emmeline is growing a strong investigatory practice in a range of fields, including the sport and employment contexts. Her work often involves young people and draws on her experience in social work practice.

Cases

A media company

(2023-2024)

Acting for a media company in relation to a confidential investigation (with Jason Pobjoy).

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Investigation relating to U18 player

(August 2022)

Instructed by the Premier League to investigate whether a young player's move between clubs was in accordance with the Youth Development Rules.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Education

- BCL (Distinction)
- Masters in Social Work (Bedfordshire, Distinction)
- Law BA (Cantab, First)
- Classics BA (Oxon, Congratulatory First)

Prizes and scholarships

- Peter Taylor Scholarship (Inner Temple, 2018-19)
- Human Rights at Work Prize (BCL, University of Oxford, 2018)
- Children, Families and the State Prize (BCL, University of Oxford, 2018)
- BCL Scholarship (Jesus College and Law Faculty, 2017-18)
- Wade Prize for Administrative Law (Part II, University of Cambridge, 2015)
- Littleton Chambers Prize for Labour Law (Part II, University of Cambridge, 2015)

Publications

- 'Lift the Ban: A Right to Work for Asylum Seekers,' (UK Labour Law Blog, 15 November 2018).
- 'The 2014-15 Legal Year in Overview: Criminal Law. Evidence and Procedure' (The UK Supreme Court Yearbook, 2015).
- 'Profiting from Punishment: should the private sector run children's prisons?' (John Howard Essay Prize, 2012).

Research interests

Emmeline has worked with Professors Catherine Barnard and Amy Ludlow on research projects on EU-8 migrants' use of employment tribunals, and with Professors Jeremias and Abi Adams-Prassl on the impact of digital court reforms on access to justice.

Volunteering and Pro Bono

Emmeline interned at the Texas Defender Service, which provides legal services and representation for prisoners on death row in Texas, USA. She has also been a volunteer at FRU since 2016 and with Advocate since 2020.

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