

## Rose Heilbron: Legal Pioneer of the 20th Century: Inspiring Advocate who became England's First Woman Judge

Hilary Heilbron

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Rose Heilbron QC (later Dame Rose Heilbron), was an English barrister, who became a world famous icon of the 1950s and 1960s. She was one of the two first women King's Counsel (later Queen's Counsel) in 1949 and the first woman Judge in England in 1956 when she became Recorder of Burnley. This biography, written by her daughter Hilary, also a barrister and Queen's Counsel, charts her rise to prominence and success against the odds, excelling as an advocate and lawyer and later as only the second female High Court Judge in a career spanning nearly 50 years. She broke down many barriers with a string of firsts in the legal profession. She became a pioneer for women at the English Bar and for women generally, championing many women's causes in an era when it was not fashionable to do so.

The biography highlights her role as an inspiring and successful defence advocate in many famous and fascinating cases as well as in cases of great legal importance. These include the Cameo murder case in 1950; the trial of Devlin and Burns for capital murder; the representation of the striking Liverpool Dockers in a case of national importance; the defence of the notorious London gangster, Jack Spot; and the representation, in an early anti-discrimination case, of the world renowned cricketer, Learie Constantine.

Also chronicled are her years as a High Court Judge and the wide range of other legal and non-legal activities she undertook as a result of her fame including her appointment by the government in 1975 to chair an Advisory Committee on Rape.

With the added insights and recollections of her daughter it portrays a multi-dimensional picture of the young and beautiful Rose Heilbron - barrister, judge, working wife and mother - who not only managed to combine these public and private roles in an era when to do so was extremely rare, but who did so with the combination of warmth, flair and determination which was to make her an internationally acclaimed role model for women.

Many people over the years have wanted to write about her: this is the first authorised biography.

#### From the Foreword by Cherie Blair QC

'[an] inspirational pioneer...But it wasn't her novelty that made Rose's career at the Bar such a glittering success. She broke the mould because she was a brilliant advocate and a master of her brief...Rose's daughter gives us in this book a personal and warm insight into Rose, the advocate, with a comprehensive account of a glittering variety of her legal cases from the notorious to the more mundane...the working mum who always found time for her family and...who cared about equality and justice for other women...'



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