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Solicitor quits over 'corruption'

By Tom Tuite and Allison Bray

A SOLICITOR left his colleagues stunned yesterday when he dramatically announced in court that he is quitting the legal profession due to "corruption" in the judiciary.

Dublin-based solicitor Martin Coen was arranging a hearing date for a client at the Dublin District Court when he shocked the courtroom by declaring that he would not continue to work as a solicitor.

He told Judge Hugh O'Donnell: "From this day forwards I am no longer practising as a solicitor."

He claimed he was stepping down "because of judicial corruption within the system, particularly in Blanchardstown District Court".

After the case, Mr Coen, whose Dublin city centre firm has practised law since 2004, confirmed to reporters that he resigned. "I do not want to go into details but I am finishing my practice," he said.

"I will let matters speak for themselves and I will leave it at that," he added before declining to comment further.

But last night, Ken Murphy, director general of the Law Society of Ireland representing solicitors, said there has never been any evidence of corruption in the Irish judiciary.

"I don't know what caused this outburst but we don't believe there is corruption in the judiciary," he told the Irish Independent. "The Irish people have benefited from judiciary of the highest integrity.

"Tensions can arise between individual judges and lawyers in court from time to time and the judge isn't always right. But we have never had any evidence of corruption in the judiciary."

Mr Coen did not return phone calls on the matter last night.

- Tom Tuite and Allison Bray
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