

The logo for Damian McCarthy, an employment lawyer. It features a dark grey square with a vertical blue bar on the left side. The name "Damian McCarthy" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below the name, the words "Employment Lawyer" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

**Damian
McCarthy**

**Employment
Lawyer**

Press Release
By Nicole Martin, Digital and
Media Correspondent
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Moira Stuart quits, reigniting BBC ageism row

Moira Stuart, the veteran newsreader, has reignited the row over ageism in the BBC after announcing she is quitting the corporation after more than 30 years.

The 58-year-old presenter would not be drawn on her reasons for leaving but it is widely thought that she has become fed up with the BBC's alleged prejudice against older women.

Her decision to quit comes six months after she lost her slot on Sunday AM, the current affairs programme anchored by the political journalist Andrew Marr.

The move sparked a chorus of complaints from MPs and some of the biggest names at the BBC, including Jeremy Paxman and John Humphrys, who demanded that Stuart be reinstated immediately.

They accused the BBC of age discrimination and claimed that she was being sidelined to make way for younger presenters.

But Mark Thompson, the director general, denied the allegations at the time, telling MPs that the role of the traditional newsreader had "virtually died out".

The BBC declined to comment, saying only that the presenter had left the corporation "to work on a wider range of projects".

Helen Boaden, the director of BBC News, paid tribute to Stuart, who was the first black female newsreader on television.

"Throughout her 30 plus years at the BBC Moira has achieved a great deal. She has always been a model professional as well as being much loved and admired by both the public and her BBC colleagues," she said.

"Everyone in BBC News wishes her all the best for the future."

Sue Ayton, who represents the presenter, confirmed she was quitting to pursue other projects, adding: "I think she is just pleased that things have been resolved. At some point she may talk about what's happened, but not now."

Although she does not want to speak publicly about her decision to quit, she is said by friends to be "deeply hurt" by the BBC's treatment of her.

They added: "Clearly, if you are a woman in TV over 40 at the BBC - start worrying."
Don Foster, the Liberal Democrat Culture spokesman, said yesterday it would be "a disgrace" if the BBC had pushed Stuart out because of her age.

"It is important that the BBC demonstrates that it has got presenters who represent all strands of the community, including a wide range of different ages," he said.

"No one has suggested that Jimmy Young should give up because he is too old."

Stuart, who was awarded an OBE six year ago, has presented almost every news bulletin on the BBC. After starting her career as an actress, she began working as a production assistant before becoming a newsreader on Radio 4, Radio 2 and then on television.

She has also presented various programmes on radio and television including Best Of Jazz, The Quincy Jones Story, Open Forum and The Holiday Programme.

More recently, she hosted Have I got News For You and took part in BBC1's Who Do You Think You Are?