



Connecting Women in the Law

BC WLF Spring 2013 Newsletter

Upcoming Events

BC WLF Annual General Meeting & Speakers' Panel

5:30pm
Tuesday, June 18, 2013
Law Courts Inn, Fifth Floor,
800 Smithe Street
Vancouver, British Columbia

Cover Photo: International Women's Day celebration - Women lawyers at the Vancouver office of Miller Thompson raise their glasses to toast the occasion simultaneously with colleagues at their offices throughout Canada.

Remarks of the Chair

by Nicole Byres

I've never bought in to the myth that women do not support other women or are not team players. In fact, it has been my experience that the opposite is true. The women lawyers and business women that I know, all generously offer their time and talent to help other women, and most are deeply committed to creating a work environment where everyone can succeed. One of the mandates of the WLF is to support other women lawyers – and I'm always impressed by how much our members take that to heart. Through the connections made at WLF events, many women lawyers have found positions, received helpful advice, or have made meaningful connections and friendships.



In the Spring 2013 edition of our newsletter, we chronicle some of the WLFs achievements - from Caroline Nevin's reflections on history of the WLF, to some of the networking and recognition events we hosted in this, our 10th year. Whether or not you attended the awards luncheon event on February 20, 2013, we think you will enjoy reading about the remarks by our award winners Jan Lindsay QC and Danine Griffin, and our guest speaker, the Honourable Lynn Smith. We hope you are inspired, as we were, by their experiences and by how much they have, and continue, to support women in the legal profession.



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BAR ASSOCIATION
British Columbia Branch



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Women are also very effective at collaboration. For the past year, the BC WLF has belonged to a network of 31 women's business and professional organizations called The WEB Alliance. The WEB Alliance was specifically formed to enable the member organizations to share ideas and collaborate on events. (If you want to see who the other member organizations are, check out The WEB Alliance's website at <http://www.weballiance.ca/>). At my first meeting of The WEB Alliance, I was astounded to find that despite the differences in membership and focus, most of these groups are engaged in the same four core activities as the WLF: mentoring, networking, recognition and education.

An example of the power of these collaborative efforts occurred in February when The WEB Alliance had the opportunity to meet with Premier Christy Clark. It is unlikely that any one of our organizations alone would have been able to meet with the Premier, but for the collaborative efforts of this group. Thanks to some great teamwork, we were able to quickly develop an agenda and identify key issues of importance to our members, and then deliver an effective presentation during a two hour period.

As I write this, we are already making plans for the coming CBA year. Some of our hardworking members will be stepping off the BC WLF executive, and we will welcome new ones. As always, we encourage you to contact any one of us if you are interested in getting more involved in the BC WLF. I can promise you much support and collaboration.



*WLF BC Executive & Guests at the Women Lawyers Forum BC Awards Luncheon:
(right to left) Nicole Howell, Melinda G. Voros, Dana Turner-Ryan, Wendy Lee, Daria
Batkin, Deborah Taylor, Janine F. Jones, Honourable Lynn Smith, Cherisse Friesen, Jan
Lindsay, QC, Danine Griffin, Barbara Devlin, Nicole Byres, Lana Li*



Celebrating Ten Years of the CBABC Women Lawyers Forum

*by Caroline Nevin, MBA CAE
Executive Director, Canadian Bar Association BC Branch*

I have been very fortunate to work at the CBABC long enough to see the history of the CBABC Women Lawyers Forum play out over the past 12 years. We are celebrating its 10th year since being established, but like any bright, beautiful baby, the WLF too had a period of ‘gestation’ and growth before being brought into the world! In June 2001, then-President Margaret Ostrowski, QC led a one-day Forum on “Creating Success: A Symposium for Women in Law”, which brought together many women interested in helping other women succeed in their chosen field, the law. Over the next six months, many conversations were held about how best to support women lawyers.

In January 2002, the CBABC Executive Committee which was led by President Carman Overholt, QC first considered the establishment of a Women’s Advisory Council, which stemmed from discussions among the Chairs of the Women Rainmakers Sections, the Equality Committee and the Women’s Practice and Equality Issues Section. Past President Margaret Ostrowski, QC and then-Equality Committee Representative Sandy Jakab developed a proposal for a one-year Women’s Advisory Committee with a mandate to form a Conference (what we now call the Forum) to further women’s advancement and recognition in the legal profession. The Provincial Council approved the Committee in June 2002. Kerry-Lynne Findlay, QC chaired the Committee, which in June 2003 proposed that Council approve the creation of a Women Lawyers Forum. The resolution was supported unanimously by the Executive Committee and Council, led by President David Paul, QC.

Since that momentous day, the Forum has consistently attracted fantastic volunteers who are true leaders in the profession, and who care deeply about equality and supporting other women in the law. Year after year, we have seen an increase in the depth and span of programs and services provided through the Forum, and many young women have told me that they found true mentors and friends through the CBABC WLF. Some of these women are crystal clear that they would not still be practicing law without it.

If I had to pick only three highlights from the past 10 years of watching the CBABC WLF grow, I would point first to the perseverance of Kerry-Lynne Findlay, QC and others who made it their mission to “take it National” so other women across the country could duplicate BC’s success in their branches. My second highlight would be the bittersweet pleasure of watching the CBABC WLF’s amazing mentoring program grow into a huge success despite the loss of one of its most inspiring leaders, Debra Van Ginkel, QC. The final highlight has been watching the creation of Women Lawyers Forums in Kamloops and on Vancouver Island, spreading the good work of women supporting women to even more locations.

As we enter the second decade of the life of the CBABC Women Lawyers Forum, I wish you all the best. I can’t wait to see what happens next!



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WLF Members: Recognition and Achievements

- Judith Huddart, co-chair of the WLF National received the 2013 President’s Award in recognition of her outstanding service within the profession and leadership roles in advancing the position of women and women lawyers in Ontario.
- Benchmark Canada recognises Ludmila Herbst of Farris as BC’s female litigator of the year (2013)

WLF Newsletter Spring 2013 Edition

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Janine F. Jones
Carol Cash

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Carol Anne Finch-Noyes
Deborah Taylor
Nicole Byres
Janine F. Jones
Vanessa Gauthier

**CBA National WLF Events -
Save the dates!**

**CBA Canadian Legal Conference
- August 18, 19 and 20, 2013 in
Saskatoon**

*Binaries, Triplets and the Use of
Gender Neutral Language*

The CBA's National WLF will present an insightful exploration of outdated language that continues to be used, along with recommended alternatives. The linguistic and legal experts, Dr. Jila Ghomeshi (Assoc. Professor, Univ. of Manitoba, Linguistics) and Sandra Petersson (Research Manager, Alberta Law Reform Institute), and moderator Patricia Lane (Past WLF Chair) will engage participants in a lively discussion on the evolution of our societal and legal language, and will provide practical skills that will enhance the ability to speak and write in a clear, non-judgmental and gender-neutral manner. They will address the different issues that arise in the English and French languages, and will reference some of the solutions being taken by other countries. For further information and registration, see: http://www.cba.org/cba/clc/pd/cba-pd-3_2.aspx

**CBA National WLF Leadership
Conference - Oct. 4 and 5, 2013 in
Montreal**

*Women Walking the Talk: Concrete
Steps Towards Leadership*

The CBA's National WLF will present the 2013 Leadership Conference which focuses on women

**CBA Resolution regarding
Ending Violence Against Aboriginal Women
An Interview with Aimée Craft**

by Michelle Casavant

Aimée Craft, a descendant of Manitoba Métis Louis Riel, practises at the Public Interest Law Centre in Winnipeg, and is the Chair of the CBA Aboriginal Law Section.

I first met Aimée in Ottawa, at a Federal Court Aboriginal Law Bar Liaison Committee Meeting in 2008. She was on the CBA National Aboriginal Law Section Executive and I was clerking for Justice Mandamin at the Federal Court. Since then, Aimée has received her LL.M. from the University of Victoria in 2012, and just published her first book titled *Breathing Life into the Stone Fort Treaty: An Anishinabe Understanding of Treaty One* in March 2013. I met up with her at the CBA National Aboriginal Law Section in Victoria in April 2013, and she agreed to a brief interview.

In 2012 she had a hand in drafting two resolutions for consideration at the CBA mid-winter meeting held in Mont Tremblant, QC. Both resolutions were adopted unanimously.

The first resolution called for collaboration to help end violence against aboriginal women and also called for an inquiry into the issue of murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls. This followed an earlier letter to the Minister calling for a National Inquiry and provides support for future efforts on this issue, including making submissions to a Special Committee of Parliament that was announced on February 14, 2013.

Ending Violence Against Aboriginal Women

MC: Who were the authors and what prompted the drafting of this resolution?

AC: I drafted the resolution with CBA staff assistance. This resolution came out of a call for support from Aboriginal organizations for assistance of Aboriginal lawyers in bringing these issues to light in another forum, and, if an inquiry is launched, to contribute to defining the scope and mandate of the inquiry. A National Aboriginal Women's Summit (shadow event) was held in Winnipeg, Manitoba in November 2012, (the shadow event was held because the community groups were excluded from the National Summit where National Aboriginal groups and government officials attended). The purpose of the Summit was to increase public understanding and knowledge at a national level of the impact of the racialized, sexualized violence against Indigenous women in this country that often has led to their disappearance and death, and to develop a strategy to formulate an inquiry.

MC: Is this resolution linked to the Missing Women's Inquiry Report?

AC: Yes and No; the Missing Women's Inquiry was very limited in scope and jurisdiction. This is a call for a National Inquiry, for Missing and Murdered Aboriginal women.



MC: *The Resolution seeks 2 things mainly: funding for programs and services for Aboriginal communities; and a National Inquiry into murdered and missing Aboriginal women and girls?*

AC: Yes, funding for anti-violence initiatives and for a National Inquiry.

MC: *Does the CBA have a vision of the terms of the Inquiry called for?*

AC: There is currently weak coordination between jurisdictions; the resolution calls for much more coordination between provinces and jurisdictions to effectively achieve results. There need to be programs and funding to address the systemic problems that lead to violence against women which include: poverty, over representation in the criminal justice system, and remoteness and accessibility of services, to name a few.

The Mandate cannot be limited to only violence; the Inquiry needs to be designed on the basis of the needs of the communities, and geared toward solutions that can be funded and achieved.

Women Lawyers Forum Senior Womens Dinner Held on January 16, 2013

On January 16, approximately twenty women gathered at Frankie's Italian Kitchen and Bar for some Italian food, wine and conversation for this year's Senior Women Lawyers Dinner. This year, women lawyers had a chance to meet and hear about the remarkable career of lawyer and former Olympian, Tricia Smith, OC, OBC. Smith, currently a lawyer and the Deputy Managing Director at Barnes Craig, was formerly a world champion rower. With medals from seven world championships, a 1986 Commonwealth games gold medal and a silver medal from the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles in the two person rowing event, Tricia gave the dinner attendees a glimpse into the world of elite athletes.

Though retired from competition, Tricia continues her involvement in the world of sport. She is a twelve year member of the International Council of Arbitration for Sport (along with nineteen other members from around the world). This body oversees international sport court and she is currently on a committee for the appointing of sport judges. She is Vice President of the Canadian Olympic Committee – the Committee that sets the standards and selects those who are to represent Canada at the Olympics. She is on the executive of the International Rowing Federation and Chair of the Women's Commission for the development of rowing. She is a member of the Board for "Own the Podium", a body that funds high performance athletes and sports in Canada. Last but not least, Tricia is an arbitrator for the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada.

Tricia shared her stories which demonstrated some of the dedication (Tricia had to take two spring terms off from law school to train for the Olympics), and fun (training in Italy with the Italian team) involved in her Olympic bid for gold. Finally, Tricia shared her experience on the International Rowing Federation where sometimes by simply asking the question "Where are the girls teams?", sporting organizations in other countries were prompted to support women and girls teams.

and leadership. The interactive workshops will provide participants with practical tools to develop action plans enhancing professional and business development strategies. This conference's mission includes pursuing a cross-Canada action plan to increase the number, and influence, of women in the legal and business communities, and on boards of directors. Plan to attend the Oct. 4 reception and network alongside the fashion runway. For further information and registration, see: http://www.cbapd.org/details_en.aspx?id=NA_WLF13



WLF BC Senior Women Lawyers Dinner: Special Guest Speaker, lawyer and former Olympian, Tricia Smith, OC, OBC s with Vivienne Stewart, Margaret Ostrowski, QC, Nicole Byres, Linda Robertson and Melinda Voros



WLF BC Senior Women Lawyers Dinner: Special Guest Speaker, lawyer and former Olympian, Tricia Smith, OC, OBC s with attendees at the Senior Women Lawyers Dinner



Spring Update for the WLF-Vancouver Island
By Krystle Gill, Chair of the WLF-Vancouver Island

The WLF - Vancouver Island has held some interesting and well-attended events over the last few months. In February, we organized an event at the London Chef where investment advisor Viola Van de Ruyt provided us with information about investing in the current market, and then had a "Dinner and Learn" with Chef Gianfranco who took us on an amazing culinary adventure to experience the flavours of Tuscany. There was an opportunity to network and converse with fellow women lawyers throughout the evening, and the food was delicious!

Our next event was a Bench and Bar Dinner at Café Brio, where we were joined by Master Carolyn Bouck, Judge Susan Wishart, and, later in the evening, retired Court of Appeal Justice Carol Huddart. The members of the judiciary were great sports in playing along with our creative "Judicial Speed-Dating" format that required them to switch tables between courses. It was a fun and informative evening about the work and lives of our distinguished female members of the judiciary.

We are now looking for volunteers to join the WLF - Vancouver Island's Executive for 2013/2014. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Krystle Gill at KGill@Hart-Legal.com.

Thank you to our members for supporting our events, and each other. If you have an idea for an upcoming event, please contact any member of the Executive - we would love to hear your thoughts!

**Justicia Project Update:
Strong Support for Justicia Project in BC**

by Andrea Hilland, Staff Lawyer, Law Society of British Columbia

The Justicia Project was launched in BC on November 20, 2012 and is actively underway. Justicia is a voluntary program undertaken by law firms, and facilitated by the Law Society of BC, to identify and implement best practices to retain and advance women lawyers in private practice. Justicia was created in response to evidence that women leave the profession at a higher rate than men in the first 10 years of practice.



The Project will proceed in BC in two phases: Phase one is directed at national law firms with offices in BC, as well as large regional firms; and Phase two will be directed at all other BC firms. Phase one has already seen tremendous success, and all seventeen firms that were targeted for participation have signed letters of commitment to address the retention and advancement of women in the profession in a proactive way.

Following an initial meeting of managing partners in late 2012, diversity officers (designates from all participating firms responsible for ensuring the implementation of Justicia) met on April 8, 2013. This meeting was well-attended by enthusiastic participants who are keen to move Justicia forward in BC. An engaged discussion highlighted the practical application of policies as a key indicator of their effectiveness. Participants identified next steps, including the creation of smaller focus groups to meet regularly to develop recommendations in six areas:

- enhancing flexible work arrangements;
- improving parental leave policies;
- tracking gender demographics;
- fostering women's networking and business development;
- promoting leadership skills for women; and
- developing paths to partnership initiatives.

The entire group of diversity officers will reconvene on a quarterly basis, or more frequently, as needed. As well, a workshop on unconscious bias was held at the Law Society earlier this year.

For more information on the Justicia Project in BC, please contact Andrea Hilland, Staff Lawyer, Law Society of British Columbia: ahilland@lsbc.org



2013 Women Lawyers Forum BC Awards Luncheon

by *Simi Dosanjh*

On February 20, 2013, the CBA BC Women Lawyers Forum recognized the achievements and contributions of Jan Lindsay, QC, recipient of the CBA BC WLF Award of Excellence, and Danine Griffin, recipient of the Debra Van Ginkel, QC Mentoring Award.

Jan Lindsay, QC shared with the audience her thoughts on the retention and advancement of women lawyers in the legal profession. In addition to discussing the need for the Law Society of BC to continue supporting women lawyers through initiatives such as the Retention of Women in Law Task Force and the Justicia Project, Ms. Lindsay reminded women to identify and rely on their support systems to achieve a balanced and successful practice. In her words:

"[B]e active, volunteer, put yourself out there" and "be persistent".

Danine Griffin also touched on the issue of attrition among young women lawyers and discussed the importance of mentorship throughout one's legal career:

"To have someone in your corner who understands; [is there] to talk to, seek advice from; who is not there to judge you, but to support and encourage you in your career path is invaluable."

Following the presentation of awards, guest speaker, the Honourable Lynn Smith, addressed the audience with an inspirational and thought-provoking commentary regarding the presence and retention of women in the legal profession. Before highlighting the successes achieved by women over the last four decades, she described what legal change seemed (in the 1970's) to be needed to bring about equality for women:

"Just a few little things: to change the laws, populate the profession and the judiciary with women, and build into the legal system an overarching principle or equality lever in the form of a constitutional guarantee."

The Honourable Lynn Smith urged women to continue working towards the implementation of their constitutional equality guarantee and the achievement of a level of parity with men in legal partnerships and on the bench. Her closing message to women lawyers was that they:

"[H]ave played a key role, and can continue to play a key role – just by being there and achieving excellence in practice, or by going further and thinking about ways to move the equality project along."



CBA Women Lawyers Forum BC Award Winners: (right to left) Jan Lindsay, QC recipient of the CBA BC WLF Award of Excellence, and Danine Griffin, recipient of the Debra Van Ginkel, QC Mentoring Award.



CBA National WLF Newsletter

In May 2013, the CBA National WLF published its newsletter, The Common Room. Check it out at http://www.cba.org/CBA/newsletters-sections/2013/05_wlf.aspx.

The CBA National WLF is seeking articles for its newsletters. If you would like to contribute, please contact news@cba.org.

Get Connected!

Forum membership is open to CBA members only. For membership information call the BC Branch of the Canadian Bar Association at 604.687.3404, toll free in BC at 1.888.687.3404, or visit <http://cba.org/BC/PD/main/sections.aspx> for a Section enrolment form.

We hope you will make the Forum your meeting place of choice.

Write Us

Are you interested in writing an article for the WLF BC Newsletter or do you have any comments or feedback?

If so, please contact the CBA BC WLF Marketing and Communications Committee Co-Chairs: Janine F. Jones or Vanessa Gauthier.



Attendees at the Women Lawyers Forum BC Awards Luncheon: (right to left) Rosalind Campbell, Caroline Nevin, Robert Brun, QC, CBA President, Nicole Byres, Honourable Lynn Smith and Kerry Simmons, CBABC President

CBABC WLF Celebration Of International Women's Day

As was reported in our Winter 2012 Newsletter, in celebration of International Women's Day (IWD) on March 8, 2013, the CBA BC WLF encouraged BC women lawyers to "come together, network, and generally celebrate the achievements of women and women lawyers in BC" by joining the millions of other women around the world who were also celebrating the positive achievements of women.

We are pleased to report that our membership embraced the idea by getting together informally and formally and attending events that celebrated acts of courage and determination as well as supporting each other. Some of the events attended by our members on March 8, 2013 were highlighted on our special webpage at www.facebook.com/wlfiwd. These events included the women lawyers at the Vancouver office of Miller Thompson who raised their glasses to toast the occasion simultaneously with colleagues at their offices throughout Canada; the large group of women lawyers, friends, and clients who met after work at the Kingston Taphouse, Vancouver; and others who lunched together in small groups while others attended an IWD luncheon of the International Federation of University Women at Hycroft, Vancouver.

We look forward to celebrating again next year and reporting on more of the events that take place throughout the province.

