



Connecting Women in the Law

CBABC WLF Upcoming Events Save the Dates!

Senior Women Lawyers' Dinner

February 24, 2016

Cactus Club, Coal Harbour, Vancouver.
Shelley Fralic

(Columnist with the Vancouver Sun)

will speak on the topic of

"Newspapers: The Reports of Our Death

Are Greatly Exaggerated".

Space for this event will be extremely limited so please watch for the notice of registration to ensure you don't miss out.

Junior Women Lawyers' Event

February 16, 2016

5:30 - 7:30pm

The Blackbird

International Women's Day

March 8, 2016

Time and Location TBA

Education Event - TBA

Spring Outreach Potluck - TBA

Annual General Meeting

May 26, 2016

Time and Location TBA

Remarks of the Chair

By Deborah Taylor

HAPPY NEW YEAR! As a woman lawyer I hope you celebrated last year's ending, as I did, inspired by Prime Minister Trudeau's simple phrase, "Because it's 2015".

We now have a Federal Cabinet comprised of members who reflect the diversity of our country, who have been given mandates to work together to achieve top priorities and reflect the needs of many whose voices may not have been heard before. These mandates recognize the challenges ahead that "will bring real change." For all lawyers, especially women lawyers, these are exciting times.

In her Mandate Letter, Minister Wilson-Raybould, our Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada (who just happens to be a woman lawyer from British Columbia), was told that she was expected to work with her colleagues and established legislative, regulatory, and Cabinet processes to deliver on the following summarized top priorities:

- To develop and implement a comprehensive federal gender violence strategy and action plan aligned with existing provincial strategies.
- To ensure that gender-based analysis is applied to proposals before they arrive at Cabinet for decision-making.



THE CANADIAN
BAR ASSOCIATION
British Columbia Branch

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- To support the Privy Council Office as it develops monitoring and reporting processes to ensure that the government’s senior appointments are merit based and demonstrate gender parity.
- To ensure that no one fleeing domestic violence is left without a place to turn by growing and maintaining Canada’s network of shelters and transition houses.
- To review current gender and culturally sensitive training policies for federal front-line law enforcement offices to ensure that they are strong and effective.
- To ensure that Parliament and federal institutions are workplaces free from harassment and sexual violence.
- To develop a process and mandate for an inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women and girls in Canada.

There is certainly a lot to do, but what we as women lawyers have learned over the years is that by working together, with all stakeholders at the table, with equal voices, we can accomplish amazing things.

Overview of the Third CBA Women Lawyers’ Forum National Leadership Conference

By Linda Robertson

The third CBA Women Lawyers’ Forum National Leadership Conference was held in Vancouver on November 20 & 21, 2015. The Conference sold out almost two months in advance with 260 registered plus a long waiting list. The conference drew lawyers from across the country with fifty-five percent attending from BC. The Conference built on two previous leadership conferences held in Toronto in 2010 and Montreal in 2013.



L-R: Deborah Taylor, Jennifer Chow, Judith Huddart

The faculty included lawyers, judges, authors, academics and leadership consultants. Sponsorship by four leading firms – Miller Thomson, Blakes, DLA Piper and Bull Housser plus Goldcorp - was crucial in assisting to bring in speakers from outside Vancouver.

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Carol Cash

Editorial Board

Carol Cash, Deborah Taylor, Nicole Byres, QC,
Simi Dosanjh, Kathryn Sainty, QC





The conference theme was “Creating Our Future”. We know how quickly the profession is changing and women have an opportunity to be at the front of that change. The WLF believes that leadership training is essential to keeping women in the law and assisting them to move into more senior positions. Training that focuses only on the law or practice management, misses an essential piece of personal and career development. Leadership skills give women lawyers the confidence and the resiliency to move forward and the ability to change their workplaces to better support all their colleagues, their clients, their families and themselves.



Leadership skills include how to develop a leadership presence that is authentic for women and recognizes that leadership does not need to look like the male models often associated with senior positions. Women need to learn how to be resilient in handling both personal and professional responsibilities, developing sponsors not just mentors, and adopting a growth mindset and an understanding of the politics and culture of law firms.

The workshops focused on issues such as how to have difficult conversations, how to thrive not just survive when working in demanding jobs, how to be more productive or how to develop a career strategy. As one third of the attendees were in-house counsel, one workshop of senior General Counsel talked about the different leadership skills needed in corporate environments as opposed to law firms.

The highlight of the conference was a magical two-hour conversation on Saturday morning between Justice Rosalie Abella of the Supreme Court of Canada and the Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell. The moderator was the Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay, the founding Chair of the BC and national WLF. It was a gift for those present to hear their frank, funny and inspiring stories of the challenges and triumphs of their careers in the law and politics.

The WLF also presented its national CBA Cecilia I. Johnstone award to Pat Lane of Winnipeg who, in addition to co-chairing the first WLF leadership conference in 2010, has been active nationally and internationally in promoting equality for women.



L-R: Jennifer Chow, Janet Fuhrer, Patricia Lane, Linda Robertson, Elaine Keenan Bengts, Heidi Schedler

The book, “Leading The Way: Canadian Women In The Law” (LexisNexis) by two Blakes lawyer authors, partner Julie Soloway and associate Emma Costante, was launched at the Conference. In the book Soloway and Costante profile prominent Canadian women lawyers over the past one hundred years. The launching of the book perfectly complemented the Conference, showing how far women in Canada have come while inspiring women to continue leading the way.



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Recent Appointments and Recognition of CBABC WLF

Federal Ministerial Appointments

Jody Wilson-Raybould, a lawyer, advocate, leader among BC’s First Nations and MP for the Vancouver Granville riding was named by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.



Carla Qualtrough, a lawyer, dedicated volunteer, Paralympic swimmer and MP for the Delta riding was named the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.





Vancouver Magazine Power 50, 2015

Congratulations to Anne Giardini, QC, who was named one of the 50 most powerful people in Vancouver by Vancouver Magazine.

Queen's Counsel Appointments 2015

On December 18, 2015 the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Suzanne Anton, announced that the following women lawyers had been appointed Queen's Counsel (QC):

Kathryn Sarah Sainty, Deborah Jane Strachan, Judith Irene Frances Kenacan, Nancy Joanne Wilhelm-Morden, Nancy Elizabeth Brown, Phyllis Maurene Kenney, Barbara Kay Buchanan, Marilyn Elizabeth Sandford, Nancy Gail Merrill, Tracey Michelle Cohen, Joyce Lee and Ludmila Barbara Herbst.

Retirement of Linda Robertson December, 2015



The CBABA WLF would like to extend its heartfelt thanks and congratulations to our friend, mentor and colleague, Linda Robertson, who retired in December, 2015. The breadth of Linda's contribution to the profession and to women lawyers generally is impossible to put into words so we'll simply say 'thank you' and wish her all the very best for a happy and fulfilling retirement. We will miss her dearly but expect that, given how active and engaged she's been with the WLF since its inception, she likely won't be too far away.



A Reach to Succeed: The Importance of Empowered Self-Leadership for Women Lawyers

By Nicole M. Byres, QC

Ritu Bhasin kicked off the CBA National WLF Leadership Conference on November 20, 2015 with an engaging and thought provoking presentation on the role that empowered self-leadership plays in career advancement. Once a practising lawyer, Bhasin, is an award winning former coach and consultant in the areas of diversity, inclusion and leadership development.

Bhasin's interactive presentation started with her overview of some of the systemic and individual obstacles women lawyers encounter that get in the way of their advancement. The systemic obstacles discussed were: unconscious bias, limited access to career shifting experiences, and lack of advocates, sponsors and role models. Individual challenges to the advancement of women lawyers include: underestimating the value of key strategies to advancement, overreliance on technical skills development (at the expense of other important strategies), and fear of failure (or the 'imposter syndrome').

Bhasin identified her key leadership strategies for advancement as:

1. developing a leadership presence;
2. developing shields or protections for unconscious bias; and
3. attracting sponsors.

Leadership presence was described as having an aura of confidence and competence. Leadership presence was then divided into what Bhasin described as: Gravitas – how you act, Communication – how you speak, and Appearance – how you present yourself.

Bhasin described what she meant by gravitas in the context of women lawyers and professionals: confidence and grace under fire, decisiveness, integrity and speaking truth to power, emotional intelligence, standing/reputation, vision, and charisma. Confidence and presence are important parts of developing leadership presence.

The development of an arsenal of shields against unconscious bias was then discussed, including the importance of emotional intelligence to better understand the most effective communication style for the situation at hand, as well as tips on how to react when unconscious bias is at work. Part of this discussion included the need to recognize the double standards faced by women, as well as the fact that men get assignments based on recognition of their potential, whereas women are assigned assignments based on proven or already demonstrated performance, further decreasing women lawyers' opportunities for career shifting experiences.

Bhasin wrapped up her presentation by addressing the third and final key leadership strategy – sponsorship and how it differs from mentorship. Bhasin concluded by challenging everyone to identify three things that they will do differently, as part of their journey to career advancement and success – however each of us define those terms.





Reflections on Panel: Women At The Top: What We Can Learn From Two Of Canada's Most Influential Women

By Joy Ren

On November 21, 2015, at the third CBA Women Lawyers' Forum National Leadership Conference, I had the great pleasure of listening to an engaging dialogue between the Hon. Mme. Justice Rosalie Abella, Supreme Court of Canada and the Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell, PC, CC, OBC, QC, facilitated by the Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay, PC, QC. Both women leaders openly shared how their personal journeys of professional development were both impacted and shaped by the issue of gender equality as well as how they also impacted and shaped the issue of gender equality themselves.

Hon. Mme. Justice Abella stated that in her career, an important realization was to have her own voice and to stay true to that voice. This was true when she conceived the concept of employment equity and redefined the notion of equality as one that required an acknowledgment of the differences between people. Hon. Mme. Justice Abella attributes her career advancement to being able to hold fast to her convictions, take opportunities as they arise and not cave in to pressure to compromise too much. She remarks, "often you will not realize the impact you have made until much later".

Like Hon. Mme. Justice Abella, the Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell's strong, principled approach to gender equality also allowed her to become a "woman of firsts." In 1989, she became the first Justice Minister, a platform from which she called for the advancement of women and an increase in the number of women on the Supreme Court Bench. She achieved another "first" when she was elected the first and only female Prime Minister of Canada. During her impressive career, Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell explained that being a woman, she was not always seen as "belonging" and did not receive the benefit of the doubt the way a man would. She explains that while people may intellectually agree with gender equality, it is the hidden biases that are damaging.

Through their illustrative careers, both women have made significant strides towards advancing the position of women. However, both Hon. Mme. Justice Abella and Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell emphasize that there is more we can do to continue to advance gender equality. In order to achieve equality, it is not enough to raise awareness but to also develop and support access to resources that allow substantive change in the workplace. Simply supporting the notion of equality is not enough.

Update from the Women Lawyers Forum – Vancouver Island By Nicole Hamilton

The CBABC WLF - Vancouver Island (WLF-VI) has continued focusing on hosting events that foster connections between the diverse female members of the Island bar. The close-knit nature of our community has led to amazing opportunities for learning, mentoring and growth. The WLF-VI continues to take pride in its role as a conduit for the support of women lawyers. We have been fortunate enough to take part in a number of events that have aided both the community and our membership over the past few months.

In September, the WLF-VI organized a team for the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope. We are proud to announce that we had our best turnout to date and raised funds for this very worthwhile cause. It has been inspiring for members of the WLF-VI to watch the Walk of Hope grow each year we have participated – both within our own membership and in the community at large.

In October, the WLF-VI hosted a panel session with experienced members of the Victoria bar that focused on avoiding compassion fatigue. The turnout was fantastic and the response to the information shared was phenomenal.

The WLF-VI is gearing up for one of its most popular events of the year – the Annual Judge's Dinner. This event has historically been sold out and has seen a number of local women from the bench give us valuable tips, advice and stories. Once again, the size of the Victoria bar has been advantageous in allowing these types of intimate events to take place.

There are a number of other events currently being planned and the WLF-VI is coming up with new ways to reach our membership over the entire Island to ensure that all women lawyers have access to the support and mentorship that our section provides.





Update from the Kamloops WLF

By Rachel Lammers

The Kamloops CBABC WLF was pleased to host their annual “meet and greet” event on October 22, 2015 to welcome the first-year female law students from Thompson Rivers University Law School. The event was a potluck-style dinner held at Michelle Stanford’s residence. The dinner was well attended and it was a pleasure to welcome this year’s new law students to Kamloops!

The Kamloops CBABC WLF also hosted their annual holiday potluck lunch at the Kamloops Courthouse Library, on December 9th, 2015 over the lunch hour.

Finally, the Kamloops CBABC WLF held a pub night on January 14th, 2016 at the Commodore Pub on Victoria Street, which was attended by law students and members of the bar.

WLF Halloween Potluck



L-R: Sara Li, Angela Dunn, Brenda Benham, Dana Turner-Ryan, Stephanie Markovich, Jennifer Hicks

WLF 2015 AGM



L-R: Madam Justice Ballance, Kathryn Sainty, QC

Negotiate for What You Want

By Angela Dunn

Why is it often easier for women to negotiate on behalf of others than for themselves?

At the WLF Education Luncheon on November 4, 2015, our guest speakers, Claire Yeung, a lawyer coach, and Tracy Theemes, a financial advisor, explored this question and shared tips on how to advance your career by negotiating for what you want.

Unlike men, who are more inclined to see salary negotiations as a kind of sport, women tend to find it difficult to establish a value for themselves, to negotiate one’s self-worth publicly and to get feedback on one’s value. A negotiation about money is a negotiation for power and women tend not to like power. In order to confidently enter financial negotiations, we have to first ground ourselves in personal values so we can negotiate for what we are passionate about. We also need to think about what is important in our life, work, and relationships and play to win. Finally, we need to lower our voice and slow the cadence of our voice (women raise their voice when they get nervous). A lower voice has more authority.

“Uncover Our Extraordinary Inner Negotiator” by bringing the following five “Action Heroes” to the negotiation based on C.G. Jung’s archetypes:

1. The Champion: Before each negotiation, step into your true champion. Believe that you have everything to succeed. Be prepared and show up as your most powerful self. Believe in yourself, believe that you are worth it. Occupy that space and believe that what you have to say needs to be heard. Champion your goals and causes. If you don’t champion your own cause, who will do it?
2. The Leader: Be the leader of yourself and be a visionary. Don’t be afraid. Don’t allow self-limiting beliefs. Be the person who sees the big picture, and makes things happen and finds the road to resolution. Take the reigns.
3. The Learner: Be genuinely curious about the other person’s proposal. Don’t be positional; ask open-ended questions. Discover the “why” behind the other person’s proposal. Use your active listening skills.
4. The Observer: Your voice of reason. Put yourself in the position of an objective third party looking in from the outside. Do I make sense? Am I true to who I am?
5. The Warrior: In rare negotiations, you have to draw a line and bring the Warrior to protect your interests. Don’t put up with disrespectful conduct. It is ok to call off a negotiation in an offensive environment.

Experience each negotiation anew. Don’t be hindered by past experiences.



Leading the Conversation to Increase Awareness about Ovarian Cancer

By Tracy Kolwich

Ovarian cancer has flown under the public radar for far too long. It's time to change that and Ovarian Cancer Canada is leading the way on behalf of women and families who are dedicated to increasing awareness. People like you make this possible.

"Conversations about ovarian cancer are all the more difficult because the subject is unfamiliar to most people," says Karen Cinq-Mars, Vice-President of Marketing and Innovation at Ovarian Cancer Canada. "But this issue is about women's lives. We need to demand the attention of millions of Canadians who have never even heard of the disease."

One way to educate and inform the public about ovarian cancer is to make the dialogue surrounding it more accessible. The forthcoming awareness campaign moves the disease out of the clinical context, where it is discussed in medical terms, and into mainstream conversation.

By staking claim for an idea that is ingrained in popular culture and appropriating it for women who are empowered against this disease, we are honing in on an exciting opportunity to shake up public consciousness.

Curious? Look for our awareness ads in publications like Reader's Digest and Chatelaine.

We are honoured that Ovarian Cancer Canada is again in 2016 the charity of choice for the Women Lawyers Forum in Vancouver. To learn more about our important work, arrange to have a Knowledge is Power presentation brought in to your colleagues or become involved as a volunteer, please contact our office at 604.676.3431 or visit www.ovariancanada.org.



CBA National WLF Newsletter

CBA National WLF Newsletter - The Common Room is available at www.cba.org/Sections/Women-Lawyers-Forum/Articles

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 www.cba.org/Sections/Women-Lawyers-Forum for a Section enrolment form.

We hope you will make the Forum!

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 CBABC WLF Marketing and Communications Committee Co-Chairs: Carol M. Cash and Simi Dosanj.

Post-OCC Walk Brunch



L-R: Brenda Benham, Kathryn Sainty, QC, Lori Kilburn, Janine Jones, Deborah Taylor, Linda Robertson, Carol Cash

