



Connecting Women in the Law

CBABC WLF BC Upcoming Events Save the Dates!

Senior Women Lawyers Dinner

Thursday, February 22

Special Guest Speaker: Jean Swanson

Location: Water Street Cafe

Spring Potluck

Thursday, March 8

Celebrating International
Women's Day

New Westminster: Details TBC

WLF Retreat at Sparkling Hill Spa April 6-8

"Tackling Change in Your Practice, and Beyond", showcasing sessions with The Honourable Madam Justice Sherri Donegan, Judge Carmen Rogers, Judge Stella Frame, lifestyle coach Andrea Verwey and CBA National President Kerry L. Simmons, QC

Remarks of the Chair

By Kathryn Sainty, QC

While in the United States celebrating American Thanksgiving with some dear friends, I had the opportunity to reflect on how thankful I am to be a part of the Canadian Bar Association and, in particular, the Women Lawyers Forum.

I first got involved with the WLF in 2005 when it was in its infancy. I started as a member of the Education Committee and, over the years served in different positions, eventually becoming the Chair last year. As a member of the executive I have had the opportunity to work with a dynamic and committed group of women and I am ever thankful for each of their contributions and their friendship. This year, as I look around the executive table, I see a new group of women – a much younger group than the "old girls" (and I include myself in that) who started the WLF and stewarded it through to where it is today. It reminds me that it is time to turn things over to the new guard; to those women who are emerging leaders and who are the current members of the WLF executive.



THE CANADIAN
BAR ASSOCIATION
British Columbia Branch

Continued on the following page

Cover photo L-R: Elizabeth Bryson (Board member of the NCWBA), Robin Bresky (President of the NCWBA), Angel Zimmerman (Board member of the NCWBA), Jeanne Marie Clavere (Vice President of Fundraising and Strategic Partnering of the NCWBA) at the WLF BC and National Conference of Women's Bar Associations.



CBABC WLF BC Executive Contact Information

Chair

Kathryn Sainty, QC
ksainty@saintylaw.ca
604.789.6621

Vice-Chair

Daria Batkin
dbatkin@hartmehl.com
604.708.3775 ext. 226

Treasurer

J. Cherisse Friesen
cfriesen@trustee.bc.ca
604.775.3482

Secretary

Rose A. Keith
rkeith@rosekeith.bc.ca
W 604.484.2638
C 604.218.9772

Past Chair

Deborah Taylor
dtaylor@mackoff.ca
604.632.3271

Education Committee Co-Chair

Angela Dunn
dunn@mhmlaw.org
604.669.1106 ext 219

Education Committee Co-Chair

Denise Duifhuis
dduifhuis@stikeman.com
604.631.1379

Events Planning Co-Chair

Stephanie Markovich
markovich.stephanie@gmail.com
604.637.1420

Events Planning Co-Chair

Nicole Chang
nchang@onyxlaw.ca
604.900.2538

Continued from the previous page

I want to urge those young women who are reading this, especially those who feel they are too junior to take on a leadership role, to consider getting involved in the WLF at a leadership level. Eleanor Roosevelt once said “We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face... we must do that which we think we cannot.” The young women who are part of our current executive started by volunteering their time on a committee. Perhaps they did not know exactly what they had to offer when they volunteered but they saw a benefit in being part of the WLF.

The WLF is different from other CBA sections because there is no substantive law component therefore the executive is always looking for new and interesting ways to bring women lawyers together for learning and for networking. It is a challenge to find things that all women lawyers (regardless of their backgrounds, interests, level of call and areas of practice) will find interesting and worthy of their time (and money). I have no doubt that there are young women lawyers out there who have a lot to offer us. Please feel free to contact any of the members of our executive who can chat to you about what opportunities may be open to you.

Update from the Women Lawyers Forum, Vancouver Island **Women in the Law: Advancing Your Career** *By Jennifer Cooper, QC*

I had the distinct pleasure of hosting a panel of senior Victoria women this Fall on behalf of the WLF, Vancouver Island: Pinder Cheema, QC Senior Crown Counsel Trudi Brown, QC Founding Partner, Brown Henderson Melbye, and Jennifer Barrett, Judge, Provincial Court of BC.



We shared tips about how to advance your career to a packed house of women lawyers, young and old. Between us we had 3 QC's, 2 Life Benchers, 1 current Bencher, and a judge. Also, mountains of experience on government, professional, and community Boards and Committees.

Some of what we had to offer was informational, for example:

Continued on the following page





Continued from the previous page

...here are the websites where you can download applications for a [QC appointment](#), for a [Provincial Court appointment](#) and for a Supreme Court appointment; here is the [Crown Agencies and Board Resourcing Office](#) where you can have your name registered for consideration for appointment to Crown corporations, agencies, boards and commissions; here is the link for the [Bencher call for nominations form and timelines](#); here is the composition of the [Committee who would be considering your application for a judicial appointment](#). But much of what we had to offer was simply practical.

Start today to create a journal (on-line or paper) where you record everything that is relevant to your professional career: the CPD courses that you take, the papers you write, the talks you present, the committees that you sit on, the challenges you face and address in work and in life. These are all things that you will want to draw on when you are ready to take the next step. Don't rely on your memory when that day comes!

Value your contacts: Is there someone familiar with you or your work who will be sitting on the committee who is considering your application? Or who would be willing to act as your reference? It can say a lot about a candidate if someone with integrity and experience is willing to go to bat for them. And for heaven's sakes, speak to your references before you list them: to get their consent, but also so that you are sure what they will say. Don't assume!

Research your goals: Know now what criteria will be relevant to the goal you seek to achieve. And then work towards that. If you notice gaps, work to fill them in. If you lack information, seek it out: Invite a member of the Board/Committee that you are interested in to lunch. You will learn about that Board and if things go well you might find that they are prepared to recommend you to it.

Do what interests you: preparation for reaching your goals will involve volunteering your time. Best to do things that are meaningful and worthwhile, no matter the outcome of your path. None of these lofty types of goals are guaranteed, even if you do all the 'right' things. Enjoy the journey.

All of us want to see more women in positions of leadership and influence. The challenges are many and there are still glass ceilings around. We hope that committees like the Women Lawyers Forum with activities such as this panel, will bring us closer to our common goal.

CBABC WLF BC Executive Contact Information

Marketing & Communications Committee Co-Chair

Elisabeth Sadowski
es@holnesslawgroup.com

Marketing & Communications Committee Co-Chair

Janine F. Jones
janine.jones@icbc.com
604.661.6286

Mentoring Committee Co-Chair

Brenda Benham
Brendabenham4@gmail.com
778.919.4033

Mentoring Committee Co-Chair

Dana Turner-Ryan
dturner@smithsip.com
604.689.7276

Member at Large

Melanie Magnusson
mmagnusson@onyxlaw.ca
604.671.3067

Member at Large

Sara Li
sli@wt.ca
604-891-7283

Member at Large

Samantha Chang
schang@fasken.com
W 604.631.3153 | 604.765.3883

Member at Large

Sara Forte
sara@fortelaw.ca
604.535.7063





Recognizing the achievements of women in the law

WLF Member Trudi Brown QC, currently a partner at Brown Henderson Melbye in Victoria, was recently awarded the inaugural 2017 Law Society Excellence in Family Law Award.

The following women lawyers were appointed Queen's Counsel in December 2017:

- Frances Joan Connell
- Deborah Ann Armour
- Margaret Heather Mason
- Ursula Botz
- Shelley Lynn Sugarman
- Donna Mary Turko
- Karima Andani
- Lisa Joan Hamilton
- Ardith Alison Walkem
- Tamara Miriam Levy,
- Catherine Jean Parker
- Monique Carmel Pongracic-Speier

Judge Delaram Jahani was recently appointed to the Provincial Court of BC and The Hon. Madam Justice Francesca V. Marzari was appointed to the Supreme Court of BC.

Mapping Her Path

Mapping Her Path is a 3 year project created to learn about, collaborate on and pilot initiatives that improve the retention and advancement of women lawyers in the profession.

As part of our mentoring pilot initiative, we'll be sending out a monthly e-newsletter featuring mentoring tips and advice.

We'd greatly appreciate your input and feedback!

To sign-up, please email:
Kathryn McCready
kathryn.mccready@justiceeducation.ca

WLF Mentoring Q&A

By Brenda Benham and Dana Turner-Ryan

Have you ever wondered about the benefits of participating in the WLF BC Mentoring Program and whether it is right for you?

Let's start by looking at the program itself. The WLF Mentoring Program matches pairs of women lawyers, to support each other and flourish in the practice of law. Any woman lawyer, articling student, NCA student, or NCA graduate who is also a CBA and WLF member may join the program. Mentoring pairs are encouraged to meet once a month, either in person or using other technology. Mentoring pairs are often matched for common interests as well as common practice areas, so that the meetings can be over meals, drinks, or any activity, whether physical, intellectual, or cultural. While the mentoring partnership lasts formally for one year, some pairs enjoy themselves so much that they continue meeting for years after the formal relationship ends.

To highlight the benefits of the program, we thought you'd want to hear from some of our recent participants:

From the mentee perspective:

"It was great to have the perspective of a lawyer senior to you who you don't rely on for employment provide their opinion respecting various issues."

"It's really nice to get to know other women in the field. This is the hardest job I have ever had and having someone to talk to outside of my firm is so helpful and so important."

"The ability to have someone to speak openly with and also the great networking opportunities that the program offers."

From the mentor perspective:

"It is rewarding assisting others in the profession."

"I felt like a made in a difference in someone's life, as well as a friend."

"I appreciated the opportunity to provide support to a junior lawyer. I didn't have a mentor and I learned the hard way. "

Really, the best reason to join the program next year is to have fun! The WLF BC Mentoring Committee organizes several events throughout the year, where pairs can get together with others to socialize and to learn from each other.

Join a great group of supportive and interesting women who are giving back to and involved in our profession. Look for the application form for the next program year in summer 2018.





A Path to Partnership: A Case for Becoming a Businesswoman of Your Practice

By Daria Batkin

What does it take to climb to the very top of the partnership ladder at a law firm? I asked Valerie C. Mann who has returned to full-time practice after completing her term as a managing partner of Lawson Lundell LLP. Valerie has built an impressive practice in the area of mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance and technology law, and has been repeatedly recognized as one of the best in her field, all the while staying actively involved in the community as a leader and educator. She shared a few words of wisdom with me which I am happy to share with you here.

To rise to the top of your firm, you need to make a business case for your practice first. In the competitive private practice climate, being able to bring value through your reputation, network and client referrals is crucial. Build and expand your niche expertise and don't be afraid to take on new opportunities. As Valerie shared, in order to make partner you should strive to bring something new and creative to the partnership. This means making a business case for how you can expand the firm's success. If you want to stand out, be the businesswoman of your law practice and make it an invaluable piece of business to the firm. Determine what your "brand" is and build it. Get known not only for stellar legal work and community engagement, but also for increasing involvement in your firm. Market your brand as vital to your firm, and opportunities of leadership will just happen.

You may be thinking it is an impossible task to build your expertise and your brand and thrive in other aspects of your life at the same time. However, don't fret. As Marie Henein assured us at the 2017 WLF Awards Gala, "we *don't* have to do it all." I personally found that liberating and inspiring. We do not have to do it all, instead we are free to choose what we want to focus on and give it our all.

Those of us who choose the partnership ladder will need a good support network to help manage other aspects of our lives while working on expanding our business. Perhaps it won't be smooth sailing every step of the way, but if it were, it wouldn't be as exhilarating when you finally reach the top, right?

WLF Fall Event Highlights

This year marked the fifth year of the WLF BC's proud participation in the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope on September 10, fundraising for research and education and raising awareness of this devastating disease. The WLF team of 14 participants raised over \$3,900!



The WLF BC Fall Launch Event was held on September 18 and featured the 11th annual "Hot Tips from Top Mentors" which included the following panelists (pictured below L-R): Rachel Mockler, Flatiron Construction; Nicola-Jane McNeill, Impark; Miranda Lam, McCarthy Tetrault; The Honourable Madam Justice Catherine A. Murray; Gaynor Yeung, Whitelaw Twining; and Christine Murray, Cassels Murray Family & Estates Law.



The WLF BC hosted "Not Just a Bystander: What to Do About Inappropriate Behaviour in the Workplace" on October 16. Sara Forte, Forte Law Corporation; Claire Marchant, Practice Advisor and Equity Ombudsperson, Law Society of BC ("LSBC"); and Bena Stock, Lawyers Assistance Program of BC ("LAP") presented.

Continued on the following page





Continued from the previous page

The panel emphasized the many excellent resources available for those dealing with harassment, bullying and discrimination. In particular, LSBC and LAP provide free, confidential services to members of the legal community (LAP also offers services to family members of legal community members).

The inaugural WLF BC Fraser Valley Fall Mingler was held at Backyard Vineyards on October 25. Over 60 lawyers were in attendance and enjoyed an evening of dinner, drinks and networking. The WLF thanks event sponsors Surrey Bar Association, Darnell & Company, Wilson Rasmussen, Baker Newby, Waterstone Law Group, and Hamilton Duncan.

The WLF BC's Education Committee held their book club event on Edward M Hallowell's book, *Driven to Distraction at Work: How to Focus and Be More Productive* which was held on November 8. The event was moderated by professional coach and leadership consultant, Andrea Verwey.

The WLF BC mentoring orientation lunch was held on November 14 at the Law Courts Inn. This year, 79 mentoring pairs were matched. The orientation included guest mentor speakers Amy Fong, Oyen Wiggs; Nicole Howell, HHBG Lawyers; and Rhona Lichtenwald of Hillcrest Law & Mediation.

Continued on the following page

**WLF Newsletter
Winter 2018 Edition**

Editor

Janine F. Jones

Editorial Board

Daria Batkin, Elisabeth Sadowski
Janine F. Jones, Deborah Taylor,
Kathryn Sainty, QC

Sexual Harassment in the Legal Profession

By Sara Forte

If you are experiencing or observing sexual harassment at work, deciding how to respond can be paralyzing. There is a widespread perception that sexual harassment is something that comes with the territory in the legal profession, and that the only viable responses are to avoid situations where it could happen, tolerate it or ignore it. Unfortunately, these responses are often ineffective, particularly beyond the short-term.



The good news is there is help available to support and assist you in considering the full range of possible responses, so that you can develop an informed strategy to move forward. I recently participated in a panel discussion on workplace sexual harassment in the legal profession, as part of the WLF's promotion of the [“not just a bystander” podcast](#). My contributions to the panel were as an employment lawyer who advises employees and employers (including lawyers and law firms) on workplace human rights, and the other panelists were Claire Marchant, [Equity Ombudsperson for the LSBC](#) and Bena Stock, Associate Director of the [Lawyers Assistance Program](#).

Between the three panelists, clear themes emerged. A lawyer observing or experiencing sexual harassment can consult with any of the three of us in complete confidence. Any consultation is standalone and the person reaching out for advice maintains complete control over what happens next, if anything. After all the media reporting on #metoo, it should no longer be a surprise to anyone that sexual harassment is pervasive, within the legal profession and in our society. All three of the panelists have helped lawyers through situations involving sexual harassment, and understand that you are not alone.

When I am consulted by clients experiencing sexual harassment, I review with them a broad range of practical responses. I start by helping the client identify their goals and ideal outcomes. We always review the options for legal action, and there are several. The most common forum for legal action is a Human Rights Complaint to the BC Human Rights Tribunal. Sexual harassment can also be constructive dismissal of employment, pursued with a civil claim for wrongful dismissal.

Continued on the following page





Continued from the previous page

Worksafe BC can also address sexual harassment. Some forms of sexual harassment are criminal and can be reported to police. Sexual harassment by a lawyer can be grounds for a complaint to the Law Society.

All that said, starting legal action is only one of many ways to deal with sexual harassment at work, and generally a last resort. Other ways to respond to harassment include telling the harasser to stop, finding an ally in the organization to confide in, making a complaint through an internal harassment policy or leaving the organization for a new job prior to reporting. More information about this issue can be found in my blog post – [Sexual Harassment – Is reporting a career-limiting move?](#)

Silence is not the only option.

Sara Forte is an employment lawyer and frequent speaker on workplace human rights issues. Sara practices at [Forte Law](#), an employment law boutique based in Surrey.

An Interview with Anne Bhanu Chopra: Former Law Society of BC Equity Ombudsperson

By Elisabeth A. Sadowski

I had the pleasure of interviewing Anne Chopra, who for almost 18 years has been actively involved in contributing to the legal community in British Columbia through her work as the first equity ombudsperson for the Law Society of BC (“LSBC”) and her work with the CBABC WLF.

How did you first become involved with the CBABC WLF?

Spearheaded by Debra Van Ginkel, QC, I worked with Debra and a few others, including Linda K. Robertson to develop a mentoring program that was later adopted by the WLF BC. I was also a member at large with the WLF BC and developed the WLF Award of Excellence and the WLF Debra Van Ginkel, QC Mentoring Award. I am a great supporter of the WLF BC, they allowed me to market the Role of the Ombudsperson by attending WLF BC events regularly.

Continued on the following page

Continued from the previous page

On February 2, 2018, the WLF BC and the National Conference of Women’s Bar Associations presented an excellent luncheon event on Challenges and Rewards for Women in Politics – Both Personal and Professional, with special guest speakers (pictured below L-R): Suzanne Anton, QC (former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Province of British Columbia), the Honorable Ellen Rosenblum, Attorney General of the State of Oregon. Also in the photo is the Honourable Kerry-Lynne Findlay, QC (former Minister of National Revenue of Canada).



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 CBABC 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: [Janine F. Jones](#) and [Elisabeth Sadowski](#).





Continued from the previous page

What is the greatest challenge for women in our profession?

Women find it difficult to come forward if they are struggling with challenging issues. There is a fear of judgment that exists - from their self and others. It remains difficult for women to come forward if they are being harassed or bullied, because there is a subjective nature to this challenge and firm culture does not necessarily have the systems in place to support them.

With regards to sexual harassment in the legal profession, what more can be done to address what you coined as the “culture of silence” in law firms?

Sexual harassment and issues based on sexual orientation and disability are particularly challenging. Established lawyers are often protected. The message from lawyers and the profession still remains, “it is a small community... you don’t want to risk your reputation as a troublemaker”. As there is more education and the issue becomes understood by male and female lawyers, I envision the culture changing.

We have to see how can we make a more practical and friendly system for persons dealing with sexual harassment. The LSBC formal complaints process, which adopts an investigative approach, exists but lawyers are not accessing it. Maybe we should set-up a task force to examine what a good system may be?

We need to extend the issue to male lawyers - we all need to champion the issue. We need to understand the impact of the issue on the individual and the whole community.

What advice would you give to young women entering the profession?

Young lawyers should focus on developing their specialization in a field of law.

Young lawyers who are interviewing for a position need to understand a firm’s culture impacts their success. If possible, have lunch with one or two lawyers to see how you might connect with your future colleagues. I once went to a firm because of its renowned reputation; however, the journey was not what I had hoped it to be. I had no idea at the time about other firm cultures, i.e. more informal firms, the importance of inclusive and friendly work environments.

What are you working on now?

I provide workplace consulting to law firms, organizations, and individuals (investigations of workplace issues, education on cultural competency and coaching). Also, I am working on my second book, “Beyond Reflection: Bridging Mind and Heart.” It is a self-reflective book and tool with chapters that include discussion on being open, resilient, happy, etc.

