



Left to Right: Daria Batkin; Margaret Ostrowski, QC; Carol Anne Finch-Noyes; Deborah Taylor



Connecting Women in the Law

CBABC WLF BC Upcoming Event Save the Date!
April 11, 2019
WLF Awards Gala
Location: Terminal City Club
Special Guest Speaker: The Honourable Catherine Anne Fraser, Chief Justice of Alberta, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut
More details to follow

Remarks of the Chair

By Daria Batkin

As one of my first official tasks in the new capacity as Chair of BC WLF, I had the privilege of attending the in-person WLF National meeting in Toronto during October 13-14, 2018. The meeting was preceded by an OBA WLF presentation “Revisiting Touchstones for Change: 25th Anniversary”. The 325-page *Touchstones for Change: Equality, Diversity, and Accountability Report* was prepared in August 1993 as a result of a 2-year mandate by CBA Gender Equality Task Force, chaired by the Honourable Bertha Wilson. The report revealed many barriers women faced in the profession, made a case for change, and offered actionable items on how the change could be achieved.



Although I had heard of the Report before this presentation, I have to admit - I had not read it. It is perhaps understandable for someone of my vintage – the report was prepared years before I entered the profession, and I ignorantly saw it as a “historical” document, much less relevant to the current realities of practising law as a woman.

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I also assumed that whatever the findings, we had come a long way since 1993.

Well, let me tell you. The Report reads like it was written yesterday. It identifies all of the same barriers to equality that exist today: sexual harassment; salary differentials; difficulties obtaining articles; difficulties in securing good files and problems with work allocation; problems in career advancement in terms of promotion and access to partnership; the lack of women in management and leadership positions in B.C. including in the judiciary; segregation into certain areas of practice; and an unwillingness to accommodate female parents who have family responsibilities.

The Report blames the narrowness of our image of a lawyer *as a male* as the central cause of the problem. With women entering the profession in equal numbers as men, we are required to measure up to the outdated standard of a lawyer designed for men in a traditional family setting. The Report advocates for revamping the standard, and offers concrete steps that can be taken by law schools, law societies, and firms to bring women on equal footing with men in the profession.

The Report is an invaluable resource for all of us fighting for equality, and I encourage you to read it and to spread the word. We have made only modest progress in the last 25 years and there is still a long way to go. Here at the WLF, we will continue to do our part in facilitating the much needed change, so that the message from the WLF Chair 25 years from now is a celebratory one.

Fall Launch and Hot Tips

By Sarah M. Walker

The 2018-2019 year of the Women Lawyers Forum kicked off with our Fall Launch and Hot Tips from Top Mentors event on September 26, 2018. We had fantastic speakers give inspiring advice to young and seasoned women lawyers alike. The event was held at Law Courts Inn and there was a great turnout.

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The women in attendance had the opportunity to network and snack on hors d'oeuvres before the panel began. The panel featured Morgyn Chandler, Lori Guiton, Rebeka Breder, Amy Nathanson and keynote speaker, Madam Justice Lauri Ann Fenlon.

Morgyn Chandler of Hammerberg Lawyers LLP kicked off the evening by discussing how to manage a room and handle challenging personalities. Morgyn shared her valuable wisdom on keeping a calm and composed demeanour when confronted by rude opposing counsel, while addressing the improper behaviour and advising that it will not be tolerated.

Lori Guiton, Director of the Policy, Regulation and Research Division at WorkSafeBC, spoke next on her topic, entitled: "To Thine Own Self Be True." She highlighted the importance of remaining true to yourself as a lawyer, but also in a broader sense, the importance of choosing a career path that suits your personality and is in harmony with your priorities and values, both in and outside the office.

Rebeka Breder of Breder Law discussed a topic she is well-versed in and which she titled; "Building a Law Practice you are Passionate About." Rebeka is a trailblazer for the development of Animal Law in Canada. She now runs her own firm where she acts only for the interests of animals. Rebeka explained how her vision and passion were often doubted, but she pursued it nonetheless and encourages others to do the same.

Amy Nathanson, of Lawson Lundell LLP, offered tips about using your own style in the practice of law and not playing against type. She highlighted the fact that many litigators do not fit into the TV stereotype of the aggressive lawyer and encouraged those in attendance to find their own style. She advised that trying to take on a persona that isn't genuine often falls flat.

Madam Justice Lauri Ann Fenlon closed the panel by sharing her insight and knowledge from her experience as a judge of the Court of Appeal for three years, trial judge for seven years, and civil litigator for 23 years. She spoke about the importance of the big picture and having a work-life balance.

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Report from WLF Vancouver Island

On October 30, 2018, the Women Lawyers Forum Vancouver Island partnered with the Young Lawyers Victoria Section to hold a panel discussion on parental leave for lawyers in Victoria's private and public sectors. We were grateful to have as panelists Bencher Pinder Cheema, QC, Robin Gage of Arvay Findlay LLP, Carley Gering of BC Ministry of Justice, and Lisa Jozsa of Quadra Legal Centre.

Topics included: what resources are available to lawyers considering parental leave; the law surrounding parental leave in the province; key things to consider when negotiating a parental leave package and preparing your practice in advance of taking parental leave. We are hopeful the event will become an annual one, with an expanded list of topics (such as leave for adoptive parents) in future years.

Upcoming events for the WLF Vancouver Island in 2019 include the annual women judges' dinner, a recognition lunch to celebrate some of the fantastic women who have been recognized for their professional accomplishments over the previous year, as well as a wellness event.

This update was prepared by Clare Sparks of Quadra Legal Centre and Amy Jaworsky of Island Law Office.

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She emphasized that one's work-life balance must be consistently re-evaluated so that it continues not just in the short-term but also over the long term. She noted that long-term work-life balance may include taking a leave from a demanding work schedule to prioritize your home life. Depending on your current situation, the scale of the work-life balance may tip heavier to one side or the other, and it is important to know when you need to either step it up or take a step back.

Overall, the evening was inspiring and educational. I and many others left with a renewed passion for the practice of law and motivated to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Law Needs Feminism Because...

By Grace Cleveland

We've all seen the numbers before, but a [recent study](#) of top American law firms has confirmed that in 2018 there was a 53% difference in the average compensation for male and female partners. [Similar studies](#) undertaken across the United Kingdom have produced analogous results.

What are the numbers for Canadian law firms? The [CBA Women Lawyers Forum](#) had the same question and has engaged an independent polling company to survey firms with more than 50 lawyers operating in Canada (more than 70 firms) to provide some basic information about how compensation decisions are made in Canadian law firms. Stay tuned for those results!

However, the pay gap is not the only hurdle women lawyers face. More statistics can be found in [NAWL's report](#) on the promotion and retention of women in law firms. For example, in addition to making less than their male counterparts, women remain the minority in terms of equity and non-equity partners, and the likelihood that women will become equity partners remains largely unchanged in the last 10 years (16% in 2007 to 19% in 2017).

All of these statistics have at least one thing in common – they show in concrete terms that law needs feminism! [Law Needs Feminism Because](#) picks up where these statistics leave off.

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Featuring portraits of folks from across the country finishing the sentence ‘law needs feminism because...’ the initiative draws attention to the lived effect of the statistics above. In a world where the numbers can be discouraging, community and inspiration become crucial. If you haven’t already, be sure to set aside some time in 2019 to check out the beautiful solidarity that is #LNFB.

Women Lawyers Forum & CPA Fall Mingler

Lawyers and accountants go together like wine and cheese – ie. **L**excellently. Maybe that’s why Sara Forte, founder of Surrey-based Forte Law, an employment law boutique firm, and Kathy Rogers, accountant and CPABC SLND chapter chair, saw fit to bring all four together at Fort Langley’s Saba Bistro & Café on September 19, 2018.

With over 80 attendees from White Rock to Chilliwack and everywhere in between, the dreamy Saba setting was a perfect background for both introductions to new friends and embraces with old ones. Upon walking in, guests were provided with a light and fruity cocktail that tasted suspiciously like passionfruit and champagne. A giant harvest table ran through the middle of the restaurant, chock full with a gorgeous assortment of appetizers and desserts to tempt those nearby. It was cozy yet elegant, and the air was perfumed by breathtaking bouquets placed around the room. Overall, it was a wonderful evening for all involved.

Although the networking was generally informal, guests were also encouraged to play a game that involved recording the names and a few interesting details about the lawyers and accountants they met that night. For a handful of lucky participants, this made the night even more special, as it turned out the lovely little flower arrangements were door-prizes in addition to décor.

This is the third WLF gathering that Sara has organized in the Fraser Valley, with prior events in October 2017 and June 2018. The purpose of these events is to bring women lawyers (and accountants in this case) together to encourage the development of professional networks and support for women professionals who live and/or practice outside of the downtown Vancouver core. To say that these Fraser Valley events have been enthusiastically received is an understatement, but if you’ve missed out so far, we have good news:

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Report from WLF BC North

Women Lawyers in Northern British Columbia are separated by thousands of kilometers from one another and face unique challenges in their practices. Over the course of the past few years we have tried to assemble a ‘WLF-North’ section with the CBA but have faced obstacles forming an Executive that is representative of the communities across the North. Therefore, we are asking all of those who are interested in keeping this section alive to come forward and volunteer for an Executive position. If you would like more information, please contact Nina Purewal at the Crown Counsel office in Smithers, BC (250-847-7364).

Stay Connected!

BC WLF membership is open to all CBA members. For membership information call the CBABC at 604.687.3404, toll free in BC at 1.888.687.3404, or visit cbabc.org/sections/enroll for a Section enrolment form.

We hope you will make the Forum!

WLF is now on LinkedIn!

Please visit [our page](#) and follow us for updates!

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-Chair: [Sarah Walker](#).





CBA National WLF Newsletter

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

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

Upcoming Events:

Save the Date: WLF Awards Gala April 11, 2019

Save the Date! The CBABC Women Lawyers Forum Awards Dinner Gala 2019 will be held on April 11, 2019 at the Terminal City Club. Please join us in celebrating outstanding women leaders as we honour the recipients of the BC WLF Award of Excellence and the Debra Van Ginkel, QC Mentoring Award.

This year we are thrilled to announce that our special guest speaker is The Honourable Catherine Anne Fraser, Chief Justice of Alberta, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. Chief Justice Fraser is a trailblazer in the legal profession and was the first female chief justice in Canada. Her strong belief in justice for all and her witty and engaging presence makes her an exemplary speaker for our Gala.

More details to follow.

WLF Networking Events

- Senior Women Lawyer's Event - February 5, 2019
- Junior Women Lawyer's Event - February 6, 2019
- International Women's Day Potluck - March 7, 2019

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Sara is planning another event for the spring of 2019!

Thank you so much to Sara and Kathy for your thoughtful planning and tasteful execution! Thanks also to the event sponsors: CBABC Women Lawyers Forum, CPA, Darnell & Company, Waterstone Law Group LLP, Magellan Law Group LLP, Hamilton Duncan, Sangha Tone Chartered Professional Accountants, MNP, Manning Elliot Accountants and Business Advisors, Baker Newby, and ZSA Canada.

A Review of Recent WLF BC 2018 Events

WLF Mentoring Potluck – August 16, 2018

A wrap-up potluck was held for the participants in the 2017/2018 mentoring year. Mentors and mentees were welcomed into the home of a past member of the WLF Executive and celebrated the end of the mentoring year with food, wine, and good times.

Ovarian Canada Cancer Walk of Hope – September 9, 2018

The BC Women Lawyers Forum participated in the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope at Queen Elizabeth Park. The Walk was a success in raising awareness and vital funds to provide support for women with ovarian cancer and , and for much-needed research into prevention, and improved treatments. Ultimately we hope the funds raised help find a cure for ovarian cancer. We hope to see even more WLF members participate next year!

Outreach Event – Langley Fall Mingler – September 19, 2018

Our widely popular outreach event returned this year as the WLF continues to make our events more accessible to people living and working outside downtown Vancouver. This time we partnered with the Chartered Professional Accountants organisation and had more than 80 attendees at this event. Check out the article by Grace Cleveland in this edition for more information on the success of the WLF and CPA Mingler.

Fall Launch Event – September 26, 2018

We kicked off the 2018/2019 year off with our annual “Hot Tips from Top Mentors” Event on September 26, 2018. This event is featured in an article by Sarah Walker in this newsletter edition.





Book Club to discuss “Lean Out – How to Dismantle the Corporate Barriers that Hold Women Back” by Maureen Fitzgerald – October 23, 2018

Maureen Fitzgerald led an engaging and thought-provoking discussion of her book, *Lean Out*. Book one in the *Women in the Lead* series. She writes that, despite years of climbing corporate ladders, women still lag behind their male counterparts. Using an intelligent and humorous approach, Fitzgerald suggests that instead of blaming women one should shift the focus to the barriers that are accountable for holding women back, which include double standards and the 24/7 workplace. We highly recommend this book to everyone seeking helpful insights and tips on building your success in the workplace.

Be sure to keep an eye out for the WLF’s next book club meeting to be held in Spring 2019.

WLF Mentorship Orientation Breakfast – November 15, 2018

We jazzed up our Mentoring Orientation this year by holding it as a breakfast event. It was a wild success! Thank you to those mentoring pairs who came and joined us.

Education Event: Susan Burak: Harnessing the Power of Mindfulness to Reduce Stress and Develop Resiliency – November 27, 2018

The WLF Education Committee held a fantastic workshop with Susan Burak who taught us some self-management techniques to help focus more effectively in the courtroom, boardroom, or living room. Attendees learned helpful energy management strategies, how to stay in the Zone of Optimum Human Functioning, and participated in a handy mindfulness exercise.

Volunteer Appreciation Night – December 17, 2018

This appreciation event (*pictured below*) is open to all the Women Lawyers Forum volunteers. The celebratory event is held annually to thank and honour the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers that make all WLF events possible. It’s always fun to catch up with the many members who make volunteering rewarding and we are grateful to Whitelaw Twining for kindly opening their doors to us for this event.

