



Connecting Women in the Law

BC WLF Winter 2014 Newsletter

Upcoming Events

BC WLF 2014 Education Program – February 7, 2014

In conjunction with the Law Courts Inn, the BC WLF will be holding an education program on February 7, 2014 to discuss the relevance and significance to women lawyers of Sheryl Sandberg's book *Lean In*. Linda K. Robertson and Allison Wolf will lead the discussion. This luncheon will be the first in a series of three "Lunch & Learn" events between February 2014 and June 2014. The sessions will feature

Remarks of the Chair

by Nicole Byres, QC

Over twenty years ago, (August 1993), the late Justice Bertha Wilson's report *Touchstones for Change: Equality, Diversity and Accountability* was published by the Canadian Bar Association. The report marked the first significant discussion on the issues of gender equality in the legal profession. At the time the report was published, I had been a lawyer for ten years, had two children aged 7 and 3, and had my fair share of experiences with gender-based, overt and unconscious bias.

The *Touchstones for Change* report resonated with me, igniting a passion for addressing the challenges faced by women in the practise of law and in achieving leadership roles.



When I reflect on the efforts made since then to improve the retention of women in law, it is clear that while there have been many positive changes, unconscious bias still exists and women still struggle to succeed on their terms. Sadly, many more women than men continue to leave the practice of law, particularly private practise. Notwithstanding the slow progress to date, I remain optimistic that with continued energy, focus, and dialogue on these issues, (aided by communication tools and social media that was unheard of twenty years ago), these statistics will improve.

Cover Photo:
The WLF BC Walk of Hope Team



THE CANADIAN
BAR ASSOCIATION
British Columbia Branch

facilitated panel and audience discussions on topics of relevance to women lawyers, managing partners and others responsible for any law firm diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Junior Women Lawyers Networking Event – February 20, 2014

The BC WLF will host a networking event for junior women lawyers on February 20, 2014 at Joey Bental One in Vancouver. We hope you can join us!

International Women's Day Networking Event – March 8, 2014

International Women's Day is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of those who have paved the way for the advancement of women and to continue to inspire generations of women to come together and achieve further progress. The BC WLF will host an event in Vancouver to celebrate and honour International Women's Day and will look to coordinate this event with other events being held across British Columbia. Stay tuned for more details.

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Recently, Kerri Priddle (current co-chair of the Kamloops WLF) shared a 2009 article with the attendees at the October 2013 Trial Lawyers Association of BC's Women Lawyers Retreat. This article from *Ms. J.D.* laid out Adrienne Suarez's *Code of Ethics for Female Attorneys* and reminded me of the role we each can play to 'be the change' we want to see in the profession. Four of my favourite 'calls to action' are reproduced below.

- I pledge to respect the female attorneys who came before me, because their paths were steeper, rougher, and unfamiliar. I pledge to respect the female attorneys who come after me, even though their paths may be gentler, smoother, and well worn. We are all traveling down the same path.
- As a woman, I will not judge other female attorneys who have come before me or who will come after me for (1) getting married; (2) not getting married; (3) having children; (4) not having children; (5) or making any other major life decisions because of, or in spite of, balancing a legal career.
- If my voice is louder or carries more weight, then I will speak up for my fellow female attorneys' needs, like a flexible schedule, even if those are not my personal needs at the moment.
- I pledge to be me. There is a younger female attorney out there who sees herself in me. I pledge to succeed for her.

There is still work to be done if we are to have a profession where women, as well as men, thrive. Whether you "just" support other women lawyers, advocate for change, or take up leadership roles, we all can play a part in transforming the legal profession. I challenge you to be a change agent. My hope is that by the 30th anniversary of the *Touchstones* report, our chosen profession will be profoundly more inclusive than it was when the report was written.



WLF BC - Fall Launch panel participants

L-R: Valerie Dixon, Katherine Ducey, Azmina Karim-Bondy, Shona Moore, QC, The Honourable Judge Patricia Janzen, Carla Forth, QC and Linda Wong

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Carol Cash

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Carol Anne Finch-Noyes, Carol Cash, Deborah Taylor,
Nicole Byres, QC, Vanessa Gauthier



The BC WLF Raises the Bar - Indeed!

*by Deborah Taylor
BC WLF Vice-Chair*

To commemorate our 10th Anniversary, the Executive of the BC WLF decided to increase our scope and leverage our resources by embracing a philanthropic cause.

Inspired by our friend and colleague Linda Wong, a lawyer with Pacific Medical Law who is living with a diagnosis of ovarian cancer, we decided that Ovarian Cancer Canada ("OCC"), the only national charity dedicated solely to overcoming ovarian cancer, would be our perfect charitable cause for 2013-2014.



Soon after the Executive's strategic planning session in June 2013, a committee was formed and with the help of the Vancouver staff of OCC and the support of the CBABC, we planned our first event and fundraising endeavour: participation in the 12th Annual Ovarian Cancer Walk of Hope, a walk that was held across Canada on September 8, 2013.

Once the decision was made, Linda started us off with what seemed like a huge challenge: she offered to match up to \$10,000 of the funds we raised by the date of our BC WLF Fall Launch, September 18, 2013. While that goal seemed difficult to meet at first, Linda was convinced that if you give lawyers a challenge they will rise to it. She was right! Within one week our team was building strong and we quickly surpassed Linda's challenge to become one of the top 10 teams in Canada. Thereafter we continued to leverage our resources to remain at the top.

On the day of the race the BC WLF team had over 45 walkers striding it out at Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Park and at Victoria's Royal Roads University. Each walker looked strong and fabulous wearing hats donated by the Pacific Medical Law. We joined over 10,000 walkers across Canada to raise over \$2.1 million for OCC. With the support of our family, friends and colleagues, the BC WLF raised \$38,356.11 and received a trophy for being the top fundraising team in Canada. Linda was the top fundraiser in BC. At the BC WLF Fall Launch we displayed our trophy and Linda shared with us some of her journey living with her diagnosis of ovarian cancer. The trophy is now displayed in the CBABC office conference room.

The BC WLF continues to spread awareness and to fundraise for OCC at our events. We encourage our members to take advantage of the resources available at the Vancouver OCC office whose staff is available to provide us with further information and present programs at our firms to lawyers and staff.

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Recent Appointments and Recognition of CBABC WOMEN LAWYERS

BC MINISTER OF JUSTICE & ATTORNEY GENERAL

On June 10, 2013 **Suzanne Anton, QC**, elected MLA for the riding of Vancouver-Fraserview, was appointed Minister of Justice and Attorney General. Minister Anton was the featured guest at the 2012 BC WLF Senior Women Lawyers Dinner.

LAW SOCIETY LEADERSHIP

Incoming President of the Law Society of BC – Jan Lindsay, QC

The BC WLF congratulates fellow member and this year's recipient of the Women Lawyers Forum Award of Excellence, **Jan Lindsay, QC**, as she begins her term as President of the Law Society of British Columbia for 2014. Ms. Lindsay is a founding partner of Lindsay LLP and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2009. She has been a Bencher of the Law Society since 2006 and has been involved in a number of initiatives supporting women in the legal profession over the years. We wish Ms. Lindsay much success in her new role!

Elected Benchers of the Law Society of BC

On November 15, 2013 the following women lawyers and members of the BC WLF were elected or re-elected as Benchers of the Law Society of British Columbia representing Vancouver for two year terms

Once again we want to thank Linda for her spirit and inspiration, all of our donors for their generosity, the Pacific Medical Law for our fabulous hats, the OCC for its support and literature to distribute to fellow walkers and finally, the CBABC who provided support from the beginning, publicised our efforts, and on walk day provided us with a tent to meet under along with treats.

Ovarian Cancer Canada – A Valuable Resource

by **Tracy Kolwich**

Ovarian Cancer Canada is the only national charity dedicated solely to overcoming ovarian cancer, providing leadership by supporting women and their families living with the disease; raising awareness among the general public and health care professionals; and funding research to develop reliable early detection techniques, improved treatments and, ultimately, a cure.

Ovarian cancer is the most fatal women's cancer; yet it is often overlooked and under-diagnosed. Symptoms are vague, so most women are diagnosed in late stages when 70% will not survive 5 years.

Ovarian Cancer Canada was selected as a Top Pick Charity for 2012 by Charity Intelligence Canada – one of only four health charities chosen, based on the efficiency and effectiveness of its programs.

For more information or to book a health education lunch and learn seminar 'Knowledge is Power' contact me at:

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Ovarian Cancer Canada
Cancer de l'ovaire Canada



WLF BC Walk of Hope

L-R: Deborah Taylor, Nicole Byres, QC, Linda Wong and Wendy Lee



WLF Leadership Conference: Montreal October 4-5, 2013

by **Linda Robertson**
National WLF Co-Chair, Lawyer Coach & Practice Consultant

The national WLF's second Leadership Conference held in October in Montreal, was a sold-out success. Over 200 women attended from all over Canada.

The sixteen-member conference organizing committee headed up by the national WLF Chair Pascale Pageau, included women from many different backgrounds. While the majority of those in attendance were lawyers, the committee's broad network attracted delegates from a wide variety of professions and businesses.

The two days were packed with a wide selection of workshops and many talented speakers.

Deborah Epstein Henry, who runs flextimelawyers.com and who has recently written a book on flexible work arrangements "Law and Re-Order," opened the conference with a powerful presentation on the challenges facing women lawyers today. Deborah later shared a luncheon speakers' platform with Linda Robertson, past WLF BC Chair and the incoming national WLF Co-Chair, on whether women lawyers can have it all – both a successful legal career and a fulfilling personal life. Their resounding answer was 'Yes, you can!'

Kirby Chown, formerly a managing partner at McCarthy's in Toronto, launched her new book "Coming Through: Tales from the Top Canadian Women General Counsel" along with a panel of women General Counsel who spoke about their success stories.

Sessions and panels on: rainmaking strategies, how to develop your personal brand, how to get more women on boards, and how to take risks as an entrepreneur, were a few of the numerous topics available for discussion. The conference ended with a call to action by Pascale Pageau to establish a "girls' network" across Canada, to promote women in the law, the professions and in business.

The conference was completely bilingual with simultaneous translation available for every session. Being Montreal, the style capital of Canada, a fashion show was held on the Friday night featuring professional women's clothing. The show was held in a dazzling 1890's Parisian themed theatre, and sensational culinary delights were provided on different levels around the theatre, offering optimal networking and socializing opportunities with other delegates.

Feedback from the conference has been very positive. There was great energy in the room and many women commented on the dynamic nature of this conference.

The national WLF is in the very early stages of planning its third Leadership Conference for 2015 to be held in Vancouver. We know it will be just as successful as Toronto 2011 and Montreal 2013. Watch for future details so that you can be there.

starting in January 2014: **Miriam Kresivo, QC, Sharon Matthews, QC, and Maria Morellatto, QC.** Other women lawyers elected include **Jeevyn Dhaliwal** (Vancouver), **Elizabeth Rowbotham** (Vancouver), **Pinder Cheema, QC** (Victoria), **Nancy Merrill** (Vancouver), and **Lee Ongman** (Cariboo).

LAW SOCIETY LEADERSHIP

Lori Mathison was elected Managing Partner of the Vancouver office of Dentons LLP late last year, making her one of the youngest managing partners of a large law firm in Vancouver. Her practice focuses on taxation law, an expertise built on her prior experience as a Certified General Accountant. Ms. Mathison also has a young family and is engaged in other community activities.

2013 QUEEN'S COUNSEL

The following women lawyers were among the 32 lawyers appointed as Queen's Counsel on December 5, 2013: **Diane Bell, Nicole Byres, Deanna Ludowicz, Elaine Reynolds, Kerry Simmons, Sandra Watson and Angela Westmacott.**

APPOINTMENTS:

Deborah Taylor, current Vice-Chair of the BC WLF and Associate Counsel at Mackoff & Company, was appointed to a 6-year term on the Board of Trustees of the P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship Fund in September 2013. This fund was established in 1949 and provides scholarships to women from abroad for graduate study in Canada or the United States. P.E.O. is a philanthropic organization whose mission includes celebrating the advancement of women, and



the education of women through scholarships, grants, awards, and loans.

Fall Update for the WLF-Vancouver Island

by Christine Murray

In the late summer and fall of 2013 we kicked off our year with two great events.

The first event was the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope on September 8, 2013. We greatly appreciate Deborah Taylor and the Vancouver WLF bringing this event to our attention and we look forward to participating in next year's walk.

On October 22, 2013 we held a "Hot Tips from Hot Mentors" event. We were very lucky to have distinguished guest speakers including Alice Finall, Kathryn Berge, QC, Kerry Simmons, QC and Carmen Rogers, QC share their wisdom and encouragement with our group. As a follow up to our October 22, 2013 event, we held a holiday potluck on December 11, 2013.

If you have any questions or if you have an idea for an upcoming event please feel free to contact me directly at christine@casselsmurray.com.

Did You Know?

If you are retired, working part-time or non-practicing you can now renew your CBA membership at 50% off our base membership rates.

Learn more:

<http://cbabc.org/membership>



BC WLF Fall Potluck - Nicole Byres, QC, Harkamal Rai and Ainsley MacCallum

What's Still Not Working for Women at Work

by Lindsay D'Andrea*

Joan Williams, distinguished professor of law at UC Hastings Law School, was kind enough to share her insights and research on the effects of gender in the workplace at the August 9th National Conference of Women's Bar Associations Summit. Professor Williams delivered her lecture with keen insight, great humor and an underpinning of outrage that after all these years, we are still talking about the disparities that women face in the workplace. It's maddening, it's frustrating and at times it feels hopeless.

Professor Williams echoed this frustration when she stated, "When I began my research twenty years ago, 15% of law firm partners were women. Today, 15% of law firm partners are women." We are all familiar with the problem. We all live it. But after so many years of fighting and striving, the situation seems stagnant. What is perpetuating this cycle and what can we do about it?

While the nuances of the problem remain decidedly complex, Professor Williams has a seemingly simple answer for what is causing it. In short, Professor Williams attributes the persistent disparity in work to schemas. Everyone utilizes certain schemas to evaluate the world. She explains that they are efficient tools, but they are often inaccurate representations of reality and people's consciously held beliefs. For example, industry leaders tend to have a distinct and lasting understanding of what a successful managing partner or CEO looks like, sounds like and acts like. He is male,

** Editor's Note: This article was reprinted with permission from the author. We thought that it would be of interest to our readers because the author deals with unconscious bias (referred to as schemas in the article).*





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white, assertive and mature with gray-haired wisdom. If someone does not conform to the schema, she is perceived as less competent and a less appropriate choice for a particular role.

Unfortunately, these schemas continue to operate in ways that favor Caucasian men and disfavor women and people of color. Interestingly, by identifying schemas as the cause, it becomes clear that gender bias does not necessarily have to stem from hatred or prejudice. It can be the result of simplistic mental processes and a failure to compensate for primitive evaluative abilities.

As far as how to combat the problem, Professor Williams has taken a somewhat individualistic approach. She has co-authored a book with her daughter, Rachel Dempsey, called *What Works for Women at Work*. The book explains how these schemas operate in practice and identifies four persistent patterns of gender bias: Prove it Again!, the Tightrope, the Maternal Wall and Tug of War. While Professor Williams acknowledges that individual strategies are not a substitute for structural change, the book aims to give women solid advice and effective tools to increase their chance of success in the world of office politics.

In her lecture, Professor Williams focused on the first two patterns of gender bias: Prove it Again! and the Tightrope. In discussing "Prove it Again," she explained that since women are not what power-holders think of when they think of success, women are forced to prove competence more frequently. Her research shows that women and people of color must produce twice as much evidence of competence as Caucasian men. Further, Professor Williams has found that women are judged on past achievements, while men are judged on potential. She explains that all of these interlocking forces lead to the oft repeated pattern of "He's skilled; she's lucky." To combat the "Prove it Again" pattern, Professor Williams suggests: 1) Keep proving it, but don't burn out, 2) Keep careful detailed records of your contributions and achievements, and 3) Build a network who can rally for you.



BC WLF | Fall Launch - Mina Kim, Esther Oh, Denise Lo and Vivien Yuen



WLF BC Walk of Hope - Linda Wong and Deborah Taylor



WLF BC Walk of Hope - Deborah Taylor's Speech for Ovarian Cancer Canada



CBA National Newsletter

The Common Room is available at http://www.cba.org/CBA/newsletters-sections/2013/12_wlf.aspx

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



CBABC WLF – Kamloops Annual Women Lawyers Retreat - February 28

The CBABC WLF - Kamloops invites you to their Annual Women Lawyers Retreat! Register now for 5.5 Hours of CPD. The conference will deal with contemporary practice options and advice from a variety of female judiciary and practicing professionals, highlighting the most recent and relevant legal topics in their practice and practice tips in that regard: http://www.cbapd.org/details_en.aspx?id=BC_WLFK0214

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://cbabc.org/Sections/Join-Sections> 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: Carol M. Cash or Vanessa Gauthier.

The second pattern that Professor Williams discussed is the “Tightrope,” which essentially describes the contradictory roles and personality traits that a woman must possess in order to succeed. She outlines how women must be both aggressive but also, feminine; women must be respected, but also liked. Professor Williams has found that too much aggression, too much passivity, too much anger, too much self-promotion or too much self-effacement are all detrimental to a woman’s career. Consequently, women are left with the unnerving task of constantly trying to strike the right balance. Simply emulating successful men will not always work for women because what works for a man may actually harm a woman’s ability to succeed. With that dichotomy in mind, Professor Williams suggests that women must stand their ground at work but with softeners. Essentially, a woman should assert her position adamantly, but politely. She also recommends that if the choice comes down to being liked or respected, always choose to be respected.

Professor Williams’ lecture provided an interesting conceptual framework to dissect the pervasive problem of competent, skilled women being overlooked and underappreciated in the workplace. The audience was very engaged and seemed extremely familiar with all the patterns she discussed. While structural change still feels pretty far off, perhaps being more aware of these patterns and implementing these tools will help more women succeed. Once there are more of us at the top, when you ask someone what a managing partner or a CEO looks like, you may get a very different answer.



BC WLF Fall Potluck - Melanie Magnusson, Deborah Taylor and Wendy Lee