

On The Front Cover

Dennis J. Mitchell was born in 1934 at Leipzig, Saskatchewan. He recognized at an early age that the salmon fishing in Saskatchewan was poor as were his chances of becoming Master Treasurer of our Society if he remained resident in that province. Accordingly, he asked his parents to move the family to British Columbia. His parents were not prepared to abandon the prairies and the family compromised by settling near Dawson Creek where they established a grain farm.

Dennis was educated at Notre Dame School in Dawson Creek and was elected as Valedictorian of the first graduating class in 1953. Unfortunately, he was not among the graduates of that class, being two courses short.

After High School, he worked briefly in the oil patch before marrying Ruby Walker and becoming a grain farmer. As a grain farmer, he was unsuccessful and a hail storm wiped out his crops in his first year. He decided, then, that it was time to make a career move. Soon, an overloaded half ton pickup truck destined for Vancouver was seen southbound on Highway 97 carrying Dennis, Ruby, their two children and their belongings.

In Vancouver, Dennis completed his course requirements for high school graduation and enrolled at UBC where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in three years. He then entered Law School (by then he and Ruby had five children) and graduated in 1964. While attending University, he worked full time at the Hornby Street Liquor Store after classes where he continued his studies of the human condition and, more to the point, earned a pay cheque to support Ruby and the kids.

He articulated with Bull, Housser and Tupper where he was well tutored by Bae Wallace (as he then was), Cecil Merritt and Ivan Quinn. After articling, Mitchell practised in Vancouver with Terry Nicholls and Jack Birney until 1968. He returned to Dawson Creek to practise with Marv Lundeen (as he then was) and Don Clancy.

A believer in "networking" long before that word became a verb, Dennis practised for eight months in Fort St. John with Leon Thomas, Bill Herdy and Bev McLachlin (as she then was). The daily commuting from Dawson Creek to Fort St. John became tiresome and in 1972 he established his own practice in Dawson Creek. One of his first clients remembers well the trepidation Dennis felt when he opened his doors in Dawson Creek that year. The practice did not flounder and is now known as Mitchell, Schuller & Dellow. It owes a good measure of its success to his wife Ruby who worked for many years with the firm as a conveyancing secretary and office manager.

Dennis was elected as a Bencher in 1980 and was elected to the Board of Governors of the Trial Lawyers Association of B.C. 1983-84. He was elected Assistant Deputy Treasurer for 1986 and became Deputy Treasurer in 1987. While serving as a Bencher he served on the Credentials Committee for the years 1980 and 1983 and was Chairman of the Credentials Committee and a member of the Executive for the years 1984, 1985 and 1986. He served as a member of the Discipline Committee for the years 1981, 1982 and 1983, and was the Chairman of the Discipline Committee for 1987.

Dennis was appointed as Queen's Counsel on December 23, 1986.

When not attending to his practice or to Law Society matters, Dennis enjoys salmon fishing and scuba diving. Every July (and despite recurring hay fever), he cuts and bales hay for the small herd of cattle he now maintains.

He is a competent practitioner whether arguing a rape case before a jury or drafting an agreement for the purchase of a business. He is a worker, has compassion and common sense and is well qualified to be our Master Treasurer.