



ON THE FRONT COVER

TRUDI L. BROWN, Q.C., TREASURER OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

By Jane Henderson

When you have been Queen of Everything for as long as Trudi L. Brown, Q.C., being Treasurer of the Law Society is really no big deal, undoubted honour that it is. The elder daughter of Margaret and Norval Brown of Vancouver and the Chilcotin was not born to the purple, and history is foggy as to when she was actually anointed and by whom, but none of her nearest and dearest can remember a time when her Crown was not evident.

Trudi's contribution to the public weal goes back to her early years as a Brownie, Girl Guide and Outer Guard of Job's Daughters. (That meant her job was to stand outside the door making sure no one who didn't belong got in. It must have had a lasting effect on her because she has been crashing down walls and barricades ever since.)

Trudi was called to the Bar in 1974, being a graduate of the distinguished UBC class of '73. She looked for articles at a time when it was quite acceptable for major firms to say that since they'd already "had" or "tried" a woman, they weren't looking for another. She articulated with the Attorney General and then practised with the Crown in Victoria before starting her own firm in 1978.

Although none of her then partners were actually royals themselves, several of them have gone on to illustrious careers in the Provincial Court (Chief Judge Metzger), the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal (Madame Justice Huddart) and the Canadian Bar Association (Judith Milliken). From that august group, and more, she downsized to the smaller Brown and Kay (now her Honour Judge Judith Kay) and then merged with another all-woman firm to become part of the (in)famous Broads on Broad Street, self-described as the (then) largest all-woman law firm west of the Rockies (but probably in the whole country!). In 1988, Trudi and some of the other members of that firm joined the ancient and venerable Victoria firm of Horne Coupar, where Trudi continues to practise in regal splendour.

Throughout her years in private practice, Trudi has combined a prodigious workload with a commitment to community and professional organizations. At one time or another she has served as president of the Coastal Region of the Canadian Red Cross Society and as a director of Mt. St. Mary's Hospital, the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre, the Victoria Women's Transition House Society, and the Community Law Office (a predecessor of the Law Centre), president of the Victoria Chapter of Zonta International and member of the executive of the United Way of Victoria and the UBC Law School Alumni. Since 1996 she has represented the City of Victoria on the Sexually Exploited Youth of the Capital Regional District Committee.

Trudi served on the Provincial Council of the B.C. Branch of the Canadian Bar Association as an elected representative from 1983 to 1988. She has served on the National Planning Committee for the National Family Law Program from 1990 to the present and on the National Continuing Legal Education Committee from 1990 to 1991. She was the CBA representative to the Federal Judicial Appointment Committee for three years, and she represented the Law Society at the CBA from 1992 to 1995.

From 1986 to 1995 Trudi also served on the board of the Continuing Legal Education Society. She joined the executive in 1987 and served as chair from 1990 to 1993.

Trudi became a Bencher of the Law Society in 1992 and during her tenure has served as chair of the Competency Committee, Gender Equality Monitoring Committee and the Discipline Committee. We think she sat on every other committee the Law Society has ever had, but we might have missed a few.

Trudi may be proudest of her contribution as major "mop squeezer" in the successful battle to bring gender equality to the Victoria Gorge Vale Golf Club. Those who worked for that cause occasionally had "mop squeezer" yelled at them during the sometimes-heated meetings. Of course, Trudi doesn't even know what a mop is, so she thought it was a compliment and that the hecklers were on her side.

She is also proud of her contribution as a trustee of the Nana Foundation, which provides emergency medical service for animals.

Trudi is also a member of one highly exclusive group, The L.O.C.M. (Loyal Order of Chocolate Moussers), which cannot and should not be described.

Although Trudi has been around so long many may think that she is an "old boy", she has always been a great supporter of women in the profession. Often the token woman in a professional group, she has fought for the inclusion of more women in all aspects of the profession. She has mentored many women during their articles and as young lawyers.

Trudi has escaped the parent trap herself (unless you think cats count), but she has always been extremely supportive of her co-workers and friends as they wallowed in the swamps of motherhood. An honorary aunt to many children, she is particularly proud of her niece MacKenzie and nephew Tyler.

Trudi's contributions to the community and the profession have been recognized formally by her appointment as a Queen's Counsel in 1987 and receipt of the Victoria YM-YWCA Woman of Distinction Award in 1997 for Business, Entrepreneurship and the Professions.

The Queen of Everything would be the first to acknowledge that she could not have accomplished what she has over the years without the support of really excellent staff. Her current Grand Vizier, Marion Dodds, has now been with her some 6.5 years and manages Her Highness's workload and schedule with grace and aplomb. Marion describes Trudi as "driven, fun-loving, generous and openminded — absolutely everyone is entitled to her opinion whether they ask for it or not."

Trudi's has not been just a life of hard work and good works, however. Her ability to party hearty is well known. A long-time colleague remembers "one of our first bonding experiences many years ago . . . or perhaps I was being mentored. Our respective offices were across the street from each other and we were both working on a Saturday afternoon. We started on a bottle of Scotch in her office and carried on at my apartment. Neither of us has a clear recollection of the event but I was astounded at her ability to walk down the stairs and out the door into the cab because I was paralytic from all that mentoring and unable to move until well into the next day!"

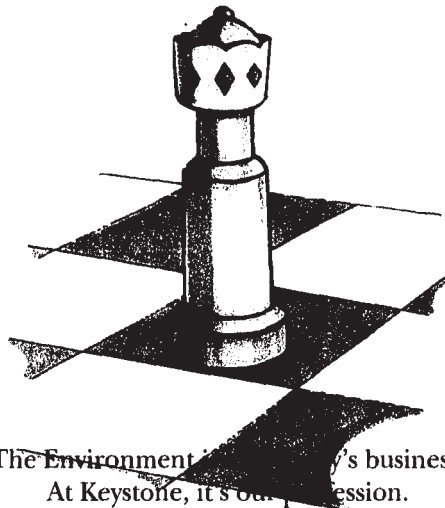
Although older and, somewhat more moderate now, Trudi is still the one who parties on til the wee hours and then gets up at the crack of dawn. Mind you, she is equally famous for her afternoon naps.

Over the years Trudi has also managed to get in a fair amount of travelling, Antarctica being the only continent she has yet to explore. Her last major trip took her through the far east including China, Cambodia and Viet Nam. She will say that golf trips don't count, but she is getting to be very well known in California, Myrtle Beach and Arizona.

As with any royalty, it helps to know their mottoes to understand them. In Trudi's case, there are two, individually handstitched by grateful clients. The first says "When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping." The second says "Tough times never last, tough women do." Both are well suited to the Queen of Everything.

One expects that Trudi will be an energetic, proactive Treasurer. She brings a broad range of experience to the position. She is at her best when faced with a challenge and represents the best of the legal profession. All hail!

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