



ON THE FRONT COVER

DOUG F. ROBINSON, Q.C. PRESIDENT OF THE B.C. BRANCH OF THE CANADIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

By the Honourable Reginald J. Gibbs, Q.C.

There are occasions when the match of the person to the office is so fitting that those who know both are moved to observe: "Of course; so obviously right; there is no one more eminently suited to the task." The accession of Doug Robinson of Lawson Lundell Lawson & McIntosh to the office of President of the B.C. Branch of the Canadian Bar Association is just such an occasion. He brings a formidable combination of talent and experience to bear at a critical juncture in the affairs of the profession.

Doug is a Vancouver native. He was born and raised and took his education, including university, here. He was awarded the degree of bachelor of commerce in 1971 and bachelor of laws in 1972. After serving the mandatory year as an articled student Doug was called to the bar of British Columbia in May of 1973. He is married to Marina Pratchett, the senior female litigation counsel at Russell & DuMoulin. Doug is "Dad" to three children, Craig, Mark and Meghan, ranging in age from 18 years to six years.

There you have the bare bones of Doug Robinson, and that is probably a fair analogy because he began his university career intending to be a doctor. But, as Yogi Berra is reputed to have said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." Doug did and became a lawyer instead. However, whether the bare bones are those of a doctor or a lawyer, it is the quality of the entire package that makes the man. So it is with Doug: the package combines a unique mix of ability and experience with a keen sense of duty to his peers and to the public at large. He also seems to have an affinity with the Court of Appeal, since he articled with Mr. Justice Lambert, was hired into Lawson Lundell by Mr. Justice Legg, now retired, and was associated as counsel on some notable cases and causes with Mr. Justice Gibbs, now retired. Perhaps therefore it would also be appropriate to call him a survivor?

The package that is Doug Robinson has a modest musical component (he was once a boy soprano of some note and he still enjoys choral participation), an athletic component of more significance (rugby, field hockey, golf and, on an international level, as a rower and an "out-of-shape" participant in the Boston marathon, although he insists that he is now progressing rapidly backwards in each of his fields of athletic endeavour), a practice component of superior quality (the most recent manifestation of which was the outstanding success he and his co-counsel achieved in *Privest v. Foundation et al*, the mammoth first asbestos product liability case in the Commonwealth, which was won at trial, won on appeal, leave to appeal to the S.C.C. refused) and an all-embracing component of tireless dedication to improvement in the delivery of legal services to the public, to the welfare of lawyers and law students

and to the preservation of a legal system of unimpeachable quality as an integral element of the Canadian social and political fabric.

The degree of dedication by Doug to the law and the profession is probably best illustrated by the variety of functions he has performed and offices he has held since he graduated: most currently, Canadian Bar Association (B.C. Branch) vice-president 1997-98; secretary/treasurer 1996-97; elected member for Vancouver County 1992-94; member of Executive Committee 1992-93; re-elected 1994-96; chair of Legal Aid Subcommittee and chairman of Membership Committee; member Legal Aid Liaison (representing CBA); member of the task force on Court Delays (National), B.C. Branch liaison on the Dickson National Task Force on Judicial Delays; chair of the B.C. Branch Working Group with respect to the Systems of Civil Justice Task Force; member of the CBA National Implementation Committee of the Systems of Civil Justice Task Force; chair of the board of directors of the newly formed Canadian Forum on Civil Justice, housed at the University of Alberta, which has been set up to carry on the Civil Justice Task Force's main initiatives; 1995 co-chairman of the Government Relations Committee (B.C. Branch); elected member of the executive of the Vancouver Bar Association (1980-82); B.C. Arbitration Association; Defense Research Institute; Association of Trial Lawyers of America; British Columbia Trial Lawyers Association; Project Management Institute; advisor on the Small Claims Court Mediation Practicum Project; chair of the Adoption of National Time Guidelines, Recommendation #12 of the Systems of Civil Justice Task Force; director, British Columbia Law Institute (formerly the Law Reform Commission of B.C.); member of the Trial Overflow Programme and Arbitrator Roster Committee formed under the B.C. International Commercial Arbitration Centre; member of the Justice Shaw Civil Litigation Management Committee, struck by Chief Justice Williams; director of the Salvation Army Pro Bono Programme; director of the British Columbia Mediator Roster Society; and an inaugural fellow of the Canadian College of Construction Lawyers, which is comprised of a small number of nominated senior lawyers from across Canada who have highly distinguished and reputable practices in construction law.

Doug serves as a director on the boards of a number of private companies and is a past director of the Independence Foundation, the funding arm of the Vancouver/Richmond Mental Health Association. He is also currently part of a group that is planning to build an international standards rowing complex to help continue the unique Canadian Olympic rowing tradition begun by some of his contemporaries.

That catalogue is descriptive of the rare breadth of service and experience that Doug brings to the office of President of the B.C. Branch. Joined with his organizing ability, his consensus-building talent and his affable personality, he presents as the embodiment of a combination that will serve the profession well in these days of uncertainty. We have at this time to face and contend with the rising cost to the public of legal services, the advent of multi-disciplinary law firms, the erosion of national and international barriers to lawyer mobility, the continual refashioning of the law by the application of the *Charter* and the never-ending assaults on the integrity of the legal system and the law.

I was one of the many who greeted the news of Doug Robinson as President with relief and satisfaction. In my view, we could not confide our affairs to a more resolute champion or a wiser custodian.

