



ON THE FRONT COVER

JOOST BLOM, Q.C. NEW DEAN AT THE UBC FACULTY OF LAW

By James M. MacIntyre, Q.C.

By the time this issue reaches you, it will be official: Joost (rhymes with post) Blom will be the new dean at the UBC Faculty of Law, effective July 1, 1997. This will be old news around the law school, where the search process occupied several months and concluded with presentations to faculty, students and staff by five highly qualified candidates during March. Joost is the second dean to hold a UBC LL.B. and also the second to come from articles at Shrum Liddle, Dean Lynn Smith having been the first in both categories.

Not quite a native of Vancouver, Joost arrived in Canada from Holland at the age of five in 1952. His father, on an earlier visit, had been taken to the Pitt Meadows area by an enthusiastic duck hunter named Leon Ladner, and Mr. Blom Sr. had concluded that all that the area needed was some good Dutch dyke works. The result was to be Pitt Polder. Joost started grade one in Pitt Meadows with no English beyond some instructions from his older brother Nick on how to ask to leave the room. At the end of that grade he was first in the class, and he more or less kept that spot right through high school and through arts at UBC. He followed his brother Nick into UBC Law and graduated in 1970, finishing just behind Bob Diebolt in the Gold Medal race. Joost then went to Oxford on a Commonwealth Scholarship and emerged with a BCL. He fell rather naturally into an appointment at UBC and has been there ever since. (During his school years, Joost's academic career perhaps overshadowed his athletic talents. In high school he was on the field for all sports, but owing to his penchant for order and accuracy he appears to have participated chiefly as timekeeper — but he did row at Oxford.)

At UBC Joost has always had a reputation among students and colleagues as a strong and respected teacher and scholar, his chief subjects being contracts, conflicts and torts. He has written extensively in these areas, both in scholarly journals and for the bar in many CLE programs over the years. He was associate dean for three years and had been on the executive of almost any bar, university or faculty committee you care to name, not always in the limelight, but always quietly and capably getting the job done. He articulated to Sholto Heberton at Shrum Liddle (now McCarthy Tétrault) in 1977 and was made a Q.C. in 1985.

The phrase "challenging times" is overworked these days, but it best describes Joost's coming term at UBC. University funding is going down every year. The current government "freeze" is really a slow decline in the budget as costs rise and increased enrolment is forced upon the whole university. It will be hard enough to

maintain current standards of teaching and research, let alone take the new initiatives that are needed as legal education tries to keep up with societal developments. Fortunately, one of the chief attributes of the new dean is "unflappability". At the age of 16, for example, on graduation from high school he was the recipient of provincial honours to be awarded by the Minister of Education in person. Everyone was there — parents, principals, officials and all. All but Joost. His "ride" had not shown up and he had had to catch the bus. He did arrive, 20 minutes late but totally unruffled. That quality is one he will need in the next six years. We wish him well.



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