

meeting her at a rugby party. Len and Laurie have been married for 26 years, and they have three sons, Miles, Keegan and Noah. In spite of Len's rigorous work schedule, he has always had time for Laurie and the boys. All three of Len's sons are in university pursuing careers in medicine.

Although Len has excelled in all aspects of his life, he has always maintained a humility and a sense of caring that endeared him to his clients, his staff, his partners and his fellow lawyers.

Congratulations to Len, who will be a great addition to the Supreme Court bench.

The Honourable Madam Justice Catherine Murray

Catherine Anne Murray has been lighting up every room she has walked into since she was a toddler. The courtrooms and judges' chambers wherever she sits will now be the lucky beneficiaries of her ready smile, positive energy and open and friendly attitude.



But make no mistake: Justice Murray is not just a sparkling personality and friendly face. Rather, she brings a vigorous work ethic, a determination and a matter-of-fact pragmatism to every job she takes on.

Catherine Anne Cicci was born on September 27, 1959 in Timmins, Ontario. Timmins is the home of Shania Twain and the Mahovlich brothers, which might explain her love of popular music and hockey. Her father Gino and mother Pauline, and their parents, were all Timminsians, but her roots run as far as Calabria and Abruzzi in Italy.

Her family, now including her younger twin brothers, Matt and John, moved west when Catherine was six years old. They settled first in North Vancouver, then in West Vancouver where Catherine attended Westcot Elementary and Sentinel High School. Catherine thrived at Sentinel where she participated in almost every sport and, not surprisingly, was head cheerleader.

One of the defining moments in high school came when Catherine was taken to a hairdresser with unruly frizzy long hair but emerged with shoulder-length layered and coiffed hair with bangs. According to Catherine, this haircut changed her social life forever. To this day she wears her hair the same way.

After high school Catherine entered the UBC commerce program, thinking she needed a decent degree if she did not make it into law school. She subsidized her education by working at Woodward's, in the shoe department, where she roller-skated (badly) from client to stock room and back, fitting people with shoes.

Although no one in her immediate or extended family was a lawyer, Catherine knew she wanted to be a lawyer, and a criminal lawyer at that. In her third year of commerce she applied to UBC law school. However, when she was not accepted, she decided to travel to California and experience the world outside West Vancouver.

During her first week in California Catherine received a call from her mother telling her that she had in fact been accepted to law school and that she needed to return home quickly as the first term had already started. Apparently, someone who had been enrolled did not show up, so Catherine got that spot!

During law school Catherine worked four nights a week as a bartender and cocktail waitress at the Granville Island Keg. It was there that she honed her ability to relate to people, a skill that has stood her in good stead her whole life, particularly as a trial lawyer. Catherine understands and loves people, notwithstanding their frailties.

Catherine articulated with Rick Peck and characterizes this experience, in her own inimitable way, as "the best articles ever!" (a sentiment everyone shares). From there she joined the Crown in 1987, starting in Vancouver. In the late 1980s she met Dennis Murray, the Assistant Deputy Attorney General at the time. She moved to Victoria when she and Dennis married. In 1992 their son, Kelly, was born. Their daughter, Julia, followed in 1994. When her children were young, Catherine worked part-time, but she could not stay away from the courtroom for very long.

In 2004 Catherine prosecuted Kelly Ellard for the swarming and beating death of Reena Virk. The case attracted substantial media scrutiny. Catherine was no stranger to publicity, but the publicity surrounding the Reena Virk murder was different. Catherine handled it all with aplomb.

Another Kelly Ellard trial followed in 2005 after the jury was hung. In 2009 the Supreme Court of Canada upheld Ms. Ellard's conviction for second-degree murder. In the interim Catherine prosecuted other murder cases, involving gang members on Vancouver Island.

Catherine returned to Vancouver in 2013, having been recruited to assist in the “Surrey Six” case. She was one of the team leaders working on the Jamie Bacon trial when, over a year ago, she received the call from Ottawa asking if she would like to be a Supreme Court judge. As Catherine’s parents described, when they were told of her appointment, “our hearts almost burst”.

Catherine was recognized for her skill as a criminal barrister in 2008 when she received her Queen’s Counsel designation. She was one of the Crown’s most skilled advocates and would easily make the list of “best cross-examiners”.

Catherine was dedicated to the profession outside of court as well. She volunteered her time, experience and energy as a regular contributor at Crown and CLE conferences. She has recently taken over as co-chair with Andrew Nathanson of the popular and widely acclaimed “Winning Advocacy Workshop”, a three-day intensive learning-by-doing course put on by CLEBC. With her good friends Sandy Cunningham, Q.C., and Judge Carmen Rogers, she developed curricula and taught and promoted trial advocacy, within and outside the Criminal Justice Branch. She was always approachable and became an obvious mentor in the Crown offices.

Catherine is not all work. She is also a horse lover and rider. No one knows what precipitated this love but her father recalls driving from Sudden Valley, Washington, to Sedro-Woolley so Catherine could visit the stables as a child. Catherine’s mother soon began driving her to Southlands for riding lessons.

This love of horses and all things equestrian led to Catherine’s partial purchase, against her brother Matt’s better advice, of Arista, an equestrian clothing manufacturing company. She and her partner then started “Horse ManUwear”, a sportier (think Lululemon) line of clothing for horse lovers. Every year in the early fall Catherine could be found hawking her clothes to the horsey set at the Spruce Meadows Masters.

Catherine is also a bit of a fitness freak. She used to run and has many races and a marathon under her belt. As of late she has swapped running for hiking and is always trying to beat her time up the Grouse Grind. She has recently taken up golf so she can spend more time with her partner, Bill McPherson. But her real addiction is yoga. She rarely misses a day of vinyasas and savasanas (look it up). Catherine lives the advice she recently gave to young trial lawyers starting out: work as hard as you can, aim to always do your best, but find time for family, friends and a daily exercise that you love—it will keep you sane.

Catherine is, as well, a sports fan. She loved baseball when her son Kelly played. She loved basketball when her daughter Julia played. She always (well, maybe not always ...) loves the Canucks.

In the end, though, her two children remain her most precious accomplishments—Kelly pursuing a career in hotel management in Vancouver and Julia in her first year of law school in Australia.

Catherine has been on the bench for over a year. She loves being a judge but is still greatly missed by her Crown colleagues.



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