

New Treasurer

R. Paul Beckmann, Q.C.

Paul Beckmann grew up in New Westminster, attended the public schools there and went on to U.B.C. where he took the commerce and law option. He was granted his B.Comm. degree in 1963 and his LL.B. in 1964.

Paul has always been fascinated with accounting, with sorting, marshalling and storing financial information and is known to analyze and collect every kind of number, from phone bills dating from 1964 to non-chargeable hours of second year associates, to non-attendance by Benchers at call ceremonies. His financial analysis melded perfectly with financial acumen when he travelled for a year in Europe between commerce and law. Young readers may be amazed to learn that the student's travel guide to Europe was then titled "Europe on \$5.00 a Day". Visiting literally hundreds of people whom he alleged were either relatives or close personal friends, Paul virtually eliminated lodging as an expense item and came home with a calculation that he had lived well in Europe at \$4.89 a day (including gratuities).

Paul entered the Faculty of Law at U.B.C. in 1961. In his first year his principal challenge was to reduce by a few seconds each day his time spent travelling on the curving, rain-swept road from New Westminster to Point Grey. In his second and third years, having learned that employment opportunities were better for people whose grades were near the top of the class, Paul continued to refine his driving skills but added to his life a dedication to his legal studies which saw him accelerate from the middle of the pack to high academic standing in his second and third years.

Paul articulated to John Walsh at Bull, Housser & Tupper which firm, then as now, was one of the largest in Vancouver. Paul preferred the familiarity of a smaller puddle and hopped to Shrum, Liddle & Heberton on completion of his articles. There he became the single associate in a legal staff whose aggregate complement was 4. He wrote an article on the taxation of associated corporations, hurled himself into a range of challenges including conveyancing, foreclosures, taxation, wills, advising small businesses and law firm management. Many people think of law firm management as organizing the flow of money in a law office. To his horror Paul discovered that the flow was a mere trickle and that the firm was never more than a nimble step or two ahead of its creditors. His partners harnessed his managerial energy by early invitation to the partnership.

Paul Beckmann ran for Bencher with the specific purpose of adding the perceptions and approaches of a solicitor to the deliberations of the Benchers. He felt that the Benchers should be devoting more time to assisting the members in developing properly professional, efficient, effective and client-responsive practices. If the Benchers were to serve this purpose they would have to improve their planning, in particular, financial planning, so that resources could be obtained and applied to tasks ahead. His committee assignments clearly indicate the directions in which he has focussed his energies as a Bencher: 5 years on the Finance Committee, in each of which he was Chairman; 3 years on the Creditals Committee and two years on the Education Committee. In addition, he served from 1981 to 1988 as a director of the Continuing Legal Education Society of B.C. Perhaps Paul's most significant contribu-

tion to the profession in the province was the leadership he manifested in convincing the Benchers to create and support the Professional Legal Training Course.

Paul's interest in law office economics caused him to serve for a number of years on the Professional Services Committee of the Canadian Bar Association. He has presented papers and commentary at a number of conferences on law office economics both across Canada and in the United States.

The time demands of the Treasurer's Committee (in effect the executive committee) of the Benchers are significant. Paul remains active, as he has been for years, in the affairs of his church, St. John's Shaughnessy. He is a director and secretary of the Vancouver Partnership for Business and the Arts and Chairman of the Anglican Homes Society. His practice now focuses on wills and trusts and advising close corporations. He plays an active role in the management of his own firm. He is still a regular attender of the meetings of the wills and trusts subsection of the Canadian Bar Association. Very much a family man, he likes to spend what little recreational time he has with his wife Elizabeth and their four children, Leanne, Nigel, Timothy and Deirdre, preferably at their retreat at Maracaibo on Salt Spring Island.

When Paul Beckmann becomes Treasurer on January 1, 1989, he will lead a Law Society which is remarkably different from the Law Society he joined in 1965. Its administration and financial management are significantly improved. It is far more effective in anticipating changes in the profession and in the relationships between the profession and the public. The Benchers are engaged in planning ways in which to make the profession contemporary and responsive. And the profession has assumed a significantly increased responsibility in training its members for their professional practice in the service of the public. Paul Beckmann's ideas, initiatives and persistence have been very important factors in bringing these changes about.

W.K.D. and S.H.



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