



## ON THE FRONT COVER

### KERRY-LYNNE FINDLAY, PRESIDENT OF THE B.C. BRANCH OF THE CANADIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

*By Eric Rice, Q.C.*

**K**erry-Lynne Donna Findlay was elected this spring by acclamation to be the President of the B.C. Branch of the Canadian Bar Association for the year commencing in August 1997.

Kerry-Lynne was born in the early evening hours of January 12, 1955, at Ladysmith, B.C., much to the joy and pride of her parents, Stephen and Norah Findlay. Raised as one of two daughters with four rough-and-tumble brothers (including Greg Findlay, who became an all-star linebacker for the B.C. Lions), she learned early how to be charming and how to tackle. She grew up on Vancouver Island, mostly Nanaimo, with a year in Victoria. She was precocious, and the family sent her to the tony Crofton House School for Girls as a boarder. In 1971, at age 16, she graduated as class president with an armful of scholastic and other prizes. Whether the experience left any lasting coat of desirable finish may have been a matter of dinner-table debate afterwards, but the Findlay family knew for sure that she had talent to go with a very kind and happy disposition, and a zest for participating in everything.

Kerry-Lynne devoted her next seven years (not exclusively) to higher learning at UBC. She earned a bachelor of arts with honours in 1975 and her law degree in 1978. At the same time she socialized as a member and later president of Alpha Gamma Delta Women's Fraternity, Greek Songfest coordinator, and in law school on various committees including faculty/student liaison and speaker's committees.

After law school, Kerry articulated with Kowarsky and Company, and stayed on there with them as an associate for two years afterwards. She then, after a brief stint as in-house counsel at ICBC, set up her sole practice in 1981. Recruited by Connell, Lightbody in October 1987, she practised with them for nine years, including five as a partner. In February 1996, she left that firm to join Watson Goepel Maledy, where she has remained to the present date. Her practice has been concentrated in the area of family law and mediation, although she also has considerable experience in estate and general civil litigation, personal injury, employment law and entertainment law.

Kerry-Lynne's rise to the presidency of our branch is the fulfilment of an ambition and a reward for many, many years of devotion to the bar. She has served over the previous five years as vice-president, secretary and a member at large on the B.C. Branch Executive. She has been vice-chair of the National Sections Council, national and provincial chair of the Constitutional Law Section, member of the National Task Force on Canadian Court Reform chaired by the Honourable Mr. Justice Seaton, editorial board member for the *National*, and chair of about a dozen other B.C. Branch

committees over the past 10 years. She has been a faithful attender of innumerable council, section and panel meetings of our association as well as joint committees with other bodies such as the federal Department of Justice and the B.C. Attorney General.

The CBA hasn't been Kerry-Lynne's only outlet for public spirit. She was a member of the Vancouver City Planning Commission for three years from 1987, including a year and one-half as chair, member of the executive of the Junior League of Canada, fundraiser for the United Way and the Heart Fund and a member of numerous other community groups including Rotary. She has been a prominent supporter of the Liberal Party of Canada, as delegate to national conventions since 1980, as executive member of the party's Women's Commission and executive member for the Vancouver Centre riding.

At the same time, believe it or not, Kerry-Lynne has made herself a fine wife and mother and has built for herself and her family a happy home life, although not without adversity. She was married previously to A. Boyd Ferris, Q.C. Boyd himself had been president of the B.C. Branch and also president of the National Association. He died suddenly of a heart attack in 1989, leaving Kerry-Lynne to provide for their two fine children, Hannah, now 16, and Beau, 14. With a lot of strength and faith, Kerry-Lynne survived that loss and carried on. She met and in 1993 married Brent Chapman, known to many of us as that very handsome and witty television actor who does those funny ads for Ford with the former bionic woman, Lindsay Wagner. With his help, Kerry in the last three years has conceived and delivered two more daughters, Donna and Lindsay. There is a family life of constant adventure, good humour and cleaning up after infants, dogs and teenagers.

What makes Kerry-Lynne tick? The biased admirer might say that it is her true love of her fellow beings. Actually it is hard to find an unbiased opinion amongst those who know her well. According to her secretary, Patralyn Stanger, "Kerry is the most compassionate family law lawyer I have ever been associated with or worked for during my 25 years of working for family law lawyers." She works hard and often late at night and somehow always impresses her clients with her sensitivity, which is well reflected in notes and cards of thanks and flowers in return. Compassionate she is, but capable too of hitting hard, especially when someone tries to push her around. Her brothers taught her well (or maybe she taught them).

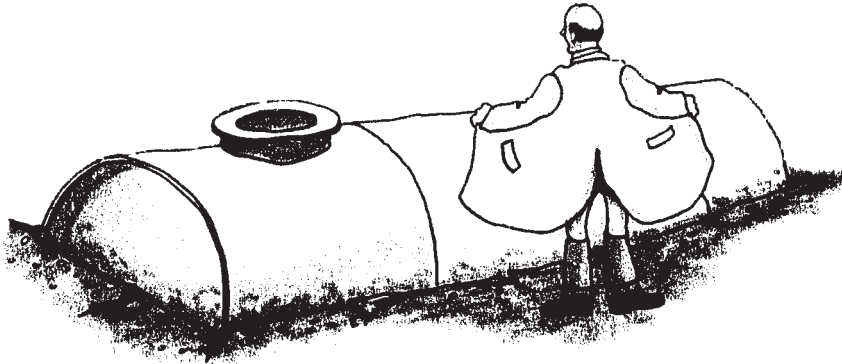
But how does she do it? How does she fit everything she does into every day? It's simple. She just shows up a little bit late for everything. Her colleagues have generally resigned themselves to this detail about her. It's actually rather amusing to watch her breeze into the room late, smile and wink at the others gathered, speed-read the materials at hand, and then join in the discussions with overtures of great regret for her tardiness.

Not on every occasion has this penchant of hers played without reaction. In 1994 the B.C. Branch executive director, Bob Smethurst, organized a cruise for CBA members from Los Angeles to Vancouver. It included a bus tour through Hollywood during which Bob, as he tells it, had the driver stop to allow the executive to get out and look at the Walk of Stars for 10 minutes. Twenty minutes later, when everyone else had returned, Bob jumped off the bus and pretty soon hunted Kerry-Lynne down in Fredericks of Hollywood. Marching up to her just as she was about to try on something nice, and barely maintaining his civility, Bob said, "You shouldn't be in here, Kerry. You're late for the bus!" Kerry laid aside the particular little garment in her hand and turned and faced her accuser, and placing her hands on her hips she calmly replied, "You shouldn't be here either, Bob. This is the ladies' dressing room." Never mind Bob's embarrassment then; it was his reaction a year later that was priceless when someone asked him, "What have you ever seen in Kerry-Lynne

Findlay?" His answer was "A lot" — followed by a suppressed chuckle, cough and blush. Kerry says that Bob has embellished the facts a bit, but it is always the best version of a story, not the most accurate, that goes down in history. Even Kerry admits that any version that puts her and Bob in a lingerie change room in Hollywood is a pretty good version.

Kerry-Lynne will serve our members well as branch president. She will throw herself into it with energy and enjoyment. We all wish her well.

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