



ON THE FRONT COVER

MARGARET OSTROWSKI, Q.C.:
PRESIDENT OF THE B.C. BRANCH
OF THE CANADIAN BAR
ASSOCIATION

By Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay, Q.C.

It is an honour and pleasure to have the opportunity to write about our Canadian Bar Association B.C. Branch president this year, Margaret Ostrowski, Q.C. Margaret is a rare find. She is a lawyer who is at once a consummate and ethical professional and yet maintains a hectic agenda as a devoted mother of two active, accomplished sons in school and a stepmother to three grown children. She is a well-rounded person. In a profession that requires great time and energy commitments, Margaret continues to pursue her lifelong love of the wilderness and outdoors, photography and painting, jogging and community and professional participation.

Margaret is one of the few people who were born in the northerly coast town of Ocean Falls, where her father worked as a chemical engineer for Pacific Mills Ltd. She was the fifth of seven children and maintains that having five brothers prepared her well for her future career. We soon lost her and her family to Ontario, where she attended grades two through 13 in Mississauga. She completed her B.Sc. (Hons.) at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, and a master's degree in social psychology at the University of Western Ontario. Fortunately for us, she found her way back to British Columbia, spending three years in the West Kootenays working as a psychologist in the local school district, building a log cabin, and teaching psychology and anthropology at Notre Dame

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University in Nelson. She was a great volunteer with the Historical Society in that community and was a founding director of the local Meals on Wheels. There she canned, sewed, crocheted, made jam, finished furniture, hiked, wrote poetry and wore granny glasses. However, a greater call came and she headed west for UBC, where she completed her law degree in 1979. I knew Margaret somewhat in law school, but we next met again over the door stoop of the preschool at St. Mary's Church in Kerrisdale, where her son, Simon, and my daughter, Hannah, both attended.

She articulated at Peterson, Stark and Fowler with John Peterson as her principal. (Ken Fowler wanted her hired because she was a Gold Cord Girl Guide.) She stayed with the firm for five years in a hectic general practice, had two children, then was asked to join Maxwell Schuman as the sole solicitor in a firm of litigators. In 1992 she struck out on her own as a sole practitioner in a wills and estates practice close to home. She has also been appointed many times as a custodian for other lawyers' practices where such services were required. Like all mothers practising law, she became great at juggling many things at once—practising law, raising children, running a household and participating in activities in the community.

Margaret has been actively involved with the Canadian Bar Association for more than 10 years. She started as the secretary of a subsection and has conscientiously and diligently worked her way up. She has chaired many committees and held extensive positions with the branch executive. She has been a strong supporter of our equality and diversity initiatives. In my year as branch president, I asked Margaret to co-chair our first President's Forum on Solicitors' Issues. The topic was chosen because of Margaret's untiring advocacy at executive meetings for the recognition of solicitors' issues and encouragement of more active participation of solicitors in bar activities. She was right. She worked very hard with vision and dedication. She and her committee made the first President's Forum (held in Victoria) an unqualified success, and now these forums are part of our branch's annual roster.

Margaret has been a dedicated board member of the Law Courts Education Society of B.C. She chaired its well-attended 10th anniversary fundraiser and has been a persistent lobbyist for funds for the organization. She has also sat on the council of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of B.C., chaired the board of the body that regulates dental technicians and denturists and been active in the B.C. Psychological Association.

It is always difficult with a very accomplished person to pick out highlights from a résumé that is full of highlights, but I would be remiss if I did not mention Margaret's ongoing contributions to the CBA sections, CLE, PLTC and the People's Law School through her many presentations and instructing stints. She has numerous publications to her name over the past 25 years.

Chris Holmes is Margaret's second husband. He is a senior and well-respected solicitor at Farris and Co. Her eldest son, Simon, is attending his second year at Harvard University and is a member of the Harvard cross-country and track teams. Kevin is in grade 12, an excellent student and an avid golfer. Athletics is

an important part of the family routine. Despite the numerous "track mom" weekend activities for which Margaret is well known, she and Chris have completed major cycling trips together down the Oregon coast and through the Cascade Mountains (which was a challenge and a half, she says) and the Gulf Islands.

In addition to the immediate matters of raising a family and practising law, Margaret has a keen and abiding interest in her Polish Canadian heritage. In fact, when I served on the branch executive with Margaret, the rest of us were concerned that she and Ken Sarnecki of Kelowna had a plan for board domination based on their shared ethnicity. Come to think of it, they are now president and vice-president and cabbage rolls and kielbasa will be served at the next executive meeting. Margaret maintains a small library of books on Poland, has travelled there twice and keeps in regular contact with her relatives there.

Those of us lucky enough to have worked with Margaret and to regard her as a friend know first-hand of her dedication and sincere concern for improving our common condition through the law and community spirit. She has incredible energy and undying enthusiasm for the task at hand. Her heart is always in the right place. She will work for us, and she will do it well. That's her track record.



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