



ON THE FRONT COVER

ELIZABETH EDINGER

By Tony Sheppard

In 1975, when David Roberts, Q.C. (who was then editor of the *Advocate*), was looking for someone to take over editorship of the case notes, I immediately suggested my academic colleague and former classmate, Elizabeth ("Liz") Edinger. I thought Liz would be ideal because she had done such a fine job of editing the *UBC Law Review* in our graduating year, 1967. In due course, Liz took over the editorship of the case notes, beginning with volume 33, part 5, and has served continuously in that capacity to the present. Few editorships can have endured so long and been so successful.

When I visited Liz's office at the Faculty of Law and she was performing her editorial functions, she would wrestle a huge box of unreported decisions of the B.C. Court of Appeal and B.C. Supreme Court into submission. Working under tight deadlines, Liz would quickly open the box and allocate the unreported cases into piles all over her office, according to subject matter. When the allocation was finished, Liz would immediately dispatch each pile to a designated specialist, keeping any remaining piles for editing by herself.

Upon receiving a pile of decisions, the designated volunteer would select and brief cases warranting publication in the case notes. Decisions that were significant to the law of British Columbia, and that were unlikely to be published in the law reports, were especially prized entries in the case notes. The volunteers, who were comprised of practitioners and academic colleagues, would brief their assigned decisions, possibly adding a short explanatory comment, according to the standard format of the day. Liz would receive and assemble the submissions

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into the case notes and send them off to David Roberts, and latterly Thomas Woods, for publication in the upcoming issue of the *Advocate*.

Congratulations and thanks from the profession of British Columbia are due to Liz, and to the numerous anonymous contributors, for many hours of devoted and invaluable service in preparing the case notes. As a result of their efforts, thousands of otherwise unreported decisions and useful short comments have graced the pages of the *Advocate* and helped to expound and explain the law of British Columbia over the last 30 years.

I understand that the case notes are being terminated, having fallen victim to the ongoing technological revolution in the reporting of judicial decisions. Now that decisions may be found so promptly and readily on the B.C. superior courts Web site, or other services, the case notes feature of the *Advocate* is ending. Only such a major upheaval as the computer revolution could have brought an end to the case notes.

Liz has been part of other changes to the legal profession. When she started law school in 1964, only a handful of women were enrolled in all three years of the LL.B. program. In the class of '67, there were only two women, including Liz, out of 100 or so.

From the beginning of her studies, Liz displayed efficiency, incisiveness and an economy of words. She always finished her law examinations before time, to the consternation of her classmates. As one of her struggling classmates, I can say that it was always disconcerting for us to look up from our protracted and stressful labours, only to see Liz coolly and calmly handing in her answer paper and leaving the room at least 15 minutes early. These qualities served Liz well in her role as associate dean of the Faculty of Law from 1988 to 1992, and from 1997 to 2002, establishing Liz as the faculty's longest-serving associate dean. The same qualities assured Liz's success as the case notes' editor.

While Liz was associate dean, she had the great pleasure of seeing the graduation of her son, H. David Edinger, B.A. '87 and LL.B. '90 (UBC). Subsequently, David attained an LL.M. (Lond.), articulated and entered practice with the law firm of Heenan, Blaikie, at its Vancouver office.

Liz began her teaching career in 1973 at the UBC Faculty of Law, where she was the first woman appointed to the full-time teaching staff. Over the years, Liz has become one of the most popular and versatile teachers on the faculty, currently teaching large classes in legal institutions, conflicts and federalism. Liz's range of teaching is so broad as to have encompassed not only the abstractions of constitutional law but also the nitty-gritty of creditors remedies. Liz has been nominated by the students for the law faculty's Killam Teaching Excellence Award many times, but she declined nominations until 2000, when she finally bowed to the inevitable and accepted the award.

As recounted by Justine Wiltshire, LL.B. '98, her class managed the rare feat of outmanoeuvring Liz. In 1998, as in previous years, Liz declined nomination for the teaching excellence award, claiming she was undeserving. The students who had nominated Liz were not to be denied, however. Justine and her classmates created a

one-off "Excellence in Associate-Deanship Award" just for Liz, which Justine presented to her at the graduating class dinner. Justine recounts that "with a rueful smile", Liz graciously received a certificate, which states as follows:

Presented to Professor Liz Edinger, for outstanding contribution and unfailing devotion to the students and faculty of UBC Law.

On this sixteenth day of March, 1998, the students make this prestigious award, which includes:

- The Mushy Heart Award;
- The Slave Labour Award; and the
- Longest Legs in the Law School Award.

Thank you for your kindness, competence and dedication.

As the certificate implies, Liz is very adept at avoiding recognition, but on this occasion at least, the students managed to offer her their collective thanks for all her efforts on their behalf. The award recognizes the unfailingly creative and empathetic steps she has taken to help students overcome financial, emotional and other obstacles that impede their progress to graduation. Liz treasures this award and keeps it on her desk.

Liz is an accomplished and widely cited scholar; her publications are both practical and policy-oriented. They have been cited and followed at every level of the judicial system: from decisions of local masters of the B.C. Supreme Court, through to decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada, and even the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (New Zealand appeal).

One of Liz's most endearing qualities is her lack of pretension. Liz shuns the limelight and has dodged many opportunities for public recognition. Along with many others, I'm delighted that the *Advocate* prevailed over Liz's reticence with respect to the tribute reflected in the decision to place her on the front cover. The profession's thanks to Liz are long overdue for all that she has done for the advancement of legal knowledge and legal education.

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