



ON THE FRONT COVER

GARFIELD GLEN RIDGWAY, Q.C.

By Scott Van Alstine, Q.C.

Glen Ridgway, the Law Society's new president, was born in Langenburg, Saskatchewan, on September 14, 1947. According to Glen, it was an event of historic proportions. So much so, that his mother and his father, the latter of whom was an active member of the Liberal Party, named him after James Garfield Gardiner, the two-time premier of Saskatchewan and powerful minister of agriculture in the cabinet of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King. Glen's parents then scooped the name "Glen" from another political friend, James Allison Glen. Mr. Glen was chosen as speaker of the House of Commons following the 1940 election, and prior to the 1945 election he was appointed minister of mines and resources by Mackenzie King. Glen's name, however, is the closest he ever got to the Liberal Party.

From 1949 to 1964, Glen lived with his parents and older brother, Morley, at Foam Lake, Saskatchewan. His sister-in-law, Pat Ridgway, describes Glen as the "guinea pig" for Morley and his pals' inventions and practical jokes. Thus, Glen developed a sense of humour—"in order to survive". And survive he did.

Foam Lake appears to be a breeding ground for important people. Bernie Federko, the hockey player, and Maestra Tania Miller, the music director, are from Foam Lake. During the time that Glen lived at Foam Lake, his father, who was a school teacher, spent his summers as an instructor at air cadet camps in Abbotsford. Consequently, Glen spent many summers in British Columbia.

Glen graduated from Yorkton Collegiate Institute, in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, in 1965, received his B.A. in history from the University of Saskatchewan in 1968 and then came west permanently, graduating from UBC with an LL.B. in 1972.

One of the characteristics of Glen that emerged at law school was a tendency to lampoon anyone with an inflated sense of power or authority. On one occasion a downtown lawyer came to address students on an aspect of commercial law. The downtown lawyer was handsome and fashionably turned out. He paused, as if to give the audience a moment to admire him, before he began his presentation. Suddenly the lengthy silence was shattered by a booming Ridgwayesque voice from the back of the hall: "Who is this guy anyway?"

Glen articulated for the law firm of Matthews and Lauder in Victoria and then made his way to Duncan, where he has lived and worked ever since, except for a one-year stint in the mid-1970s when he worked with the Attorney General of B.C.

Glen is the senior partner of Ridgway and Company, a five-lawyer firm in Duncan. He and three of the lawyers have practised together for over 20 years. Glen's legal work focuses on general civil litigation, insurance defence work, employment law, estate law and commercial litigation.

Glen is a skilled lawyer and litigator. He possesses the ability to analyze a complex set of facts and distill from them, with speed and clarity, the essential issues that arise. According to Glen's partner, Bill Younie, Monday morning at Ridgway & Co. follows a time-worn ritual. Glen meets each lawyer and proceeds to describe in minute detail his weekend activities and his views on current events. Somehow, he will manage to interject into the conversation the names of two of his favourite Canadians: Brian Mulroney and Don Cherry.

Glen married Carole on January 11, 1974. She was a beautiful, hugely optimistic and devout person. There were three children during their happy time together—Todd, Tyler and Kelly. Strangely enough, Carole's sister, Miriam, came upon Glen before Carole did. Miriam was in a movie theatre in Duncan and, as the movie was playing, became aware of a person with a most distinctive laugh who was laughing loudly when no one else was. It was Glen! Carole and Glen enjoyed a long and close relationship: raising their children, travelling, spending time with extended family and participating in community activities, until Carole's unexpected death in April 2005. As Glen noted in Carole's obituary, "After her passing, there was a small storm followed by a beautiful sunny day; her gift to us." Later in the remembrance he remarked, "Her dogs, cat and every horse in the world will miss her."

Around the time of Carole's passing, Glen's brother, Morley, died. The two brothers were very close. Morley had achieved success in the banking sector. Distance and different career paths never interfered with their close relationship. Morley was the older brother every younger sibling dreams of.

Glen served as an alderman on North Cowichan Council from 1987 to 2008. Although at one time or another he chaired every single committee,

his clear favourite was Public Works. He seems to have fashioned himself after a combination of W.A.C. Bennett and “Flying Phil” Gaglardi, premier and minister of highways respectively in the provincial government of the 1950s and 60s and who had an irrepressible tendency to build on, pave over or flood any tract of land they came upon. Glen enthusiastically arranged for new roads, bridges and buildings throughout his domain.

According to James Dias, the city administrator, committee meetings were usually held at noon, as it was the most convenient time for Glen to attend. More importantly, noon meetings came with a free lunch. One of Glen’s complaints, heard as he walked up to the buffet for the third time, was that the plates nowadays are too small. Glen, on council, was known for his common sense and ability to identify important issues instantly. He could be impatient. Once, during interminable discussions concerning a proposed bridge over a tiny stream, after numerous environment specialists had testified, he remarked, “How did they ever build that bridge to PEI?”

Glen is known for his humour. Colleen Johel, Glen’s law partner, remarked that over the years she had several clients who regularly watched North Cowichan Council meetings on the local cable channel solely for the purpose of catching Glen’s latest outrageous comment. These client viewers had no interest in North Cowichan politics, but they recognized comedy when they saw it. Glen was North Cowichan’s answer to Archie Bunker.

One of Glen’s hobbies is writing letters—to newspapers, journals and important people. Once, when running for election and believing he was in a tight race, he wrote the local newspaper to correct the belief that he was in favour of shooting Roosevelt elk because of the property damage the elk were doing. He began, “I am writing about the article of September 19 wherein I am attributed with anti-elk feelings.” After explaining his position, he closed, “It’s getting near election time and I want all the elk to know I’m on their side.”

Glen is never slow to voice his political views. In a letter to the *Advocate* in 1999 he said, “I am writing to tell you that articles in your July 1999 edition once again justify that observation [that the *Advocate* provides good assistance to legal practitioners] and I would thankfully send off my money for my subscription if I were afforded the choice to do so, which of course, I am not. Certain of those articles were so useful that I am not going to make mention of the attempt at glorification of Pierre Trudeau contained in the latter part of your magazine under the guise of a book review.”

Glen once corresponded with the a CBC vice-president about the show *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*. He asked about the cost of the show, the advertising revenue the show generated, the number of people who watched the show and how much Ms. Clarkson was paid. Mr. Byrd (the CBC vice-president)

responded, but he declined to disclose Ms. Clarkson's fee. Ultimately, Glen wrote directly to Ms. Clarkson inquiring as to how much she was paid. Ms. Clarkson replied, but would not divulge the information requested. A portion of Glen's answer to Ms. Clarkson's communication is reproduced below:

In any case, I believe that if the CBC has the right to know about the use of public funds and comment on its appropriateness in the case of Mr. Manning's trip, I too, have the right to know about the use of public funds (what you receive from the CBC) in order that I can determine whether or not it is appropriate.

The last paragraph of your letter contains some big eastern Canadian words. One of them I know, "contempt"; the other, "opprobrium", I had to look up. When I found its meaning, coupled with the word "contempt", I had the immediate impression that although I am not a neurologist, I hit a nerve. I note that in the earlier part of that paragraph, you had attempted to wrap yourself in the cloak of respectability by implying that I felt it was inappropriate for you to have a "job". You do not have a job; you have a contract from CBC, and it was not subject to public tendering. You then indicate that I am "implying" that it is inappropriate for you to be paid for "producing and overseeing a program which happens to attract a viewership of hundreds of thousands of Canadians each week". I am not implying that at all. All I want to know is how much you are paid, in order that I can determine if it is appropriate. The fact that you are paid is not inappropriate; however, the amount may well be, because—and perhaps you should check with Mr. Byrd in this regard—he has a different story on your viewership. He indicates to me that your show is part of the CBC's mandate to have programming nobody watches.

You may interpret a single question, which could have been answered months ago, as to how much your program costs the taxpayer, to be contemptible and mean-spirited; however, I call it the public's right to know. That is a phrase I learned from the CBC.

Not surprisingly, that was the end of that line of correspondence.

Glen's contributions to the Cowichan Valley and to the larger community have been enormous. He has been a Legal Aid director, a past president of the Cowichan Bar Association, a board member of Malaspina College, a board member of the Justice Institute of B.C., a president of Duncan Minor Hockey and a Rotarian for over 20 years. He is a long-time member of the Cowichan Golf and Country Club.

Not one for all work and no play, Glen has survived a trip from Beijing to Moscow with Ron Toews, Q.C., on the Trans-Siberian railway, and he loves to hike the West Coast Trail. He is an unwavering supporter of the Saskatchewan Roughriders. Glen is happy to be sharing his life with Kathryn Oliphant, a lady he met in 2009 and whose presence with him on the golf course makes mulligans necessary for Glen.

We are fortunate to have Glen Ridgway as our president. He is an excellent lawyer and is aware of the many problems practitioners deal with on a

daily basis. He is intelligent, hard-working and inspires loyalty from those people around him—indeed, his secretary, Kim Davidson, has worked with Glen for 32 years. He possesses an ease in dealing with people from all backgrounds. His wit, and unusual take on life, in the most trying of times will clear the air and allow clarity of thought and wisdom to prevail. Our president resembles the “Happy Warrior” as described by the poet Wordsworth:

...the generous spirit, who, when brought
Among the task of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright.

We wish him well in his year at the helm.



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