

NEW JUDGE



The Honourable Judge Catherine Bruce

The newly appointed Judge Catherine Bruce is a woman of many talents and great energy. She has a distinguished record of professional achievement and service.

She graduated from UBC law school in 1976, second in her class, and then articulated at Shrum Liddle & Heberton (as it then was). Yearning for academe, she attended LSE to take an LL.M. in 1978.

On return to Canada, she spent three years as in-house counsel for the Canadian Airline Flight Attendants' Association, which post she left in 1981 to join Braidwood & Co., where she practised labour, criminal and civil litigation. In 1987 she joined the Industrial Relations Council as vice-chair, a post she held full- and then part-time, until 1996.

In 1990, Judge Bruce established a private arbitration and mediation practice. Since that time, she has conducted various types of adjudications, investigations and counselling in many industries.

In 1991-92, she was appointed to direct the Law Society of B.C.'s "Gender Equality in the Justice System" study for the committee chaired by Ted Hughes. She travelled throughout B.C. conducting public hearings into issues of gender equality in the justice system as counsel and advisor to the committee. She worked with government departments, public and private organizations and members of the public, and gained the admiration of the committee and hearing participants. She wrote the committee's now celebrated comprehensive report, which addresses gender equality in all aspects of the law and the administration of justice, including police forces, the judiciary and government. This report has formed the basis for several years of follow-up work by other committees of the Law Society, in which she has participated as a volunteer.

In 1994 Judge Bruce was appointed chair of the Emergency Medical Assistant Licensing Board, the governing body for paramedics in B.C. In 1995 she was appointed by the federal government to investigate confidentiality within the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, and to make recommendations for systems changes.

An active volunteer, she has been a member of the Collective Agreement Arbitration Bureau's Joint Advisory Committee; she participates in the selection of arbitrators eligible for appointments by provincial bodies, and in development of courses for arbitrators. She has lectured for the Justice Institute, CLE, CBA, Criminal Justice Associations, UBC and UVic law schools, BCIT, Capilano College, Douglas College

and numerous other organizations, on topics involving the *Charter*, labour law, arbitration and mediation, and gender equality in the justice system.

She has found time to publish numerous papers for CLE and other organizations on pension benefits litigation, labour law topics, arbitration matters, expert evidence in sexual assault cases, and one called "Human Rights: Balancing Work and Family" — a topic on which she is surely expert.

Catherine Bruce's prodigious energy is the envy of many of her friends. While managing a busy full-time practice, she carries on all of the writing and speaking engagements referred to above, raises her family, and last year also ran a marathon in under four hours. This goes some way to explain the fact that she went into labour with her second child while riding a bicycle.

One of her most endearing qualities is her ability to bring levity to her interactions with others while displaying a legendary candour described by one of her friends as "hit them in the stomach and then laugh". The truth is that she does not shy away from asking tough questions, but engages her target with her light spirit.

When she was interviewing for articles, Catherine met with a partner who presented her with a book about the firm of which he was a senior member. She was then left alone while he went for coffee. On his return half an hour later, he asked whether she had any questions about the firm and she asked: "Do you have 25 cents? Because it cost me that to get here on the bus, and it wasn't worth it." Not every student has the fibre to state an opinion so openly.

In her work with the gender equality commission, Judge Bruce was praised by many for her willingness to support those who wanted to tell their stories about the justice system and gender inequality. She was always willing to provide encouragement to nervous women who were not accustomed to speaking of their difficulties; she went out of her way to ensure that their stories would be heard and accounted for. Catherine Bruce will bring to the bench the same compassion and tolerance. We congratulate her on her achievement, and look forward to her long career as a judge.



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