



The Pro Bono Profile

PRO BONO LAW OF BC'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring 2007



Ryan Parsons (right) receives the Court of Appeal Program award from Attorney General Wally Oppal and Jamie Maclaren.

Roster Program Lawyers of the Year Announced

Attorney General Wally Oppal and PBLBC Executive Director Jamie Maclaren were pleased to announce the 2007 Roster Program Lawyers of the Year at PBLBC's Second Annual Appreciation Breakfast on February 22 in Vancouver. For each of PBLBC's five Roster Programs, one volunteer lawyer was honoured for his or her distinguished service in providing pro bono representation and assistance to British Columbian individuals and organizations of limited means.

Ryan Parsons of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP won the Court of Appeal Program award for his assistance in co-administering the Program with colleague Angus M. Gunn Jr., and for his eleventh-hour heroics in successfully appealing an order for eviction of a social housing tenant. **Michael Steven** of Kerfoot & Company won the Family Law Program award for providing pro bono assistance to several different clients in difficult circumstances. **Josh Paterson** of Fiorillo Glavin Gordon earned the Federal Court of Appeal Program award for his tireless representation of a low-income person who was denied CPP disability benefits. **Louise Kim** of Edwards Kenny & Bray, a veritable wunderkind in the pro bono world, won the Judicial Review Program award for successfully representing dozens of low-income tenants up and through the Court of Appeal. Last but not least, **Jaime Mellott**, a Vancouver sole practitioner, took home the Solicitors' Program award for providing pro bono assistance to three different non-profit organizations, and for speaking at a legal seminar in Kelowna.

The five award-winners are only a tiny sample of the many roster lawyers that provided pro bono services through PBLBC, and so we tip our hat to all of them.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- April 16 – 22, 2007: Law Week, BC-wide
- April 27, 2007: Pro Bono Practice CLE, Vancouver
- June 1, 2007: Release of 2007 PBLBC Survey Results
- September 4, 2007: Publication of PBLBC Law Firm Pro Bono Guide for Students

VOLUNTEER PROFILE GLEN EWAN, QC

If you look closely on Google Earth at the valley nestled between the Selkirk, Purcell and Rocky Mountain ranges in southeastern British Columbia, you will see the town of Golden. If you look even closer, you may discern a golden light emanating from the small law firm of Ewan & McKenzie. The golden light (though strictly metaphorical) shines from the generous heart of Glen Ewan, QC—a lawyer dedicated to mountain life and the true spirit of pro bono.

Glen has operated a general practice in Golden since his call to the bar in 1978. A quintessential small-town, do-everything practitioner, he is counsel to local residents, businesses and organizations in real estate, wills, estates, corporate and criminal matters. He works alongside Bruce McKenzie, his law partner of twenty years. He lives alongside Bev, his marital partner of nearly thirty-three years. They are the proud parents of three sons.

Like most small town lawyers, Glen takes on his fair share of pro bono files. But his commitment to pro bono far exceeds the odd walk-in file. He is a frequent lecturer on legal issues for lay people and college students. He is also a former Governor of the Law Foundation of BC. Glen prides himself on acting as an *amicus curiae* in Provincial Court, and it is his firm's policy to provide pro bono summary advice to clients who cannot afford to pay. Last October, Glen and Bev cut their vacation short so that Glen could speak at a PBLBC Non-Profit Seminar in Kelowna. We at PBLBC are extremely grateful for Glen's golden devotion to pro bono.



LAW FIRM PROFILE BLAKE, CASSELS & GRAYDON LLP

Until recently, the national slogan for Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP was “Blakes Means Business” [it is now “Our Signature is Business”]. And with more than 500 lawyers in offices in Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver and all over the world, there is no question that Blakes is dedicated to doing good business by providing high-quality counsel on business law. Blakes also sees the business case for providing pro bono services, and as a firm with a conscience, has taken a leadership role in supporting pro bono initiatives in Canada.

Many of Blakes' Vancouver lawyers volunteer through pro bono programs like the Western Society to Access Justice, the Salvation Army Pro Bono Program and PBLBC's Roster Programs. Blakes also provides pro bono legal advice and assistance to many worthy non-profit organizations on issues including charitable activities, child advocacy, employment, litigation and corporate law. In order to enable and encourage its associates and partners to engage in such pro bono services, the firm has adopted one of the strongest formal pro bono policies among all national firms. The policy attributes a very generous number of yearly billable hours to pro bono work.

In a recent manifestation of its dedication to pro bono service, Blakes has entered into a pro bono partnership with the Parkinson Society of British Columbia. Brokered by PBLBC, the partnership allows for the provision of corporate legal services to the Society, as well as the provision of litigation services to people with Parkinson's who face legal issues tied to their disease. If you know of someone with a legal problem relating to Parkinson's disease, you may contact Diane Robinson, the Society's Executive Director, at drobinson@parkinson.bc.ca for referral information.

With its extraordinary dedication to pro bono, Blakes proves once again that doing good means doing good business.

COMMUNITY GROUP PROFILE SOUTH FRASER WOMEN'S SERVICES SOCIETY

For low-income women who cannot afford a lawyer and do not qualify for legal aid, dealing with family law issues like divorce, child custody and access, child support and spousal maintenance can be overwhelming. Many women encounter additional difficulties in the form of language barriers, cultural differences and little to no knowledge about the Canadian justice system.

Fortunately for those women residing in the South Fraser region, South Fraser Women's Services Society (SFWSS) provides much needed support and legal assistance through the Legal Information and Advocacy Program. Legal advocates Ram Sidhu and Rupi Sahota are kept busy serving women in English, Punjabi and Hindi as they help them to resolve their family law issues. Where necessary, clients are referred to pro bono legal representation services, including those provided through PBLBC's Family Law Program.

The Society provides additional services to women, including peer support groups, trauma counselling, clothing exchange, free shower and laundry facilities and a hot lunch program. Staff and volunteers with the Society are able to communicate with clients in a variety of other languages, including Chinese, Polish, French, and Vietnamese.

If you are able to assist low-income women to resolve their family law issues on a pro bono basis, contact Ram Sidhu at advocate@sfwomensservices.com or register through the PBLBC website at www.probononet.bc.ca and join the Family Law Program to receive screened pro bono opportunities.



