



Volunteer Appreciation

LEGAL EDUCATION SOCIETY OF ALBERTA



Sandra Weber

McLennan Ross LLP

FEATURE VOLUNTEER

Sandra has built a successful practice serving her clients in the areas of insurance and personal injury law, and is experienced in various areas of insurance law, including auto, property, CGL, life, and disability. Over the past 24 years, she has gained significant experience representing her clients in trials in the Courts of Queen's Bench of Alberta and Saskatchewan, at the Alberta and Saskatchewan Courts of Appeal, and in mediations and judicial dispute resolutions.

Tell us about yourself.

I graduated from the University of Alberta Law School in 1990. I articulated with McLennan Ross, was admitted to the Alberta Bar in 1991, and have continued my practice with McLennan Ross to this day. I have a civil litigation practice focused primarily in the areas of insurance and personal injury. I am currently the co-chair of McLennan Ross's Insurance & Risk Management Practice Group.

What influences and motivates you the most?

I would say that I am influenced by my parents who continue to have an incredible work ethic to this day – they are both in their 70s. On top of that, they have instilled in me, through their conduct over the years, just how important it is to give back to your community and help others who may not be as fortunate as you. I have also been influenced over the years by a number of my current and former partners and their manner of handling clients and practicing law.

In terms of what motivates me, I would have to say that I love a challenge. I enjoy the process of assisting a client

work through a problem to resolution. I really like the strategic aspects of advocacy, and I get a lot of satisfaction from presenting a client's case in the various forums we use in litigation.

What advice would you pass on to a newly called lawyer?

This will sound trite, but work hard. Treat all clients, tasks, files, etc., equally. Our clients are all paying us extremely well and counting on us to provide them with expertise, assistance, and guidance, and they all deserve the same level of dedication and commitment. Find an approach to your practice that suits you. We all have different personalities and styles, and you need to determine what is best for you.

Having said that, seek out mentors in your area of practice that you admire and take every opportunity you can to observe how they handle the ins and outs of practicing law. Do not abandon all outside interests; try to maintain some level of balance in this regard.

Finally, strive to maintain a high level of civility and respect for all you encounter in your practice (clients, opposing parties, other lawyers, staff, judges, etc.). This can sometimes be difficult in our profession, but it is crucial.

You have been a consistent and loyal supporter of LESA. What motivates you to volunteer?

I think it is important to never forget that we all started out pretty much in the same position – knowing very little about how to practice law. As a result, I feel that it is important we give back to our legal community in a way that assists those who are looking to forge their way in the profession. What motivates me is playing a role, however small, in helping to build someone's confidence in their chosen career.

What is your most memorable aspect of volunteering for LESA?

I am always very impressed with the incredible amount of progress that the participants in the Intensive Trial Advocacy Course demonstrate in a very short time period. It never ceases to amaze me how willingly the participants accept feedback and immediately improve their skills and presentation ability.

“What motivates me is playing a role, however small, in helping to build someone's confidence in their chosen career.”

The generous contributions of time, talent, and energy from all of our volunteers make every Legal Education Society of Alberta program and resource a great success. We appreciate the work of our volunteers and their service to the profession. Contact Dawn Ofner at dawn.ofner@lesa.org to volunteer.

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In addition to keeping current with the developments in the field, the benefits of acting as a volunteer for a LESA program include: recognition by the profession, a focus on your expertise while expanding your skill set, and social networking opportunities.

To volunteer, contact Dawn Ofner at dawn.ofner@lesa.org., telephone 780.969.3559, or call toll free within Alberta 1.800.282.3900 ext. 3559.

If you volunteered for us between July and December, 2013, please ensure your name is on the list. If your name has been missed, please contact us!

