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Alumni Newsletter - July 2022

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Message from Dave Leonard

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our new alumni newsletter, just one of the new initiatives we're rolling out as part of our refreshed alumni program. Designed with you in mind, the program will help you stay connected to the amazing network of people who have called McCarthy Tétrault 'home' at some point in their careers.

Having spent my entire career at McCarthy Tétrault, I have seen firsthand how truly exceptional our alumni are. You who hold top judicial appointments and C-suite roles, are general counsel for leading Canadian companies, serve on corporate and not-for-profit boards and some of you have left the practice of law and forged exciting new career paths in far off corners of the globe. These many and varied pursuits make for interesting connections and interesting conversations, and it is your stories that we hope to capture in our newsletter.

Despite being spread out across the world, the relationships and friendships you have built at McCarthy Tétrault are strong and enduring. Even decades after working together, many of you remain close confidantes, friends and informal advisors, often acting as references and business connectors, both for those of us who remain at the firm and those who have moved on.

We want to help ensure these relationships remain intact and make it easier to stay connected.

In that spirit, our team has been hard at work developing an alumni program that we hope you'll find useful and informative, as well as entertaining. It will be a place for you to tell us what you are up to, share advice, celebrate achievements, discuss ideas and issues affecting our industry and get firm updates.

In addition to the newsletter, we'll be using your feedback to roll out other initiatives within the alumni program. In the meantime, I look forward to reconnecting with you and encourage you to reach out to one another.

Many thanks,

Dave Leonard



Dave Leonard
Chief Executive Officer

Dave Leonard is the Chief Executive Officer of the firm. Dave articulated at McCarthy Tétrault in 1992/93 and had a career as a successful litigator prior to taking on his leadership role at the firm.

What's New With You?

As this is the inaugural edition of our newsletter, we've got a lot of catching up to do! There are so many people to hear from — 2022 has been a successful year for a lot of our alumni. From winning awards, to starting new roles and more, check out what some of your former colleagues have been up to:

Award Winners

Patricia Gauthier (Litigation: 2002 – 2007) – One of Report on Business' Canada's top 50 Changemakers

Jane Langford (Litigation: 1997 – 2012) – Canadian Law Awards' Female Trailblazer of the Year

Justin Nasser (Litigation: 2013 – 2015) – Benchmark's Emerging Litigation Talent of the Year

Judicial Appointments

William D. Black (Litigation: 1986 – 2021) – Superior Court of Justice for Ontario

Lia M. Bramwell (Litigation: 1999 – 2001) – Superior Court of Justice (Ontario)

Philippe Cantin (Litigation: 2007 – 2020) – Québec Superior Court Justice

Stephen Darroch (Litigation: 2017 – 2021) – Ontario Court of Justice, serving in London, Ontario

Isabelle Germain (Litigation: 2001 – 2016) – Québec Superior Court Justice

Celine Legendre (Litigation: 2001 – 2019) – Québec Superior Court Justice

Gina Papageorgiou (Litigation: 1994 – 2004) – Superior Court of Justice (Ontario)

Marie-Anne Paquette (Litigation: 1995 – 2006) – Québec Superior Court Chief Justice

David Porter (Litigation: 1998 – 2019) – Ontario Court of Justice

Board Appointments

Paul Boniferro (Labour & Employment 1996 – 2017) – Board for Sienna Senior Living Inc.

Catching up... with Vernita Tsang

General Counsel as ESG Driver

Last fall, Vernita Tsang was named General Counsel of Fengate Asset Management, an investment firm specializing in real assets such as infrastructure, private equity and real estate. She started her legal career with McCarthy Tétrault's Real Property and Planning group in Toronto. Vernita then moved on to Infrastructure Ontario where she spent nearly nine years advising on all aspects of major civil, social and transit infrastructure projects delivered through public-private partnership models. Prior to becoming Fengate's General Counsel, Vernita served as its Vice President, Legal.

With her latest move, the scope of her job has expanded to include business strategy and Fengate's long term direction.

"General Counsel is responsible for motivating people, considering strategy and setting the company's vision and goals. It's a different way of thinking than when you are a lawyer; it's like 'here is a problem ... let's solve it'," said Vernita.

She has taken on a key role for the company, leading a committee developing a strategy for the promotion of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) objectives.

Vernita notes the importance of framing every action through an ESG lens, such as screening investments. "Since we do good ESG things, we need to be more robust in what our roadmap is, and what exactly are each of the 'E', 'S', and 'G' goals that Fengate stands for." The team is also developing key performance indicators and incorporating them into performance reviews.

Initiative and executive leadership support are critical success factors, Vernita said, which is why she accepted the role. She and the committee are now building a multi-year plan that will require dedicated attention.

"It is going to be hard because there are three lines of business, each with its own view on ESG. They will need support from the top to find their ESG way."

Do you know someone (perhaps you?) that we should turn the spotlight on in a future issue? Send us your suggestion to alumni@mccarthy.ca. We want to hear from you.

Vernita's Takeaways

Create a Personal Board of Directors

"Keep your eyes open for mentors. They are so important — not just for practical things like references, but also for emotional and professional support.

Advocate for Yourself

At the start of her career, Vernita focused on keeping her head down and working hard. But she soon realized this strategy would not work, especially for a young female lawyer. That's why she urges young lawyers to speak up.

"You need to advocate for yourself and ensure your voice is heard. Otherwise people won't know to look in your direction when an opportunity presents itself."

It was that advice that led to Vernita being considered for the GC role. She made it clear that her ambition was for the GC's office and was a compelling choice when the position opened up.

"If there is a special project or something outside your comfort zone, don't shy away from the challenge. Put up your hand and figure it out. Because you are smart and capable and when you do it, other people will notice."



Vernita Tsang
2004-2008, Real Property & Planning
Now General Counsel,
Fengate Asset Management

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Norie Campbell (Business: 1997 – 2000) Board of Governors of Ryerson University

Miranda Lam (Business: 2006 – 2021) – UBC Board of Governors

Vernita Tsang (Real Property: 2004 – 2008) – Women's Leadership Initiative Championship Team by the Urban Land Institute

Alysha Valenti (Real Property & Planning: 2006 – 2012) – Board of Waterfront Toronto

Promotions and New Positions

Janie Béïque (Business : 1991 – 2000) – CEO, Fond de Solidarité FTQ

Ellen Yifan Chen (Cyber/Data: 2017 – 2022) – General Counsel, Audiokinetic

Sarah-Maude Demers (Litigation : 2015 – 2022) – Legal Counsel, Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec

Isabel Desmarais (Business: 2004 – 2009) – Chief Legal Officer, BMHL Equities & Lamour Group.

Catherine Fagnan (Tax/Business: 2005 – 2012) – Associate General Counsel, M&A, TELUS

David Gray (Litigation: 2002 – 2013) – Head of Legal at National Bank Financial

Miranda Lam (Business: 2006 – 2021) – Chief Legal Officer and Vice President, Business Development at Acuitas Therapeutics

Jane Langford (Litigation: 1997 – 2012) – General Counsel, TD Bank Group and has also joined the Senior Executive Team

Kelly McDermott (Labour & Employment: 2008 – 2010) – Incoming President, Ontario Bar Association

Bart Nowak (Intellectual Property: 2013 – 2020) Senior Counsel at TELUS

Dominique Paiement (Business: 2016 – 2022) – Legal Counsel at Sheertex

Jessica Rousseau (Business: 2015 – 2021) successfully passed the California Bar and is now an associate with Massumi + Consoli LLP

Nicole Springer (Business: 2003 – 2006) promoted to Managing Director, Xylem Inc., Eastern Europe Central

Daniel Thomas (Litigation: 2019 – 2022) – Partner, Crawley MacKewn Brush LLP

Paul West (Litigation: 2004 – 2009) – Associate General Counsel, Bank of America Merrill Lynch

Please share your own milestone or help us celebrate someone else. Email us at alumni@mccarthy.ca

What's New With Us?



In January, McCarthy Tétrault welcomed our new Chief Inclusion Officer, Charlene Theodore. Charlene is a passionate and dedicated community leader with a unique understanding of the interconnection between the legal profession and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and how to achieve tangible and meaningful results.

As the first Black president of the Ontario Bar Association, Charlene designed and implemented a series of initiatives for law firms and Corporate Canada to reimagine workplaces — building productive, profitable, healthy, diverse and inclusive work environments. Recently, Charlene was named to the **SCC Judicial Appointment Advisory Board** that will offer recommendations to help identify suitable candidates for the Supreme Court of Canada to fill the vacancy created by the upcoming retirement of Mr. Justice Michael J. Moldaver. Charlene brings significant experience as a former employment and labour lawyer with a background in international human rights law and government relations. Charlene will oversee our award-winning Inclusion Now program and the implementation of our many EDI initiatives. We are thrilled to have Charlene on board!

Get Involved!

Abigail (Abi) Tulloch and Catherine Fagnan are among our alumni who volunteered to act as mentors for our associates who identify as diverse as part of "Mentorship Plus," a partnership between McCarthy Tétrault, Uber, Airbnb and Legal Leaders for Diversity. Mentorship Plus was created to facilitate mentorship and connections for associates who identify as diverse, in recognition of, and in response to, research indicating that these associates have more difficulty finding sponsors and champions.

If you would like to learn more about our Mentorship Plus mentoring program, please contact Gillian Kerr at gkerr@mccarthy.ca. We're always looking for more alumni to share their wisdom with our young talent.

GC Summit Recap

On June 2, 2022, McCarthy Tétrault hosted its Third Annual GC Summit – General Counsel as Growth Leader in the Age of Disruption. With over 160 attendees, the panelists discussed:

- Leadership in a Time Of Uncertainty: Finding the Silver Linings
- Converting Risks into Opportunities
- Maximizing Strategic Decision-Making Impact: Tales from the Trenches

Key themes emerged throughout the summit: pressing global issues, labour shortages, energy, growth and competitiveness, cyber security, morphing risk into opportunity, creating a culture that drives innovation,

collaborating with outside counsel to develop opportunities, perceiving ESG as an opportunity, and using grey zones to enable risk-taking.

McCarthy Tétrault CEO Dave Leonard facilitated the panel that included Janet De Silva, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Toronto Region Board of Trade, and Karl Tabbakh, the firm's Regional Managing Partner, Québec, and Chair of the Board of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. We would also like to extend thanks to alumna [Miranda Lam](#) for speaking at the event.

To read the full report from the Annual GC Summit, please click [here](#).

Mark Your Calendar

Don't wait until December 31, 2022. Our firm is here to help you obtain your CPD credits. Our learning management systems helps you manage your professional development. You can find all our e-learning offerings on our [website](#). You can also view a summary of your CPD credits earned at our internal programs and meetings (on your dashboard, click on "View Details" next to your year of call, under My Jurisdictions.) For questions or assistance with the program, please email alumni@mccarthy.ca.

To subscribe to receive notifications of blogs, newsletters and events relevant to you, [please sign up via our website](#).

In Memoriam

[Bradley Crawford, QC, 1936-2021](#)

[H.J. Michael Croghan, QC, 1930-2022](#)

[Patricia Daunais, QC, 1951 – 2022](#)

[Thomas 'Tam' Davis, 1947-2021](#)

[John Lawson, QC, 1926-2021](#)

[Bradley T. McManus, QC, 1946-2022](#)



Didn't receive this newsletter directly? Send a note to alumni@mccarthy.ca so you get the next one!

Stay Connected

Wherever you are, whatever you're working on, we want to hear from you. Stay connected with colleagues, friends, and mentors from McCarthy Tétrault and receive invitations to firm and industry events.

Stay connected to our network by [subscribing](#) to alumni event invitations and news.

See how we're championing [diversity and inclusion](#).

Find out about our [community programs](#) and [pro bono work](#).

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

