

Madam Justice
Wendy Baker, Q.C.

Wendy Baker, Q.C. on June 11, 1993 was sworn in as a Justice of the Supreme Court of British Columbia. At 40 and holding, this makes Madam Justice Baker one of the youngest members on the bench. However, the 15 energetic years she spent at the bar would have filled the career of most lawyers.

Baker's routes are in Denzil, Saskatchewan. She began a career of collecting awards by graduating from Denzil High School with the Governor-General's Medal for Academic Achievement. From the University of Saskatchewan she received a Bachelor of Commerce (with great distinction) and a Bachelor of Laws. She then migrated west to article with Davis & Company and was called to the Bar in 1978. She joined Davis as an associate, became a partner in 1984 and remained with the firm until her appointment.

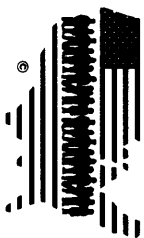
Her chosen field was litigation. She had the qualities necessary to thrive. A lively intelligence, a reservoir of good humour, an instinct for the law, and the ability to sense where the clients' interest lay. In her commercial practice she acted for, amongst others, the CIBC, and Canadian Airlines in a range of banking, tax and other commercial cases. In her administrative law practice, she acted principally for the Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia upon inquiries into professional misconduct, but she also represented voluntary organizations such as West Coast LEAF in human rights cases. She has practiced before the province's highest appeal court as well as the Supreme Court of Canada.

There is another community in which she is equally well known and that is the mentally handicapped. This was a cause she took up in university and continued in British Columbia by her participation in and commitment to the British Columbia Association for Community Living. She was its president from 1989 to 1991. It was for that cause that she acted as counsel to West Coast LEAF as an intervener in the Baby R case and it was again for that cause that she co-chaired the Reference Group for the Adult Guardianship Review Project.

She has also been a strong supporter, and sometimes critic, of the legal profession. She served five years as a Governor of the Law Foundation, two years on the Editorial Board of the Canadian Bar Review, several years on the Executive of the B.C. Branch of the Canadian Bar Association becoming its President in 1991-1992. During her tenure, she organized the successful counter-attack against the discriminatory sales tax upon legal services. She also found time to serve on a number of Bar committees and sections. When the legal profession discovered gender bias in its midst, she was recruited by the Law Society to serve on the Gender Bias Committee under Ted Huges, Q.C. which produced last year its two volume report on gender equality in the justice system. Subsequently, the Canadian Bar Association Task force on Gender Equality recruited her as their provincial working group Chair.

All of this activity has resulted in a considerable amount of recognition. In 1988 she was appointed a Queen's Counsel and also was the recipient of a Citation for Citizenship from the Secretary of State for Canada. This year she was the recipient of the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of the Canadian Confederation awarded by the Governor-General to those making a significant contribution to their fellow Canadians.

Although the legal profession has lost a strong advocate, the larger community has gained a well qualified, widely respected judge dedicated to public service.



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