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**Legal  
Services  
Society**

July 2019

## Legal Aid Brief

### We're turning 40!

**In this issue:** The Legal Services Society celebrates 40 years; What motivates you to do legal aid?; LAO resources for BC lawyers; LSS prepares for a brand refresh

#### **The Legal Services Society celebrates 40 years**

We're celebrating a milestone at LSS. It was 40 years ago on July 30, 1979, that the [Legal Services Society Act](#) was enacted in the BC legislature. Some of you will recall that it amalgamated two organizations: the Legal Aid Society and the Legal Services Commission.

The legislation brought together private lawyers, staffed offices, community law offices of lawyers and paralegals, and public legal education agencies.

No matter the changes we've undergone over those 40 years since, and there have been a lot, lawyers have been integral to the society's ability to help low-income British Columbians with their legal problems.

It takes a special kind of lawyer to be able to help legal aid clients, who often face enormous obstacles in life. Whether you've been doing legal aid work for 40 or four years, I want to thank you for what you do.

Mark

Mark Benton, QC  
CEO, Legal Services Society

## What motivates you to do legal aid?

We asked some lawyers who have been doing legal aid for a long time what inspires them to continue to provide this important service. Here's what they said:

**Bob Bellows** has been doing legal aid since he was called to the bar in 1974. He practises primarily criminal law and has worked with many clients in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

"Everyone is entitled to both protection of the law and freedom from abuse of the law. Poor as well as rich have the same entitlement, except the poor cannot afford to pay for it. That is why a strong legal aid system is needed. There is no point in having legal rights if you cannot access them."





**Debra Carpentier** has been practising criminal law and providing legal aid services in Vancouver since 1982.

“What I am most passionate about is the ability to be involved in social and criminal justice reform, such as the therapeutic jurisprudence practised at the Vancouver Drug Treatment Court.

There is nothing more rewarding than to assist someone through the criminal justice process and see a healthy and happy result.

I have also been honoured to do criminal duty counsel work on circuit in First Nations communities, and hope that I have been able to advance Indigenous concerns and respect for Indigenous laws in those courts.”

Squamish-based **Herb Chambers** practises as defence legal counsel and provides representation in criminal law and for in-custody and out-of-custody matters.

“I have been accepting legal aid contracts for approximately 35 years.

I’m motivated to do it as I feel it’s important that everyone has representation.”



Taking on both family and child protection contracts, **Bruce Clokie** has been doing legal aid in Vancouver for 25 years.

“There is no legal career satisfaction greater than being a part of the family reunification process that results in children being returned to their family of origin in a manner that is safe and strengthens families.

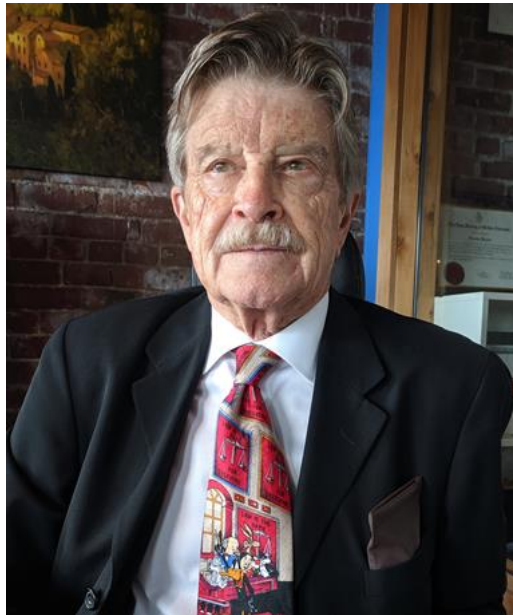
I am passionate about my legal [aid] work, having children returned to their parents. I come from the perspective that parents are at their best with their

children and, where possible, should be allowed the opportunity to raise their children.”

Called to the bar in 1969, **Brian Coleman** practises criminal law in Vancouver and has been doing legal aid since the 1970s.

“I’ve always believed in legal aid and in helping people. The poorest people in society need legal aid and often don’t get proper representation.

I try to do my part. I still enjoy what I’m doing, and I find it challenging and rewarding.”





Based in Victoria, **Forrest Nelson** practises family and CFCSA law. He was called to the bar in 1977 and has been doing legal aid ever since.

"You can help people get out of a rut, [doing legal aid]. Often their legal problems are a barrier to solving their poverty problems. I genuinely like the people I'm trying to help. They are often resilient while trying to navigate the system.

The staff at LSS are very dedicated too, and that's inspiring."

## **LAO resources for BC lawyers**

### New immigration law resources

Immigration and refugee law resources are now available through LSS Online, courtesy of Legal Aid Ontario (LAO). Presentations from the Ottawa Immigration Conference can be found under the Resources tab on the [Resources for Lawyers](#) page in the Area of Law: Immigration menu. New resources include "Significant Decisions in Immigration and Refugee Law" (2018 & 2019), and "Immigration and Refugee Law – Year in Review" (2017).

### Legal Research Memoranda Catalogue

Did you know you can access a wealth of research carried out by LAO LAW? To help you find what you need, the Legal Research Memoranda Catalogue can now be downloaded by area of law. See the [LSS website](#) for details on how to browse the catalogue and request a research article.

## **LSS prepares for a brand refresh**

After 40 years of being known as the Legal Services Society, we're preparing to rebrand and become Legal Aid BC. This is an exciting development for the organization, but does not mark a radical change for us. We've been using the name informally for some time. However, our research showed us that the Legal Services Society name does not resonate with the public and that potential clients are confused about whether some of our services are ours or belong to some other organization.

A few months from now, we will start incorporating the new name and logo into everything we do. It will take us some time, however. There will be a transitional period when some people will still be calling us LSS - and some products will still have the old logo on them while we use up what we already have. Note that for legal purposes, such as contracts, we will continue to use the name Legal Services Society.

The rebranding represents a new era for us, with the long-term goal of ensuring people can access our services and know they can trust them because they come from Legal Aid BC.

## **Questions or comments?**

Contact our Lawyer Support team at: 604-601-6155 / 1-888-401-6206 or [lawyer.support@lss.bc.ca](mailto:lawyer.support@lss.bc.ca)

*Sent from the traditional unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the*

*Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.*



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