

Michael Newcombe

When he's not taking criminal and family legal aid cases, Kelowna lawyer Michael Newcombe has another way of contributing to the legal community.

"I've written numerous skits for courthouse retirement events," he says. "And I generally also take on the role as actor in these 'productions.'"

Close to the 25th anniversary of his call to the BC Bar, Michael is being recognized for his legal aid work with the LSS Chair's Award for Distinguished Service. His legal aid career began after obtaining a philosophy degree from Simon Fraser University in 1980.

"I had a degree in philosophy and I was checking the job ads and I didn't see a single position open for a philosopher," says Michael who is a competitive bridge player. "So I decided I should try something different."

What he ended up trying was law, and three years later, he received his LLB from the University of British Columbia. He was called to the BC Bar in 1987, and in that same year, he articulated with family Vancouver lawyer Sefton Levine at Gardner and Associates. The following year, he moved to Kelowna where he worked at M. Gail Miller & Co. for three years before starting a firm in 1991, Christiansen, Newcombe and Kennedy, with Kelly Christiansen and Michael Kennedy. In 2003, Michael formed his own practice, Newcombe and Company Law Office, and has been there ever since, taking on a large number of legal aid cases.

"I really enjoy doing what I do — it's fascinating work," the Liverpool, England, native says. "The stories in people's lives that I hear about and see and try to assist with...it's pretty incredible."

Michael says he also enjoys the legal community in Kelowna.

"We deal with each other a lot so it's hard to be a real jerk," he says with a small laugh. "I think the bar in Kelowna is very collegial here. It's a good group."