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Shawn is the CEO of TLABC. He has spent more than 15 years in senior management positions in the nonprofit and private sectors including the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association, Edelman PR, CharityVillage.com, WWF-Canada and the Huntington Society of Canada. A Chartered Director (C.Dir.), Shawn is in his third term as a director with Mountain Equipment Co-op, where he also chairs the Governance Committee. He is a past director and chair of Vantage Point (formerly Volunteer Vancouver) and a past director and Treasurer of Gardens BC.

Shawn lives in East Vancouver with his wife and two young daughters, a Bernese Mountain dog, and a cat.

To quote Adam Smith, “Little else is requisite to carry a state to the highest degree of opulence from the lowest barbarism but peace, easy taxes, and a tolerable administration of justice: all the rest being brought about by the natural course of things.”

What Smith glosses over in that quote is that the administration of justice is exceedingly complex. There are a myriad of stakeholders with different and often conflicting priorities and needs. And when put in the broader governing context of government, it’s also expensive.

I personally believe that most people—and this includes the various actors in the legal system – want the same thing – they want everyone to be treated fairly. HOW to do so is where all the fighting starts.

“IT’S ABOUT FAIRNESS, STUPID!”

Butchering a quote from James Carville aside, the issues that TLABC has been engaged in over the past twelve months have all come back to the same thing: access to justice. In spite of the range of voices and opinions about the “how”, your Association has stayed true to itself and its history. We remain resolute in the defence of those things that will ensure that the greatest number of people have the easiest possible access to legal remedy should they need it.

This year, it has not been easy.

We did secure a victory with respect to class action proceedings. After four years of hard work by a small group of our members, the government made changes to the *Class Proceedings Act* ensuring that an action in BC will be assumed to be acting for all members of the class across Canada. A significant win after four years of effort.

We were not so successful at halting the adoption of so-called “minor” injury caps and the subsequent definition of “minor” injury and related regulations. After April 1, 2019, British Columbians will lose a significant amount of fairness, as defined by law, when it comes to injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident. Articles by Nick Peterson and Ian Aikenhead in this issue elaborate further on this.

We have also renewed our push for a properly fund legal aid system, the need for wrongful death legislation, relief for litigants from jury fees and for a unified family court. All are important to

British Columbians and to our members. All take time.

LEADING THE WAY

If there is one thing that members should be particularly proud of, however, is the nature of leadership that has been on display here at TLABC. It’s everywhere. In the past year our members have gone out and met with their MLAs to share their perspectives, and they have supported their clients who wanted to do the same. They have spoken with and informed other members and groups in their communities (across the province) on issues that matter to them. And they have provided financial support to the Association to advance causes and issues of import to all British Columbians.

We have a board of governors and executive that have put in extra hours to help inform and guide the work of the Association as it engages with the government and public. And we have had table officers who have stood up amongst their peers and taken principled positions and actions at the expense of their own practices to advance a common cause.

In particular, members should thank Sonny Parhar – as of December our Past President – for all his hard work this past year. And also thank Ron Nairne who is now the TLABC President. They have given a great deal to the organization, and will continue to do so in a way that reflects well on the Association and the profession.

Grounded in the effort and achievement of last year, the year ahead will be challenging. But working together thoughtfully, – as we have done for many years, will get us the outcomes that we are seeking. For now, take a moment and read in this issue what some of our best minds have to say on the matters of the day. Enjoy. V