



## EDUCATION UPDATE

Erin has been Trial Lawyers Association of BC's Education Director since the summer of 2011 and is responsible for the association's program development and execution. She has organized events all over the province, as well as in Jamaica, Mexico, Hawaii, California and is working on Costa Rica for January 2019. Since joining TLABC, she has introduced a webcasting component for online viewers, a yearly webinar series, and expanded TLABC's material sales to include seminar video archives and webinar recordings. Most recently, the association has been awarded the ACLEA Award for Outstanding Achievement (2016 & 2017) as well as the NATLE CLE of the Year (2017).

BY ERIN MONAHAN, CPP  
TLABC EDUCATION DIRECTOR

### PUTTING MY MONEY WHERE MY MOUTH IS...

A year ago, I was invited to be on the planning committee for the ACLEA (Association of Continuing Legal Education) 54<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Portland, which just took place at the end of July. I jumped at the chance, for two reasons. First, I thought it would be fun. Secondly, how could I turn it down? I mean that literally – considering my entire job is based on lawyers volunteering their time putting together and speaking at TLABC programs – I thought it was time that I put my money where my mouth is. Here was my chance to see what I put my volunteers through. I didn't just stop there. I also signed up to be a speaker. I got the full meal conference deal!

It was a valuable experience – not only to see the volunteer side of conference planning, but also for my own professional growth. I learned silly small things like the brilliance of booking meeting dates using *Doodle* (where has this website been all my life?) to bigger revelations like just how easy it is to miss a deadline for materials. I learned the thrill of when the speaker you *really* wanted for a presentation said they would do it and the disappointment when they declined.

Most importantly though, I learned just how much time it takes to put into building what I hoped would be a strong program, which is something that each and every chair of mine has done for TLABC. In addition, as a speaker, I felt the stress and anxiety putting together a talk I wanted people to enjoy and find beneficial. I also felt the pride of success, which I am pretty sure is why all my chairs and speakers keep on coming back to me!

I really enjoyed the process of being on the planning committee and conference faculty, which not only taught me some great tips to help me in the execution of my job, but also leaves me with even more gratitude and appreciation for what my volunteers do for me. Every single one of my programs (and we do many here at TLABC) relies on hundreds of volunteer hours. I say this to thank those who have done this for me, and to let those who have not know just how much work our chairs and speakers put in for us. They do this for you, for lawyers in the profession to be better advocates and officers of the court. Protecting the public. Fighting for justice.

As I write this, I am celebrating my 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary with TLABC. In that time, I have worked with the most generous, passionate, and committed professionals I have ever had the pleasure to work with (in my many varied careers). I have had Supreme Court Justices and senior lawyers of the bar say, "Yes! I'd love to." I have had newly called lawyers say, "What can I do to help?" I have had seminar registrants say, "This is the best seminar I have ever attended." And now, it is my turn to say something to all of you: **Thank you.**

Volunteering is an important and valuable aspect of professional development. I was honoured to be given the opportunity and made even more thankful to those who have shared their time and expertise for TLABC. V

Scenes from  
ACLEA 2018.

