



FEATURE TLABC MEMBER AMY MORTIMORE

WILLS - ESTATES

What were among the main reasons that you chose to pursue a career in the legal profession?

I believe we are extremely fortunate to live in Canada. I wanted to make a real contribution to the legal system that I hold in high regard. While being an estate and trust litigator often means helping one specific person or family with their legal issues, my role in the administration of justice makes me part of something larger than myself.

How did you choose your practice area of law, and why is this area important to you?

I have had files in various areas over the past 20 years, including personal injury, leasing disputes, and other general civil litigation. During the early 2000s, much of my practice was in construction, including builders liens and “leaky condos”. My practice is now almost exclusively estate and trust litigation (I still have one construction file left). I very much enjoy this area of practice, and as estate lawyers, we often find ourselves on the leading edge of the evolution of societal norms. For example, a very live issue in our area right now is society’s evolving view of what constitutes a marriage-like relationship.

I also am able to act for charities and not-for-profits, and in this way, make some small contribution to the good works that they further. I had the privilege of appearing in the Supreme Court of Canada at the end of April 2018, on behalf of an intervener. The issue to be addressed by the Court was valuation of a beneficiary’s interest in a fully discretionary disability trust, when considering eligibility for social assistance programs. Our submissions included background on various terms found in a typical disability trust, and why those terms were important to persons with disabilities.

Last but not least, I very much enjoy working with the other members of the trust and estate bar. I find that lawyers who practice in this area in particular are practical, knowledgeable, and open to resolving legal issues in creative ways that meet the needs of our collective clients.

If I wasn’t a lawyer, I would be a ...?

During exams at university, my dream alternate career was radio DJ. That dream would typically die once exams were completed. The other career I was seriously considering was a professor of English literature, teaching either Shakespeare or 18th century authors (including in particular, Alexander Pope).

What advice would you give to those just beginning their career in law?

When I talk to articling students or new lawyers I tell them that the learning curve for them right now is very steep, but it does get better. Take this opportunity to ask for feedback from the senior lawyers in your firm or with whom you have developed a mentor/mentee relationship outside of your firm. Just because you have graduated from school does not mean you stop learning.

Why is being a member of TLABC important to you?

I think TLABC is an excellent organization. It has a powerful voice that it uses to better the public interests. Additionally, the annual TLABC Women Lawyers’ Retreat allows lawyers to connect with one another and with judges, and build a network of lawyers in many areas of practice who they otherwise may not have met.