

Speech to National Council

Bonjour. Good morning.

Friends and colleagues, I am privileged to stand here today as a candidate for the position of Second Vice-President with my friend, Robert Patzelt. Through my years of experience, I have always admired the diversity of our active members and appreciated the many opportunities afforded those with a desire and talent for governance. Comme Présidente, je dirigerai et appuierai les activités qui continuent à refléter et encourager le caractère inclusif historique de l'ABC.

I take great pride in my 28-year association with an incredible team of volunteers and professional staff that forms this CBA family. Throughout our history, we have benefitted from the vision and leadership of those who preceded us. These leaders gave us the Touchstones Report, our strategic plan, our new brand, and many other accomplishments.

I particularly applaud the work of the committee looking at overcoming barriers to leadership within the CBA. This morning's activity was an excellent way for us to work together. I look forward to working with the National Board of Directors and Branches to implement the committee's recommendations and continue our important work to achieve all of our strategic objectives.

Mon engagement personnel se concentre sur trois priorités : l'adhésion (membership), les fonctions de direction (leadership), et les prises de position (advocacy).

Je sais que l'ABC a besoin d'augmenter le nombre de ses membres et de les renouveler. Although our national membership is increasing, I am concerned that Branches in Atlantic Canada and the Northwest Territories are experiencing declining membership right now. As President, I will develop and encourage greater communication between and among Branches so that all 13 Branches can grow from the sharing of knowledge and ideas.

In particular, I want to open a dialogue with the Branches to explore ways that all members can benefit more from their membership dues. We already use technology to give broad access to national educational programming, whether we live in Iqaluit, Shawinigan or St. John's. We can, however, do a better job of sharing our resources. How about a member in PEI participating in a section meeting in Alberta? A woman lawyer in the North joining a Women Lawyers Forum meeting in Manitoba? A Saskatchewan lawyer in Toronto on business taking part in the OBA's Annual Institute?

I deliver better service to my clients because of what I have learned and continue to learn through CBA programs. In these uncertain times, my own firm is struggling to hire and keep associates who will become partners so that someday my partners and I can retire or at least reduce our workloads. Talking to lawyers across the country about these issues is beneficial. I will work with our 32 sections and nine conferences to encourage more innovative programming so that even more lawyers are aware of how relevant CBA is to what we do as lawyers.

Le jour où le Comité de sélection de ma division m'a appelée afin que j'examine la possibilité de devenir membre du Conseil pour ma région géographique, ma première réaction a été « Pourquoi moi ? » Je découvris que quelqu'un au bureau de notre Division tenait des listes de ceux et celles qui assistent aux activités des sections de l'ABC.

Once on Council, I volunteered for committee work. I attended National Council meetings. I made friends with lawyers across the country. Now, here I am: a CBA lifer.

Je crois qu'il y a d'autres membres comme moi, qui désirent servir l'ABC en tant que dirigeants. Comment pouvons-nous les rejoindre ?

In fund-raising, the key to obtaining a significant gift is often the person who makes the "ask" and the "ask" is always made in person. Asking a busy lawyer to donate personal or professional time to a volunteer organization deserves the same approach. We need to identify and cultivate our prospects because timing has to be right for the "ask" to be successful.

Despite our increasing reliance on electronic communications, I believe a more personal connection is essential if we want individual members to feel valued and important to the CBA. With over 37,000 members, I would need to call or visit about 100 members every day to reach every member during my Presidency. I am willing to do my part. I believe it would be worth the effort, if the Branches would join me and the Board of Directors, to undertake this kind of personal outreach to seek out leaders and, at the same time, thank each member for belonging to this family.

Chacun de nous dans cette salle est un dirigeant. Nous avons accepté la responsabilité d'établir des politiques et de guider l'avenir de notre organisation en servant comme membres du Conseil national. None of us does it

alone. Individuellement et collectivement, nous sommes des modèles pour d’autres dans la profession. I thank each of you for your commitment and dedication to the CBA.

À Québec, Maya Angelou a remercié les juristes pour ce qu’ils font. Je suis heureuse qu’elle reconnaisse le rôle des juristes dans la société. We know the CBA vigorously defends legal rights, access to justice and the rule of law and that we support and defend our judiciary. We know the CBA makes an extraordinary number of submissions to the Canadian government each year and that we do vital work abroad.

When I tell non-lawyers I am running for office in the CBA, their first question is, “What is that?” Clearly, we can do more to achieve name recognition for the CBA in the wider community. Our new brand will play an important part. I particularly applaud the efforts of the BC Branch, which partnered successfully with other groups to protect non-insurance RRSPs from seizure by creditors in British Columbia. More of this kind of advocacy will attract more members. In consultation, I will identify specific issues where the CBA can be effective in speaking out more for lawyers and lawyers’ interests.

J’aime être avocate parce que j’aime aider mes clients à prévenir et à résoudre des problèmes juridiques. J’aime être membre de l’ABC parce que, bien que travaillant dans une petite ville, je fais partie d’une organisation nationale influente et respectée par les gouvernements et les autres organisations.

The advocacy work of the CBA, combined with the individual efforts we make in our practices and communities, can lead to greater respect for the profession as a whole. We can continue to volunteer in our communities, do pro bono work, mentor other lawyers, participate in Law Day activities, and treat clients and other lawyers with civility and courtesy.

Helping others gives me personal and professional satisfaction. I want all lawyers to share the same satisfaction from their membership in the CBA. I want us all to love being lawyers.

- Nous sommes éduqués.
- We care about our clients and others in our local communities, in Canada and throughout the world.
- Nous utilisons nos connaissances pour aider autrui.
- We protect everyone’s legal rights.
- We owe it to our profession and to ourselves to speak out about what we do.

Nous faisons déjà une différence pour les autres. Now, let’s make a difference for ourselves. With your vote and support, I know that together we can do great things. I know the CBA has a vibrant future.