

## MEET THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

### J. Ernest Janzen: a Well-Balanced Life

Ernie Janzen was born March 16, 1938, in Coaldale, Alberta, just east of Lethbridge; his family farmed on irrigated land in that area. Several months after Ernie's arrival, Ernie's future wife Agnes was born in the same country hospital in Coaldale.

In 1944, Ernie's family moved to Clearbrook, BC, now part of the large amalgamated City of Abbotsford. His elementary school was a converted Abbotsford Airport barracks that had been mothballed after WWII. He and his chums spent many hours roaming the fields and crawling through abandoned aircraft pretending to be "Aces."

Ernie graduated with his senior matric from the Mennonite Educational Institute in 1956. Agnes attended the same school; in fact, they were "going steady" in his final year.

To earn his first-year engineering tuition, Ernie worked as a draftsman with a major consulting firm. During that year, he decided engineering was not in his future, and took the summer off to work on the CPR Ferries as a steward. He had a fine time, made great tips, and earned enough money for full tuition, accommodation, and food for a year of Commerce at UBC. He qualified for the gymnastics team and competed in the Pacific Northwest.

Now focused on becoming a Chartered Accountant, Ernie was accepted for articles with Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co., one of the major firms at the time. In 1960 he married Agnes, his high school sweetheart.

In 1965 Ernie bought a small accounting practice in Abbotsford. Thanks to a great partner and a growing economy, the practice grew quickly. The company was purchased in 1973 by a major firm; Ernie retired from the business in 1976.



Next, he opened a Budget Rent-a-Car franchise in the area, which he operated for several years. He also obtained a life insurance agents' licence and practised in the "financial planning" arena.

In his CA practice, Ernie had done the Trust Audits of the two local Notaries, as well as those of a number of lawyers. One Notary with a rapidly expanding practice urged Ernie to become a Notary, offering him a partnership in the practice. Ernie applied, was accepted, and completed the BC Notary course in 1978.

Unfortunately, on his application for a Seal in the Abbotsford area, he was aggressively opposed by the local lawyers. Ultimately the courts decided in their favour; Ernie was denied a Seal. And the nature of the decision put the future of The Society in doubt.

Discouraged, he gave up on the plan to become a Notary and moved the family to Kelowna where an Insurance Agency was available.

In the meantime, The Society's Board of Directors rallied the troops. A well-planned application for a Seal by a female Notary was also opposed by the lawyers, who were confident of success. The province-wide press coverage resulted in enough public pressure on Victoria to cause a revision to the *Notaries Act* to allow for unopposed applications for Seal transfers.

This made it possible for Ernie to re-apply; he obtained the Seal of a retiring Notary in Kelowna in 1982. The insurance agency was moving along nicely; Agnes looked after the ICBC portfolio—a huge workload—while Ernie concentrated on building the Notary practice.

Son Tim had graduated from flight school at a time of little opportunity for new pilots, so he joined the agency and the rest is history. Tim also enjoyed the Notary practice. In 1992, they sold the insurance agency and concentrated on the Notary practice. As they became busier, daughter Carmen agreed to help out; she enjoyed the work so much that she, too, became a Notary!

First elected to the Board of Governors of The Notary Foundation in 1992, Ernie has been gratified to see the funding of many worthwhile organizations and projects brought before the Board for consideration and approval.

“The assistance of Agnes and my children gave me the opportunity to commit myself to work on the Board of The Society. I have always enjoyed the camaraderie of the Board members. Working shoulder-to-shoulder with the committed people that serve our Society is a real privilege. I have been a member of the Board since 1987 and have had the honour to serve on many of the committees.”

Ernie feels fortunate to have attended attend several IOLTA [Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts] meetings where the Canadian and US Law Foundations discussed common issues of concern, including the more effective administration of Grants and ways to increase the income from Interest on Trust accounts.

A former kids' softball and minor hockey coach and referee, Ernie is significantly involved in church-related organizations. His church is central to his life, and forms the underpinnings of his personal and work relationships. He has served as auditor and a member of various committees for the church family, and also plays the violin in a church music group.

Very active in racquetball and squash in Kelowna, Ernie has restored several vintage cars and is currently resuming his interest in fishing, boating, and travel in the family RV. He has a garage full of tools and a mile-long *To Do* list from Agnes, awaiting his retirement.

Without doubt, family is of paramount importance to Ernie. He and Agnes are extremely proud of their offspring and have a special place in their hearts for their grandchildren. Ernie expects to spend much more time with them in the future. ▲

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## About The Notary Foundation

In 1985 the Provincial Legislature amended the *Notaries Act*, SBC Chapter 334, to create The Notary Foundation. This non-profit organization receives interest earned on the general trust funds held by members of The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia.

The Notary Foundation receives and distributes over \$1 million each year. Most of the money is paid to the Legal Services Society, specifically to provide Legal Aid in the province. In addition, The Notary Foundation makes funds available to The Society of Notaries Public of BC to assist them in the education of the members, the general public, and applicants for membership in The Society.

In addition to Grants, The Notary Foundation funds two Scholarships and two Bursaries each year for UBC students taking certain law-related courses.

If your not-for-profit group would like more information on Scholarships and Bursaries, or you would like information on how to apply for a Grant and learn what projects are available for funding, please contact Wayne Braid, Executive Officer of The Notary Foundation.

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