

BC Notaries
A TRUSTED TRADITION



Tiah Workman: Living *the* Passionate Life

In Conversation with Val Wilson

This capable and popular Notary has a way of making everything she does look easy. She's very involved in life, loves people, and appreciates the beauty in our world. Here's her story in her own words.

The Scrivener: Tiah, Please tell us about your early life.

Tiah: I was born in Fort St. John and adopted shortly thereafter by parents who were then living in West Vancouver. I did not find out I was adopted until I was 36 years old.

When I was 6, we moved to Nanoose Bay on Vancouver Island where I grew up. I had some rather turbulent teenage years before getting my act together and was very lucky to have a mother who loved and put up with me throughout all of it. When I was 16, my father had a massive



With the Nanaimo Community Band

stroke at age 57. He lived long enough to see me finish school, attend my wedding to Greg, my husband of 18 years, and meet Graeme, his first grandchild.



On Vacation!

My older brother Douglas was also adopted, but from different birth parents. We did not find out until my mother's dementia had progressed to such a stage that we had to take over her affairs. Shortly before her rapid decline, she confided to my brother that we were adopted and it fell upon him to tell me.

Some time later, I decided to search for my birth mother, if only to obtain health information for my children as I was suddenly a blank slate with no history of my own. While I managed to locate her, she did not want to be found and we have not had any communication beyond our original contact.

The Scrivener: What was your career experience before you became a BC Notary?

Tiah: While attending classes at Malaspina College, I found myself

gravitating toward law. I was quite interested to learn a woman's perspective on attending law school and contacted a new lady lawyer in Nanaimo to ask questions and request her permission to be her shadow for a while.

That initial meeting worked its way into my assisting with notetaking a few times in court, then into various clerical duties in her office. She became a very good friend.

From there, a receptionist position came up at a medium-size law firm in Nanaimo. During my time at that firm, I was instructed in conveyancing to fill in for the firm's conveyancer during maternity leave. That office had a typing pool so I was never required to prepare my own documents or letters; everything was dictated.

Upon the conveyancer's return, I left that firm for a full-time conveyancing position at another law firm where I was required to prepare all my own documents. Did I mention I had never learned to type? Not sure if I had mentioned it to the partner in the first firm that hired me, either. My entire first day was spent typing up one Court Order—three pages long! I always have been a quick study, though, and did very well once I caught on.

After two years, I became pregnant with my first son and decided to quit my job to stay home with my new baby for a year. After two months at home, I was totally stir-crazy and applied for a position as a senior conveyancer with



Tiab with Marilyn Sullivan from the Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce. Tiab's office won First Place in the "General Office under 10 Employees" category in the Chamber's Annual Christmas Decorating Contest.

one of the best law firms in Nanaimo. I worked for that law firm through my second son's birth and right up to the time I was commissioned as a Notary Public. The two solicitors in the firm were extremely supportive of me while I was taking my Notary Preparatory Course.

The Scrivener: Why did you become a BC Notary?

Tiab: At that point, I was no longer interested in going to law school. I had a husband, a very young family from whom I did not want to be separated,



With a performer of traditional Mayan Dance

and, quite honestly, I was not interested in anything but solicitor's work.

Rick Evans, one of our past Presidents, past Directors, and more recently our past Education Coordinator, provided me with information about becoming a Notary. That is where it all started. I thought that becoming a Notary Public would be a perfect match for me. I started the Notary Preparatory Course in 1991 (with a 3-year-old and 1-year-old at home). My youngest son Sean became extremely ill in the Spring of 1992 and I can still remember working on my assignments while sitting on his bed in Children's Hospital! I received my Notary commission in December 1992.

I take pride in doing the job properly and upholding the integrity of BC Notaries and our Society.

The Scrivener: Did you have a mentor? Are you a mentor?

Tiab: Rick Evans certainly filled that role for me and continues to do so. When I was first commissioned, I shared office space with him in Nanaimo for three years before heading off on my own.

Although Rick tends to be the first person to whom I often turn, a number of our members have also filled that role for me throughout the years. That is something very special about our Society and our members; we tend to look to each other and be there for each other as needed. Although that is partially due to the size of our Society, it is primarily because Notaries are who they are. Am I a mentor? I know I have been a mentor to a few Notaries and would hope that any of our members would feel welcome to contact me regarding a question or a problem.

The Scrivener: Why do you practise in Nanaimo?

Tiab: Because it's home. I moved to Nanaimo in 1983 and could not imagine living and working anywhere else. I have

had an opportunity to do a little travelling over the past few years and every time I come home, I realize how incredibly lucky we are to live in a such beautiful place.

Although Nanaimo is growing in leaps and bounds, it maintains a "small town" feel. We are close enough to Vancouver and Victoria to be able to enjoy the best of both, without the worst, including the high costs related to living in the city. A little more than an hour away, we have skiing. We have boating at our doorstep and we can golf year-round. We get very little snow and the shopping is improving, so my son Sean says! What's not to like!?

We have a great business community. Our city is still small enough that we generally know everyone working on a file, from the other Notary office/law firm, to the lender, Realtor, or insurance office. It's a good place to do business.

The Scrivener: What's the most satisfying aspect of being a Notary?

Tiab: Knowing you have helped someone, whether you are assisting clients to buy a first home or helping people with the Will they are finally getting around to doing or just answering a few questions that no one else has taken the time to answer. I take pride in doing the job properly and upholding the integrity of BC Notaries and our Society. I see myself retiring in 10 to 15 years and know I will miss being a Notary. It is who I am.



Tiab and Greg at the President's Reception at The Society's 2005 Conference in Victoria



With Greg

The Scrivener: You were elected to the Board of Directors at the Annual Conference in Kelowna in October 2000. What do you enjoy about your involvement on the Board?

Tiah: Becoming a Director was definitely one of my better decisions. I sat as a committee member for a number of years before becoming a Director, which gave me very good insight into the effort that goes into running a Society such as ours.

Being a Director gives you an opportunity to understand what goes on in the office, including the enormous amount of work Wayne Braid does on our behalf and how and why The Society is where it is today. The committee work is sometimes tiring, sitting on discipline matters is never fun, but all the work the Directors are required to do is interesting.

I like having the opportunity to voice my opinions at the Board level and to know I am part of the decision-making process for our Society, particularly when I am affecting my own future by doing so. I enjoy the camaraderie with the other Board members. The opportunity to



At Chichen Itza

represent The Society when called upon is a very gratifying experience that I would certainly recommend to all our members.

What have I helped accomplish? Together with all the members of the Board, I have helped with the continuation of our Society by being involved in it. I am more that willing to continue in that commitment because I think it is important to be involved in something in which you truly believe.

The Scrivener: In what community service are you currently involved?

Tiah: I am a member of the Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce and Nanaimo Women's Business Network. As always, I am involved with one of my son's teams. Currently I am manager of Sean's Rep "B" soccer team.

The Scrivener: What are your special interests?

Tiah: I like to think I can golf, I am an avid reader, and I cross-stitch while sipping wine with my best friends. I did play the flute until recently; I find I am running a little short of time to give it the attention it needs. I like boating with my husband, particularly when we can leave the rest of the world behind and just camp on the boat or visit a really cool little pub, although that seldom happens, due to my schedule.

I love to travel. I have pretty much decided that is my number one special interest. I don't think I will get to do nearly as much as I would like until I retire.

I enjoy spending time with my boys, watching them grow into confident young men and being there when they realize they might still need me. I love watching them play sports. Although they have played quite a number of sports over the past few years, both my boys have chosen soccer as the only sport they still play. There is nothing quite like watching your children excel in a sport they love.

And, OK, I like to shop; I don't think anyone who knows me well would



On Akumal Beach

let me get away without making **that** statement. I am unfortunately known for my rambunctious bidding at silent auctions and I am lucky to have such supportive friends who help me carry home everything I "win."

When I am not working, spending time with family or friends, or doing chores around the house, I love to spend time with my pets. Our Border Collie/Cocker Spaniel/Doberman cross Sarah is 12 and our kittens, Rosemary and Thyme—they came with those names—are 10 months. Those three made for quite an interesting trip on the houseboat on Sprout Lake last August.

The Scrivener: Tiah, what is most important to you in life?

Tiah: I only get to pick one? I want to say my husband . . . my boys . . . my friends . . . honesty—that's a big one . . . integrity . . . health . . . happiness . . . To live it! ▲



With Graeme (centre), Sean, and Greg