



# Lady of The Lake!

**P**at Thomson was born in Kelowna. When she was 1, the family moved to Vancouver where her dad became manager of the Service Department of Dueck on Broadway.

Her older brother is a senior draftsman for an oil pipeline company in Calgary; her older sister is administrator for a law firm in Vancouver.

The family lived on King Edward Avenue in Vancouver—on the wrong side of the tracks, laughs Pat—and spent Summers and weekends on their

Saturna Island farm, known to some as the site of the Annual Saturna Lamb Barbeque.

Every chance she had, Pat left the city for the farm, where she learned to ride horses and ponies (they were the rejected ponies from Stanley Park), round up cows, herd sheep, deliver baby animals, and milk cows, etc.



*“Green” transportation: Patricia (right) on Max with Lorelei Sharpen from the Royal Bank on Patricia’s paint horse Pie*



*Patricia in her office with Jessie Barger (right), her conveyancer*

"In the mid-1980s, my dad found himself the defendant in an easement battle with my uncle who owned the adjoining farm. They fought their way to the BC Court of Appeal—*Campbell v. Thomson*."

In a nutshell, the uncle simply received the easement her dad had originally offered him, not the one the uncle had pursued . . . down the middle of the farm. "I was told it became a test case," says Pat.

Before becoming a BC Notary, Pat graduated from Prince of Wales Secondary. "I was NOT in the Quest program that has been so highly publicized in the media," she maintains.

From there she went on to the Vancouver College Legal Secretary program. Near the end of the course, Pat was hired to do a practicum at a criminal law firm, where she was introduced to John MacKay from Davis and Company. "I worked there and for other large law firms in Downtown Vancouver for the next 12 years, while taking night school courses toward credit in the Legal Assistant Program at Capilano College.

She worked for Davis and Company (Grant Burnyeat) in the Foreclosure department; Clark, Wilson (for Ken Downing) in the Corporate Commercial department; Russell and DuMoulin (Ralph McRae/Fran Boyle) in the Realization/Insolvency Department; Ladner Downs (Clive Bird) in Realization; Ferguson Gifford (Ralph McRae/Dennis Quinlan/Derek Cave) in Litigation; and Killam Whitelaw and Twining (Mark Tweedy) in Insurance Litigation.

**"The most important part of this business is to provide my clients with the best possible advice and service."**

When Pat first applied to become a Notary Public in 1985, she was considered too young. She freelanced as a legal secretary between permanent jobs and really enjoyed the freedom.

"Then I read an article about Notaries and decided to reapply. After passing the Notary Preparatory

Course, I was commissioned in 1993 for a Vancouver Seal."

Pat decided to article with Mac (Herb) McCallum in Duncan for 3 months after seeing him at a convention, then returned to Vancouver to open her Notary office at Broadway and Arbutus.

She remembers having only two files in her first month so she also worked as a word processor for Boughton, Peterson, Yang Anderson.

"I had a great arrangement at my Notary office because I shared a receptionist. If I needed to be at my office, she would call me and I could be there in half an hour. The law firm was happy, too, because it worked both ways. If they weren't busy enough, I would be happy to go back to my Notary office."

Not long after Pat set up her office on West Broadway, Stan Nicol called to see if she would be interested in the Lake Cowichan Seal.

"I was standing on a chair painting the wall in my tiny apartment kitchen. I asked Stan when he would like me to move. 'Next week,' he said—'Oh, I'm going through the tunnel . . . static . . . static . . . Bye.'

"I remember standing there, stunned, with the paintbrush in my hand, thinking maybe I could buy a house with a real kitchen—and even have a horse?"

"I had also been approached by a law firm to give up my Seal and take over their Pan Pacific real estate division with six conveyancers at my disposal and an office on the 32nd floor overlooking Coal Harbour.



Family dog Annabell with Patricia's son Robert



“And of course there was my new office on Broadway with the two files.”

They were all great opportunities, but Pat is delighted she chose to make the move to Lake Cowichan.

“I have a house with enough property for my beautiful draft horse Max; his friend Pie; my St. Bernard Annabell; and an assortment of adopted cats.”

For Pat, the most satisfying aspect of being a Notary Public is taking a file from start to completion. “Sometimes the more challenging the file, the more rewarding,” she says. “The more the merrier.

“The most important part of this business is to provide my clients with the best possible advice and service. As for the future, I am hoping it will continue to be as busy as it has been for the past couple of years.”

**Pat’s young son Robert is now 7 and doing well in Grade 2.**

**“To date, he has not shown an interest in any part of the Notary business except the shredder.”**

When asked if she had mentors, Pat says, “Mac McCallum was very helpful to me in the beginning and Notaries Doug Parton, Alexander Ning, Dick Wright, Pat Bekar, and Joan Phillips became my mentors and friends.

“All the Notaries I met were most helpful and welcoming. I expected more competition among Notaries but it wasn’t like that. I would be happy to be a mentor, if asked, but I’m a bit off the beaten track here.”

In the area of community service, Pat has been social director, treasurer, and secretary of the Vancouver Rowing Club and secretary/treasurer of the Pacific Ski Club. She belongs to

the Chamber of Commerce in Lake Cowichan and was Treasurer of the Lions Club.

In the “special interests” department, she has started to collect motor vehicle licences. She received her motorcycle licence through Simon Fraser University’s safe driving course and her chauffeur (taxi) licence, too!

“I completed the Power Squadron Course and navigated the family cruiser throughout the Gulf Islands and to Granville Island quite often. Karen Magnussen’s teacher taught me to figure skate.

“I was a licensed groom at Exhibition Park Race Track for about 6 years and used to go there after my legal secretary job at night and on weekends.”

When it comes to leisure activities, Pat played field hockey for the Vancouver Rowing Club from the time she left high school until she moved to Lake Cowichan, then played for Island teams for a few years after that.

And she has always really enjoyed riding her horses. “There are some nice places to ride here. I can leave work and be on a beach on my horse in less than an hour.

“One of the restaurants in town has a hitching post, so sometimes I meet friends there.”

Pat’s young son Robert is now 7 and doing well in Grade 2.

“To date, he has not shown an interest in any part of the Notary business except the shredder.

“One of the greatest advantages of being in this business as a new mom was the ability to take him to work with me.”

Pat took only a week off when he was born, so he spent a good part of his first year sleeping in a basket in her office. “He is very social; I wonder if that is a result of all of the client interaction.

“I’m very proud to be a British Columbia Notary Public. Life is good.” ▲