

Kate Manvell



The Journey to Success: The Class *of* 2004

The day I got the letter from The Society of Notaries Public of BC informing me I'd been accepted as a student for the Class of 2004 was July 19, 2002.

I was over the moon. Like a teenager entering junior high—a *keener*, as my son Simon would later call me, I rushed out and bought every *suggested* textbook, joking with friends and family I was about to store away my Italian leather pumps and designer handbags for sandals and a backpack. Well into my 50s, I was going back to school!

At our first Introductory weekend at the downtown UBC campus, 18 other Notary students from various towns and municipalities and hamlets in British Columbia joined together for our first glimpse of what lay ahead for the next 18 to 20 months.

Over the weekend, many of us had a chance to get to know each other. It turned out I was the only spouseless student. I happily offered my home—3 bedrooms, 3 baths, and no children underfoot!—to out-of-town students. Being somewhat of a social animal, I knew from the beginning I wasn't prepared to suffer through

months of a gruelling course, studies, and exams ALONE.

Our core group started with four. From time to time, we grew to larger numbers. With three living levels in my home, it was easy to keep us “segregated” after lights out! We women got the top floor; men were banished to the dungeon—okay, the bottom floor. It did have carpet, heat, and running water!

We realized it was impossible for our family members and friends to understand or acknowledge what we were going through, studying as mature adults.

Every Saturday and Sunday morning of the study weekends, we were up at 6:30 AM to put on coffee and tea and make lunches for each other.

All of us had a passion to do well and pass the feared six statutory exams at the end of the course. In the evenings, we enjoyed never-ending Notary chatter and, from time to time, would actually talk about our families or current jobs.

I came to greatly admire the colleagues who managed to juggle

full-time jobs (which I also had), their private family lives, and other commitments—all while meeting every assignment deadline, keeping up their passing grade, and attending the UBC weekend seminars throughout each year.

We realized it was impossible for our family members and friends to understand or acknowledge what we were going through, studying as mature adults. As months then a year rolled by, the friendships the students made were incredible. While the Board of Directors of The Society, our administrators, and our individual mentor Notary were there for us, having the total support of fellow classmates, and helping each other stay the course—*yes, you can; yes, you can*—was beyond remarkable.

It is a long and most challenging road between the arrival of that letter to the day you're invested at BC Supreme Court as one of BC's newest Notaries.

I am so grateful to The Society, our mentors, and my student colleagues who have now become successful BC Notaries.

We love our work! ▲

Kate Manvell is a BC Notary practising in West Vancouver.

kmanvell@notaries.bc.ca