



Tony DuMoulin



## Why I Decided to Become a Lawyer

**O**ur editor has asked me to write about why I decided to become a lawyer.

After 33 years of practice, I must cast my mind back through time to those exciting days when I entered university with an open mind: I would learn what I wanted to do with my life through my post-secondary studies.

I had grown up surrounded by lawyers, generations of them, so I knew little about any career other than the practice of law. This made me all the more determined to find out what other calling might suit me. It is not that I had anything against law; I just had nothing else to compare it to. The vast majority of the male adults in my life had been lawyers.

My father's view of the practice of law—and this would have been shared by many others of his day—was that as a profession, its purpose was to assist others. It was service to others that informed my upbringing, not earning a living. I was taught very early on that the primary

purpose of life was to identify and develop one's talents to best help others.

So the purpose of my university education would be to learn how to qualify for a career where I could best be of service to mankind. Apart from that essential focus, my options on entering the Arts program at UBC were unlimited. (High school science had not excited me.) So I simply took courses that interested me, looking for inspiration.

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Upon graduation from Arts, I was still no closer to knowing what career I wanted to pursue. A number of friends had decided to try law school and so I considered: a second degree cannot hurt and a law degree would be a valuable asset for many fields.

But from the moment I entered law school, I was inspired. I immediately felt an affinity and a passion for law as a stimulating analytical discipline. Perhaps my genes had got the better of me, but I felt I was now where I belonged academically and I loved law school. What could be more fun than studying real-life court cases all day long for three years!

So what is there to love about the law? Well, in addition to the intellectual stimulation, it is just so . . . useful. Returning to my focus of service to others, law school was about acquiring valuable tools for advising people in their dealings with others by studying the many dealings that went wrong. There are other disciplines in which one glimpses “how the world really works”: physics, psychology, economics, philosophy, medicine, art, theology, the list goes on. But in law, we were learning at the most practical level the details of how civilized societies are organized and what social interactions work and don't work. We studied where people bumped into each other and what society did about it.

