

## Focus on Leta Best, New President of The Society of Notaries Public of BC

The Society's new President, Notary Leta Best, provides a strong role model for the young women of today.

She has worked hard to succeed in her profession. Upgrading her skills has always been a high priority, and she has always taken the time to give back to her community. As a Director of the United Way of Victoria, Leta served on the allocations committee, which audited the United Way Agencies to ensure they met criteria for funding, and set allocation of funds to be paid to the various agencies under the United Way umbrella. As chair of Admission, she reviewed the agencies seeking admission to the United Way family; reviewed their financial statements, funding sources, and premises; and interviewed Executive Directors and Boards of Directors.

Leta has lived her whole life in Victoria. Self-employed since 1968, previously in the accounting field, Leta devotes her time to directing and managing her two legal services corporations. Also the owner of Frank L. Kitto Registry Services, she has been active in the accounting field for 36 years.

She established Best Bookkeeping Service in June 1968. In July 1972, Frank L. Kitto—then one of Leta's accounting clients—and Leta were working in Frank's Notary office when he commented, "Do you know of a good young man to become my son's partner when I retire?" She answered, "Yes. Me."

Leta would turn 25 the following month, the age necessary to become a BC Notary at that time; she would then be eligible to apply to become a Notary. Because the number of Notaries practising in a district is restricted, Leta waited four years for a Seal to become available in Victoria. During this period, she studied Business Law for Notaries Public via correspondence through UBC while working full-time with Kitto & Kitto and part-time on her bookkeeping service. She passed her Notarial exams in 1976.

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Kitto & Best had three Notaries and three employees. Frank Kitto was a past president of The Society; his son, Notary Francis R. B. Kitto, retired in July 1991. Kitto & Best and Frank L. Kitto Registry operate today from the same address as businesses that complement one another. Leta is sole practitioner and shareholder. She has modernized the look of the office and computerized both the Notarial and the registry services, adding a computer network.

Leta is currently a member of the Status of Women Committee of the Zonta Club of Victoria. A member since 1981,

she was President for two terms: 1984 to 1985 and 1991 to 1992. In Zonta International, she has served as Area Vice Director, Lieutenant Governor, Governor, International Director, and International Chair of Public Relations and Communications. She is also a Trustee for the BC Land Surveyors Foundation.

Leta has been recognized as Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year: First Place for British Columbia in the category of Lifetime Achievement. To be eligible for this award, you must be in business for at least 20 years and be a beacon for others to follow. Leta Best qualifies on both accounts.

She currently serves as a Governor of The Notary Foundation, President of The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia, and a Director on The Society Board; she has chaired the Education, Membership, Finance, Research and Development, and Magazine Committees.

BC Notaries number approximately 300, of which 58 percent are women. Leta was the first woman to establish her own Notary practice in Victoria. Since 1998, she has been practising with Notary Sabrina Hanousek.

Leta has two children. Gary, 34, is married with three children; Elizabeth, 32, has recently completed her Masters Degree in Computing Technology in Education at Nova Southeastern, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Elizabeth is also a member of the Zonta Club of Victoria.

We look forward to an outstanding year under Leta's leadership. ▲