

Aidan Butterfield: Always a Pupil and a Teacher . . . *a Lifetime of Learning*

I am a Vancouverite, born and bred, with webbed feet even.

In 1949 I was in Montreal—THE most cosmopolitan and sophisticated city in Canada at the time—on the threshold of starting my life, when I was asked “where to from here?” My answer was, “I’m going home.”

I still love it here, and always will, even though the rain does get me down on occasion when it conspires with the wind to drive right through me. It gets into the bones, you know, but I guess that’s just old age.

My career experience before becoming a Notary was in mercantile credit management and banking.



Aidan Then . . .

Over the years, that line of work and direction became less and less meaningful. Since I had not been brought up in a community where I felt I belonged—nor did I have job security—I longed for a place to settle where I could be of help to both the people and the community.

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Then I met my wife. She persuaded me to take advantage of my previous legal experience to become a Notary. So I did and we have never looked back.

Everybody should have at least one mentor. I was very fortunate to have had three of them

The first took me out into the mountains on a “prospecting for gold” expedition, where I learned certain aspects about myself and life in a very big hurry. I have loved nature and the outdoors ever since.

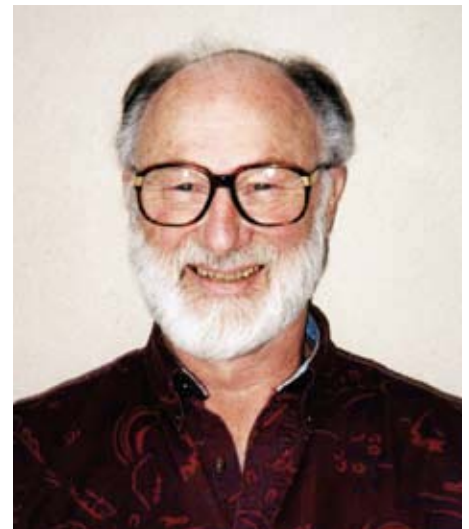
My second mentor was a wonderful man who taught me more about myself, who I was, and how to transform my life. At the end of that experience, my life changed a great deal.

My wife was my third mentor. She showed me how to put into practice all that I had learned about life and living up to that time.

Since then, I have always tried to give back by mentoring in one way or another, or by helping in the management of the professions and associations to which I belong.

In 1974, at the age of 46, I started my notarial studies—after Bernard Hoeter said I would never make it!—and received my commission in May 1975 for the District of West Vancouver.

I was scared to death. The excitement and adventure of it all got me through, but not really well enough to survive on it, so I bought



Aidan Now!

a business support service that thankfully went very well with notarial services.

In 1978 I accepted the contract to become the BC branch office for the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators in Canada. For the next 10 years, I was the “Secretaries’ secretary.”

In 1982 I was appointed editor of the *B.C. Notary* magazine, forerunner of the present day *Scrivener*. Bernard Hoeter started the publication of 4 to 8 pages in the early 1970s as a house organ to keep members informed about various things, but it became too much for him and the editorship was passed on to Murray Woodward of Powell River. It soon became too much for him, too, so I became “it” for the next 10 years.

Being the editor was one of the most enjoyable aspects of my practice because it taught me things I had never known or done before. Finding material to write about was always a challenge, but finding people to submit articles was even more of a test.

Consequently, I found I was writing 95 percent of the material—100 percent for some of the issues of the magazine. And here I want to thank Bernard Hoeter and Stan Nicol for all their contributions of material and assistance. The magazine finally hit its stride when it truly became an educational organ.

In 1992, however, it was decided that the old must give way to a new format and ideas and the *B.C. Notary* published its last edition in the Spring. It was succeeded in the Autumn by *The Scrivener*.

Through it all, I learned a lot about the law, publishing, and writing, which would stand me in good stead when I retired.

In 1984 I was elected a Director of The Society and at different times was chair of several committees, including Education, which went very well indeed with being the editor.

Through the recommendations of myself and the Board, the basis of the

present-day educational requirements was established. And about 1990, I think it was, I found myself one of the Founding Governors of the Notary Foundation.

My parents had both been writers, but it had never occurred to me that I might be, too . . . until becoming editor and publisher. The desire to write became foremost, which is why I enjoyed the editorship so much.

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It is very difficult to leave a major portion of one’s life behind, so I crystallized an idea I had when in practice to put together a fast-find “Notarial Practices” manual, thinking it would benefit The Society and its members. After being encouraged by The Society to proceed, it turned out that the computer was advancing faster than anyone anticipated, and the manuscript was never published.

In retirement as of 1994, I turned to writing in earnest, publishing some articles in trade and professional journals for about 2 years. When my knowledge became obsolete, I tried my hand at short stories, articles, and poetry, some of which were published.

But no writer ever bats 100 percent—Oh! tears of frustration. I was known as a “conscience” writer, ever challenging the *status quo*, unfairness, inequality, stupidity, and the unconscionable. That seemed to start when I was on the Board; I was dubbed “the conscience of The Society.”

For many years, stamp collecting had been my hobby but, in retirement, it consumed much more time, to such an extent that I eventually put writing aside to become what is known as a “weekend” or small-time stamp dealer. This required going to stamp shows and bourses—places like flea markets where the dealers all sell the same kind of product—stamps, coins,

etc.—and joining various stamp clubs in the Lower Mainland.

This all got started when I made a deal with a man in Park Royal Shopping Centre who ran a “Collectables – Coins and Stamps” shop. He knew nothing about stamps and allowed me to put my surplus inventory into his store. We worked together for over 5 years. The shop closed in July 2005.

Our West Vancouver Seniors’ Centre is run by volunteers; I helped out in various ways, eventually serving on the Program Committee and the Advisory Board.

And for years I have given therapeutic messages to members and staff, to help ease the tensions in their necks, shoulders, and backs and have assisted them in everyday, common sense living. Since my retirement, that activity has been the most rewarding.

My stamp dealer days are almost over, to be replaced by a return to writing. Of course I shall continue with stamps as a hobby because that’s where the fun is.

But writing intrigues me because I think I still have something to say and with that grandiose thought in mind, I hope you will soon be reading my meaningful “letters to the editor.” I am currently working on a memoir for my daughter and her children so they will understand and appreciate where all the family quirks and quarks come from. All psychological and genetic, you know.

It seems the learning about and the understanding of life has been with me forever. I have arrived at the realization that I am not the result of what I have done or the people I’ve met or where I’ve been, but rather the result of the effect that all the who’s, what’s, and where’s have had upon me.

Hopefully, as I enter the pearly gates, I can do so with a little pride at having accomplished something along this road and receive a pat on the shoulder from old St. Peter for having done so. ▲

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