

CANADIAN  
DEFENCE  
LAWYERS

**Nomination for Susan Gunter for the Fred Sievert Award**



Susan Gunter is the immediate Past President of Canadian Defence Lawyers and a partner in the Toronto litigation firm of Dutton Brock. The Board of Directors of CDL believes that she is a strong candidate for the Sievert Award and is delighted to put her name forward.

Susan has a long association with CDL but during her term as President she has moved CDL from a relatively small player in the community of legal associations to one of considerable consequence. Her contribution to this process did not start with her presidency, rather it has been made consistently, conscientiously and sincerely for many years.

Susan was the driving force behind CDL's **Boot Camp programme**, a training ground for new young defence lawyers that explains everything they need to know about running a defence practice from how to understand a doctor's report to the importance of building a strong ethical framework in your daily work. This programme originated in Toronto under Susan's chairmanship and is now nationally syndicated in Vancouver, Calgary, Moncton and Halifax. Most law firms now anticipate this much needed element to training their new hires.

As Chair of the CLE committee (when she was first vice-president) she not only presided over an incredible year of CLE in terms of volume, content and reach, she also led the committee in much needed strategic discussions about how and where CDL should be delivering its CLE programmes. She was responsible for adding a **Women Litigators group** to CDL with its own Breakfast programmes targeting issues of importance for the female litigator both in the workplace and personally. These programmes too are now unrolled in Vancouver, Toronto and Halifax.

As President Susan made it her personal mandate to upgrade and improve CDL's technology platforms. She established a technology committee to examine the best ways in which to enhance the member services through web technology, the result being the creation and launch of the first national and regional blog. Prior to the blog CDL operated a very vigorous national listserv. However it became a victim of its own success when the volume of posts became too much for some members who did not practice in province relative to the posting. The listserv also only delivered information via email, not allowing helpful search and tracking functions. Hence the launch of our **Regional blog** which now resides

on our website, segregated in regional and national streams with a fully searchable keyword index and the ability to respond online to member posts. Protected by member login this area now provides an invaluable resource for CDL members to find experts, exchange information and follow specific threads. The most popular topics are highlighted making it easier for members to get the information they want. Susan continues to head the Technology Committee and will be examining new directions for the delivery of CLE in 2010-2011.

As the President of CDL Susan used her position to network with the Presidents and Executive bodies of “sister” associations. CDL established its first policy on **sister associations** and in December 2009 hosted the first ever “Jingle Mingle” – a Christmas cocktail party to which we invited all the associations we have worked with and those we would like to work with – with the goal of making connections and discussing matters of mutual interest. Invitees were asked to make donations to the CHUM-City Christmas Wish Foundation to give toys to kids. This event was so successful that we have already planned to run a parallel event in Vancouver in December 2010. Susan broadened CDL’s relationships further to include meetings with the other 3 female presidents of Ontario legal associations, the International Bar Association, the FDCC and others. The seeds for growth and development have been sewn Susan has also brought CDL closer again to DRI by her regular attendance at the Annual Meeting and Regional Meetings and the friends and connections she has made.

Susan’s mark on CDL is indelible, but it is also her generous spirit and incredibly kind nature that has made the year of her presidency one that everyone will remember. She brought her energy and enthusiasm to all Board meetings and went out of her way to ensure that new Board members were welcomed and supported during their first few months. Her caring and sensitive approach to the CDL staff made it easy to turn her goals into reality. **Her leadership to both staff and board was exemplary – behind her sunny exterior is an intelligent, sharp witted and strategic thinking woman who has been able to juggle the CDL presidency, partnership in her firm, a busy litigation practice, and mothering two young daughters.**

Susan is truly a role model for any professional woman and we would be tremendously pleased if DRI were to recognize her achievement by honouring her with the Sievert Award.

Every member of the CDL Board and Staff would be very happy to speak with the Nomination Committee on Susan’s behalf.

Submitted by Clare Samworth, Executive Director – on behalf of the CDL Board.