

# Bartlet & Richardes LLP

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(L to R): Elizabeth Musyj, Mary-Joe Renaud, Laura Pearce, Aaron Marcotte, Gerald Trottier, Stephen Jovanovic, Milton Grant, Lawrence McRae, Gregory Verbeem, Barton Seguin, Jean Marentette, and Phillip Chandler, partners and associates at Bartlet & Richardes LLP. (Not pictured: Karol Dycha and Robert Weissner.)

Back when Fatty Arbuckle and the perennial celebration of Ground Hog Day were merely a few months old, two brothers became the forefathers of a law practice that would become a fixture in the community. Now, 120 years later, Bartlet & Richardes LLP, Barristers & Solicitors is celebrating a major milestone in dedication, integrity and quality legal services. The firm officially began when brothers Noble A. Bartlet and Alex R. Bartlet partnered to establish the practice on December 1, 1887, creating a family legacy that for generations has served the Windsor and Essex County community. That legacy includes generations of the Bartlet family — a family member had been employed with the firm right up until 2005, when Jim Bartlet died.

Established under the name Bartlet & Bartlet, the name commonly recognized today was finalized in 1971, naming George C. Richardes who had been a partner since 1934. The only change in title since has been the adoption of Limited Liability Partnership status in 2001. One of Bartlet & Richardes' strengths is its diversification; it practices in virtually all areas of law. Whether it's labour and employment law, corporate and

commercial law, litigation, municipal law, corporate financing, banking, insolvency and receivership, taxation, franchising, estates and trusts, matrimonial law, commercial and residential real estate, construction law, or customs and immigration law, this firm has had a specialist on board for more than a century. One might be warned that diluting the concentration of practice could jeopardize its effectiveness — "the jack-of-all-trades is the master of none" — but senior partner D. Stephen Jovanovic retorts there's no rule that says they can't have 14 masters on staff.

"It's not quite fair to say master of none. Every lawyer here is a master of the area they practice in," Jovanovic says. "The firm does all these areas, but the individual lawyers specialize." Jovanovic, for example, does insurance litigation and general litigation. "That's virtually all that I do ... and there's lots of different things that go into the litigation field," he says. Criminal law has not cracked the lineup, though. "It wasn't a conscious decision to not do criminal law — we do do some quasi-criminal stuff, like occupation and safety act charges, but not really criminal,"

Jovanovic says, adding with a smile, "There are lots of excellent criminal lawyers doing that."

Jovanovic says a firm's good reputation is what makes it last, and lasting more than a century on your reputation is a true demonstration of the firm's character in action. "I've always thought that, from what I learned when I started here ... that integrity was the most important thing. It's having integrity to the whole administration of justice, the court system, and it's integrity with other lawyers. It's integrity with all the other people we have to deal with," Jovanovic says. "I heard many times when I first started going to court as an articling student to become a junior lawyer, 'Oh, you're from Bartlet and Richardes,' and that immediately established credibility and people knew that what I said, and what others (in the firm) say, you could rely upon. You may not have liked to hear what we had to say, but you could rely upon it. We said we would do something, and we'd do it ... And the reward for doing good work is getting more work." Return business and long-term clients demonstrate the faith and satisfaction that some of the oldest and largest businesses in the area have come to expect from Bartlet & Richardes.

The firm has had its hand in building the foundation of Windsor over all these years. In 1904, they incorporated the Ford Motor Company of Canada, and have been working with Ford ever since. They've done major work with Hiram Walker and St. Clair College, too. The trick to maintaining large high-profile clients is keeping a very low profile. The firm also serves the province of Ontario when called upon. George A. Urquhart, for example, was admitted to partnership in 1915, and was later appointed Justice of the Supreme Court of Ontario in 1921. Arthur R. Jessup was admitted to partnership in 1951, and was later appointed Justice of the Supreme Court of Ontario (Trial Division) in 1964, followed by a promotion to Justice of the Ontario Court of Appeal in 1967. Richard C. Gates, who was admitted to partnership in 1972, went on to be appointed Judge to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in 2003.

Through Bartlet & Richardes' lifetime, there have been great depressions, recessions and periods of economic growth, yet the financial rollercoaster doesn't seem to cause as many highs and lows for law firms. "It's interesting," Jovanovic says, "that it's always survived. Not sure exactly why, but we've always been busy. We do a lot of work with automotive clients, and when the economy is going down, for whatever reason, law firms never seem to be affected ... It hasn't [had an effect on] our firm, it hasn't on major firms either. Sometimes, [economic recession] just shifts the focus of the work a little bit. You'll be working on different things. You won't be working on the opening of a new plant, but rather on different aspects." And all along, the family atmosphere upon which the firm was established has survived. "We've always gotten along tremendously well with one another," reflects Jovanovic, who was admitted to partnership in 1983 and has been with the firm for 30 years. "It really is a partnership; you spend as many waking hours sometimes with your partners as you do with your spouse. So you have to be able to get along and somehow the people who have come up through here have always gotten along."

And they soon will celebrate their 120 years of accomplishments together. The firm plans to have a formal anniversary celebration early next year for the firm, its clients, and the people who have been associated with the firm in the past.