



Left: The Bartlet firm incorporated Ford of Canada and here are some prominent people associated with Ford in 1932. Left to right: Wallace R. Campbell, the first Canadian and Windsor born president of the company; Walter G. Bartlet; Alexander R. ("Mr. A.R.") Bartlet; and Henry Ford's only son, Edsel.

Bottom: The Bartlet firm today. Back row (l-r): Aaron P. Marcotte, Karol F. Dycha, Larry R. McRae, D. Steven Jovanovic, Gerald E. Trottier, Gregory J. Verbeem. Sitting (l-r): Elizabeth J. Musyj, Jean L. Marentette.

# FROM THE VICTORIAN ERA

Early in the 19th Century, a Scottish family emigrated to what was then called Upper Canada (now Southwestern Ontario) and settled in the area around present day Amherstburg.

Among this pioneering family were three brothers: Alexander, often called "Sandy"; and James and William.

They were the Bartlets, and their enthusiasm for progressing in their new homeland is reflected in the traditions they left behind..... nowhere more than in the name and influence of Windsor's oldest law firm, Bartlet & Richardes, which this year marks the beginning of its 13th decade as one of the area's most respected legal practices.

Not that Sandy, James and William were lawyers themselves.

But their committed and industrious nature led to the marks they and their descendants have made on Windsor, Essex County, and their adopted province and nation.

The Bartlet family moved from Amherstburg to Windsor in 1854: the same year in which Windsor was incorporated as a village.

And although he wasn't a lawyer, Alexander.....Sandy...became a Police



# TO THE 21ST CENTURY

STORY BY HAL SULLIVAN / PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANGELA ROY



Magistrate and a legendary fixture on the Windsor area scene for more than the following half century until his passing in 1910.

He had a natural instinct for the law; like many Victorian gentlemen he was well read; and he leavened these qualities with a humour and common sense which makes him the stuff of legend.

It was Sandy's sons, Col. Noble A. and Alexander R. (called "Mr. A.R.") who founded the Bartlet and Richardes law firm in 1887...120 years ago this December 1st.

No account of the firm would be complete without a reference to the family background of the founding Bartlet brothers. Their magistrate father was known for his fairness and sense of practicality, especially at a time when Canada's legal and correctional systems were far more rough and tumble than they are today.

Magistrate Alexander Bartlet dispensed justice with an eye on the public purse (his Scottish roots, perhaps?) along with an awareness that wrongs should be redressed in a practical way.

It's an often told story but well worth repeating, that when someone of meagre means, especially from across the river, was found guilty of a minor offence in Windsor, Magistrate Bartlet would grant the defendant an hour or so before a jail sentence started, to allow the guilty person to scrape up money and pay a fine instead of inhabiting a cell at the public's expense.

But often, the Magistrate himself would visit the individual in private and offer a free ferry ticket back to Detroit, along with a scribbled note which contained a single word: "Scoot!" And Sandy Bartlet was part of virtually anything and everything else involving the Windsor area community.

In addition to being a police magistrate, he was the municipal clerk, secretary of the Board of Education and one of the founders and a long time elder of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at Park St. and Victoria Ave.

So his sons Noble A. and Alexander R., founders of the law firm which began life as Bartlet & Bartlet in 1887, had an abundance of good examples from their father and family to live by, in addition to the law degrees which both of them had earned.

Although there are no remaining Bartlets in the firm in this 120th anniversary year (the last, James N. "Jim" Bartlet...Magistrate Sandy's great-grandson...passed away two years ago) what is now Bartlet &



**Above: Community leader, sportsman and aviator Walter G. Bartlet takes a swing at golf in the early days of the Essex Golf & Country Club.**

Richardes LLP carries on in the tradition of professional thoroughness and community involvement which has made the firm not only Windsor's longest lasting but one of its most respected legal entities.

It's an organization which deals with virtually every aspect of legality except criminal law; a firm which has produced four Superior Court Judges, two of whom were also appointed to the Bench of the Ontario Court of Appeal.

The Bartlet firm judges include George A. Urquhart, who became a Justice of the Supreme Court of Ontario in 1938; John B. Aylesworth, named to the Appeals Court in 1946; Arthur R. Jessup, appointed in 1964 to the Trial Division of the Supreme Court of Ontario and three years later to the Ontario Court of Appeal; and Richard C. Gates, Q.C., who became a Judge of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in 2003.

Another partner, James L. Braid, became a Bencher of the Law Society of Upper Canada (the Benchers act as a sort of Board of Directors for the Society).

The "Richardes" in the firm's name refers to George C. Richardes, who became a member of the partnership in 1934 and who passed away in 1977.

Although the firm has undergone many name changes since its establishment in 1887, it has retained the name Bartlet & Richardes for the past 36 years and adopted the designation LLP (Limited Liability Partnership) six years ago.

The firm has always been located in the City Centre of Windsor and has remained at its current location, now on both the 10th and 11th floors of the Canada

Building at 374 Ouellette Ave., since that building opened in 1929 as one of the most prestigious office addresses in Southwestern Ontario.

Through the years, the Bartlet family and other members of the firm have been an integral part of downtown Windsor and the community in general.

Edgar A. Bartlet, a grandson of Magistrate Sandy, was a principal in the construction of the Bartlet Building at the corner of University Ave. and Pelissier St.

For a time, with its six storeys, that building towered over downtown as the loftiest structure in the city!

Edgar was also one of the first shareholders in the new Ford Motor Company of Canada Ltd.

It was the Bartlet firm which incorporated Ford of Canada in 1904, and to this day, Bartlet & Richardes continues to represent the Ford company in many important legal matters.

Another grandson of the magistrate, George Bartlet, was a partner in the Bartlet, Macdonald and Gow Department Store on lower Ouellette Ave.

This establishment was a traditional shopping place for Windsor area people for 112 years until it closed in 1972.

Personal involvement and connections with the community have characterized Bartlet & Richardes again and again throughout its 120 year history.

And for a distinguished firm whose actions have set, and continue to set, noteworthy precedents in the fields of corporate law, labour relations, civil litigation, municipal law, estate planning and all manner of other legal disciplines, Bartlet & Richardes has, intentionally and perhaps also by circumstance, accomplished two other achievements.

It has involved unique and colourful partners and staff members; and despite the respect it enjoys throughout the legal world, it has stolidly maintained a relatively low profile in its home city and elsewhere...and prefers it this way.

In addition to being the home partnership of distinguished judges and lawyers, the firm also counts among its members probably the only area legal professional ever to have been drafted by the National Hockey League.

This is Lawrence R. "Larry" McRae, a former Massey High School and Windsor Spitfire goaltender who, to his self deprecating amusement these days, was ►



selected 103rd in the NHL draft of 1976 by the Los Angeles Kings!

Much farther back in time, one of the firm's founders, Lt. Col. Noble A. Bartlet, was the first President of the Essex Golf and Country Club, a Windsor City Alderman and for 10 years, commanding officer of the 21st Regiment, Essex Fusiliers.

Many tales are told of Noble A.'s son Walter, who joined the firm in 1912. He specialized in corporate law but also, evidently, in a bit of derring-do. At the age of 61 he obtained his pilot's licence and then bought his own aircraft, and it's said he was the oldest licenced pilot in Canada.

On one occasion, Walter landed his plane on a fairway at the Essex Golf Club simply because he fancied a chat with the Club's famous greenskeeper, John Gray.

So...quiet and professional the Bartlet & Richardes law firm may be; but bland?

Definitely not. Insightful, too. The firm has represented clients in precedent setting cases all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

In one instance, a proceeding which Frederick W. Knight of the partnership argued before Canada's premier court resulted, in effect, in amendments to the Canada Shipping Act, with internationally significant implications.

It's the sort of initiative which may not be publicly spectacular but leads to the deep respect which other members of the legal profession express for Bartlet & Richardes. High profile endorsements for the firm are warm and numerous.

The late Charles Clark, Q.C., (after whom Charles Clark Square in Windsor's Civic Colonnade is named) described B & R as being highly regarded by "lawyers, the Bench and the whole legal community".

And Morris Kamin, Q.C., described members of the Bartlet & Richardes partnership as "fighting hard, but always with integrity".

In its 120 year history, the firm has been home to more than 40 lawyers and remains a favourite of law students seeking a prestigious firm with which to article.

The firm's library is a historical, practical and much utilized treasure all by itself. It's one of the largest private legal reference sources in Ontario with its hundreds of volumes and documents, some of which date back earlier than the establishment of the firm itself 120 years ago.

Still, alighting from the elevator on the 10th floor of the Canada Building is not

like stepping into a time machine. The impression conveyed is modern, tasteful and businesslike. It's acts for high profile clients in a low profile way...which is often the client's preference.

The premises, which were opened in 1929 in only part of the 10th floor but now extend throughout the entirety of the floor and the whole of the 11th floor as well, also contain a conference room and various other executive class amenities.

Bartlet & Richardes uses a state of the art computer and record keeping system, complementing its venerable library.

In former years and by regulation, members of the legal profession could not advertise. Bartlet & Richardes still *almost* fits into that category of modesty today.

Its advertisement in the Yellow Pages of the Windsor area telephone book is dwarfed by most of the other ads, some of which are splashed across full pages and are complete with declarations of efficiency and full colour photographs.

In contrast, Bartlet & Richardes uses 1¾" by 2¼" and simply names partners, services and contact information.

The firm is convinced that its quiet and admired reputation, built over 120 years, says everything that's needed. It also feels that this principle applies to the community service of its partners and employees.

Through the years and at any given time, Bartlet & Richardes people are, or have been, chairs of hospital boards, board members or chairs of educational institutions, leaders of appeal and review boards and volunteers assisting charitable organizations.

This is true for both lawyers and support staff. At the moment, in addition to more than a dozen lawyers, Bartlet & Richardes employs 18 secretaries, paralegals and articling students.

And the firm's message remains the same after 12 decades. In the words of Stephen Jovanovic, the firm's current managing partner, "Our goal is to perpetuate the integrity of the firm and its long standing tradition to serve the public. This historical legacy was instilled in me from the moment I started with the firm."

Bartlet & Richardes LLP: home to dedicated legal professionals, resource for corporations and individuals, nurturer of High Court Justices and involved member of the community, remains, after 120 years, an active and vital force, just as its founders and partners through the decades have wished, intended...and accomplished. WL