



85 YEARS

THE LAWRENCES®

Serving clients since 1924

LETTER

News and information for clients and friends of Lawrence, Lawrence, Stevenson LLP

FALL 2009

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MANAGING PARTNERS

Proud of Our Past, In Step with The Future

As managing partners of Lawrence, Lawrence, Stevenson LLP, we're delighted to bring you this heritage edition of The Lawrences Letter in celebration of our firm's 85th anniversary. Lawrences today is very different from the firm set up by our founding partners 85 years ago, but one thing hasn't changed, and that's our values.

When Harold Lawrence and Gordon Graydon opened their law office in Brampton in 1924, they had two simple guiding ideas: give excellent legal service and give back to the community. On that foundation, the firm has grown to be the largest law firm in Brampton, offering a range of legal services that Harold and Gordon might not recognize. But they'd be right at home with the firm's guiding principles: give excellent legal service and give back to the community. When they're not serving their clients, you'll find Lawrences' lawyers on boards of local charities, raising money for the hospital, washing windows to support local "green" initiatives, and much more.

We've all had fun looking back over our old records and remembering how things used to be, before the days of computers and voicemail. Bill Lawrence, son of one of our founders, shares some of those memories on page 2. Some of our longstanding staff remember their early days with the firm on page 7. In the article on page 6, we look back over our long tradition of giving back to the community. If any of you have memories of Lawrences in "the old days", we'd love to hear from you.

We also continue to focus on the future: how do we need to grow our firm? What are our clients' needs and how must we adapt to meet them? If you have



Today, the Lawrences team comprises 43 people. The seven partners, pictured here, are: Back row, left to right: Michael J. Prsa, Edwin G. Upenieks, William G. Sirdevan, Anthony E. Bak. Front row, left to right: Michael J. Luchenski, Heather M. Picken, Robert J. van Kessel.

suggestions for how we can help you today, we'd like to hear those too. Feel free to contact either of us with your thoughts.

Meanwhile, we wish all of our clients and friends peace and prosperity for the next 85 years!



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LAWRENCES IN BRAMPTON: From Flower Town to Multicultural Metropolis

Heather Picken

“Mentor: an experienced and trusted friend and advisor”

Webster’s Dictionary

When I think of Bill Lawrence, the word “mentor” immediately comes to mind. He has had a major impact on so many lawyers who have worked at Lawrence, Lawrence, Stevenson LLP over the years since he joined his father’s firm in 1957. Bill’s example of skill, integrity, practical common sense and client service is one from which I have certainly benefited during my 22 years of practice. It was a pleasure to talk with my mentor about Lawrences’ success over its 85-year history, and the changes Bill has seen in the practice of law and in the City of Brampton during his 53 years in practice.

Lawrences’ Origins

Bill’s father, Harold Lawrence, originally founded Lawrences with his partner, Gordon Graydon, in 1924. Brampton, with a population of 4,551, was the centre of a prosperous agricultural county and had become known as the “Flower Town of Canada” due to the success of the hothouse flower industry in the area. The largest of the almost 50 nurseries was the Dale Estate, located at the northern limits of the town occupying both sides of Main Street, with greenhouses stretching east to the Etobicoke Creek and west to the CPR rail line. Dales’ roses and orchids enjoyed international success and the company employed over 350 people in its Brampton operations. Local dairy farms were also renowned and our founders prospered as they travelled throughout Peel County to see their rural clients in their “branch offices” in Bolton, Palgrave, Malton, and Streetsville.

Gordon Graydon became the Member of Parliament for Peel in 1935. Harold Lawrence continued his sole practice in Brampton for the next couple of decades, through the Great Depression, World War II and the flooding of the Etobicoke Creek in 1948, which sank downtown Brampton under four feet of water. Harold served as Mayor of Brampton from 1949 to 1951, during which time the Town Council learned from the lesson of the flood and caused the diversion channel to be built around downtown Brampton. The channel, which officially opened in 1952, withstood Hurricane Hazel on October 15, 1954, and still stands today.



This was how Main Street looked in March 1948, during the worst flood in Brampton’s history. The Town Council, led by Lawrences’ founder Harold Lawrence who was the Mayor of Brampton at the time, learned from the lesson of the flood and caused the diversion channel to be built around downtown Brampton. The channel, which officially opened in 1952, withstood Hurricane Hazel on October 15, 1954, and still stands today.

Photo courtesy Jack Gougeon Collection

The Second Lawrence

Bill Lawrence was born and raised in Brampton. When he graduated from Osgoode Hall Law School in 1956, he did not immediately join his father’s practice as Harold had hoped he would. As the top student in his class, Bill was invited to clerk for Chief Justice James McRuer. This was a very prestigious position for the young lawyer, who was the first to be offered such a clerkship in Ontario. How could Bill refuse? However, after a year, Harold’s practice became so busy that Bill came to join him and two years later asked his friend and classmate Basil Stevenson to join them. Bill took over the management of the firm with Basil’s assistance and its growth as “Lawrences” began.

Bill recalls that in his childhood, Brampton was a small town for retired farmers, with business services available that were appropriate for that community. This rapidly changed as industry and immigration opened up new opportunities for Brampton. The aircraft industry that flourished during and after World War II brought many workers to Brampton,

to companies like Victory Aircraft, Hawker Siddeley, and A.V.Roe. Later, the construction of the Toronto International Airport fuelled this growth. Bill remembers small Brampton industries like Gummed Paper, Charters Publishing, Dixie Cup and of course the flower industry, led by the Dale Estate. He also recalls immigrants arriving from Europe after World War II and the opening of American Motors Corporation. The population began to climb; the city began to grow and subdivisions were needed to house that growth.

When Bill joined his father in practice, the population of Brampton was around 15,000 people. The firm was located at 7 Main Street South, where Scotiabank now stands at Main and Queen Streets. The premises were very small and Bill's office had no heat. Bill convinced his father that they had to find a larger office, so they bought a building and moved to the "country"—less than a block away! Lawrences still occupies those premises at 43 Queen Street West. The original building had been a tinsmith shop; over the years, the firm added space as it grew, so that today the building comprises 10,000 square feet over three storeys.

At that time, the firm's practice was primarily real estate and estates, with some smaller litigation matters. Bill says that most Brampton lawyers did not practice litigation, referring such work to Toronto law firms. Bill did some litigation, primarily personal injury and criminal work, but his clients' greatest need at that time was for real estate development work. Over his career, Bill worked with a number of developers as they developed numerous residential subdivisions within the City of Brampton, commercial and industrial developments, and retirement home communities throughout Ontario. As Bill's practice and his clients' needs grew, the firm's core practice areas of real estate and estates expanded to include corporate and commercial law and litigation.

The Biggest Changes

Bill thinks specialization has been the biggest change in the way lawyers serve their clients. When he started out, every lawyer was a generalist and "did it all". Nowadays, especially at Lawrences, lawyers develop niche areas of expertise, to ensure that our clients get precisely the legal services they need. Then of course, technology has changed everything. When Bill started his practice, Dictaphones were just becoming commonplace. Secretaries would transcribe dictated documents,

but they also took shorthand and used manual typewriters. Today, every lawyer has a computer and we use digital dictation. Clients have many more ways of communicating with their lawyers—by e-mail, phone, fax and letter—and their expectations for good, fast service have risen accordingly.

Where changes in Brampton are concerned, Bill points to the rapid growth in population—from 15,000 to 500,000 people—and in industry. Most notable for Bill is the growth in population diversity and multiculturalism, both of which have created tremendous opportunities in business in Brampton.

I asked Bill how he accounted for his success in running the firm. His answer was that with good financial controls, the firm kept growing and its skilled lawyers gave good service to clients. Primarily though, Bill credits hard work, listening to clients' needs and nurturing the solicitor/client relationship so that the client regards the lawyer as a "trusted advisor."

I asked Bill what advice he would give to someone starting out a legal career at Lawrences today. He responded: "Talk to someone younger than me!" To my mind, a young lawyer would do well to talk to Bill Lawrence and learn from his example. As he said to me when I started my career 22 years ago, "You've chosen a career you love, so you will never work a day in your life." I think he's right, but a good part of the reason for that is that I have spent my whole career here at Lawrences, following the examples of the great lawyers who have built our firm over the past 85 years, starting with Harold Lawrence and Gordon Graydon. Later, the advice of such wonderful lawyers as Farquhar MacDonald, Jim Gaskin, Dennis Cole, John Webber, Gerry Fitzhenry, Janet Simmons and Basil Stevenson (to name a few) have guided so many of us. But through it all, it has been Bill Lawrence who has been the guiding legal and professional light for the firm. His example will stand us all in good stead for the next 85 years. Thanks, Bill!



Heather Picken has spent her entire legal career at Lawrences, where she chairs the firm's Real Estate Group. She can be reached at (905) 452-6891 or hpicken@lawrences.com

REMEMBERING THE WAY WE WERE:

Where Did Brampton Get its Name?

Brampton, Ontario, was named by its first settler, John Elliott, who came to Ontario from Brampton in Cumberland, U.K. Elliott laid out lots and advertised them for sale in the Canadian Correspondent newspaper in 1834 as being “in the Village of Brampton”. The settlement was officially incorporated as a village on Jan 1, 1853. Brampton, with a population of over 500, held its first council meeting on January 17, where John Lynch was named the very first reeve. The village rapidly expanded with the arrival of the Grand Trunk Railway in 1856 and by 1867, Brampton had grown big enough to be selected as the seat of Peel County. Many public buildings were built, including the Courthouse and the Jail. By 1873, Brampton was incorporated as a town, with John Haggert as its first mayor. Lawrences’ founder, Harold R. Lawrence, was to hold that office from 1949 to 1951. Brampton finally became a city in 1974, when the Ontario government created the Regional Municipality of Peel from the former Peel County.



Photo courtesy Peel Heritage Centre

Lawrences’ offices at 43 Queen Street West are located close to the historical heart of Brampton: the “Four Corners” at Queen and Main Streets. Seen here as it was in 1925, the Four Corners was then already 100 years old, having come into existence in the 1820s. Today, the Four Corners is the business centre of Brampton.

What’s In a Name? The Origins of Lawrences

Law firms are usually known by the names of the partners. In long-standing firms like Lawrences, this usually means many name changes over the years.

Harold R. Lawrence and Gordon Graydon founded the firm in 1924 as ‘Graydon and Lawrence’. When Graydon was elected to the House of Commons, the partnership formed an association with Edward Cook and a Toronto office was opened. Fraser Raney also joined the Toronto office and the firm’s name became ‘Raney, Graydon, Lawrence and Cook’. Besides the Brampton office, Harold Lawrence maintained a permanent office in Bolton, keeping office hours there and in Palgrave once a week. Raney moved his practice to Dunnville and Cook acquired the Graydon portion of the practice on Graydon’s death in 1953, at which point the firm became ‘Graydon and Cook’ in Toronto and ‘H.R. Lawrence and Associates’ in Brampton.

In 1957, Bill Lawrence joined his father’s thriving law practice and was later joined by his classmate, Basil Stevenson. This was the point at which the firm became Lawrences, Lawrence, Stevenson as we know it today.



Photo courtesy Peel Heritage Centre

Bill Lawrence had his eye on a prime piece of Brampton real estate for the new offices of Lawrence, Lawrence, Stevenson. This is how the block containing the current Lawrences offices looked in 1950.

LAWRENCES AND BRAMPTON IN 1924

Bet the Farm

Lawrences was founded in 1924, when H.W. Dawson, a real estate agent, was mayor of Brampton. At that time, the biggest real estate business of all was the buying and selling of farms. In 1924, Jas. Martin of Brampton ran an ad in the Brampton Conservator for “some rare bargains in farms” at prices that would make a developer weep today. The asking price for a 100-acre farm listed as “5 miles from Brampton, brick house, good bank barn, best of land, lots of water” was the princely sum of \$9,500!

The Grass is Always Greener

Did you think that higher income taxes in Canada than in the U.S. were a new development? Think again. On June 12, 1924, The Brampton Conservator reported that on income of \$3,000 a year, a U.S. resident would pay \$7.50 in income tax, while a Canadian resident would pay \$40. And that was *before* universal health care coverage!

Sign Here

They call them the “good old days,” but life wasn’t easy in the 1920s. Women had the vote, but marital property rights were still governed by *The Dower Act*—which had its origins in Magna Carta, signed by King John in Runnymede, England, in 1215! A woman’s “right to dower” meant that she was entitled to a life interest in the value of one-third of her husband’s lands, to protect her in case her husband left no provision for her in his will. This created legal problems in Canada right up until 1978, when *The Family Law Reform Act* changed everything. For example, if a man wanted to sell his house, he had to swear an affidavit as to his marital status. If he was married, his wife had to sign the deed to the house, so that her right to dower would be cancelled and the property could pass unencumbered to the purchaser. If the wife’s name wasn’t on the deed, she retained her right to dower and lawyers often found themselves calculating the value of this right in order to complete the purchase and sale of a property.

No Drink, But Better Food

Then there was The Temperance Act, to prohibit the sale of alcohol. Passed into law in Ontario in 1916 as a war



Queen Street in 1915 was a much more sedate place than the bustling metropolis it is today.

measure, it remained in force until 1927, when the Liquor Control Board of Ontario was created. The Act gave municipalities the right to exercise local options on whether to sell alcohol in their communities, so some towns remained “dry” long after the Act was repealed. Smuggling was rife during the time that the Act was in force. To discourage it, penalties were severe: the Brampton Conservator notes on August 14, 1924, that a man was fined \$200 and jailed for six months for violating the Act and resisting arrest. His one consolation was that “having protested to the magistrate his abhorrence of the food at the Brampton Jail, he went to Guelph instead.”

Well, I’ll be *!xx!!

It paid to keep a civil tongue in your head in those days. The Brampton Conservator reported in 1924 that a man was fined \$10 and costs of \$12.50 for “using improper language to a constable on duty.” This was at a time when a local dry goods store was advertising in the same newspaper a sale on pure wool blankets and cotton felt mattresses at \$10.50 each.

Fowl Play

Besides Temperance Act violations, the other big crime in 1924 appeared to be—chicken theft. A witness in the trial of one hapless feather plucker told the magistrate that he had lost 100 chickens, nine ducks and five geese. The miscreant was found guilty on four charges of theft and received a sentence of two years in jail less a day.

Giving Back to the Community



Lawrences lawyers have always prided themselves on “doing what it takes”. For Earth Day 2009, this included washing windows! When the Brampton Downtown Development Corporation sponsored a window washing event using products from cosponsor RONA’s Eco line, Lawrences lawyers were quick on the squeegee—including Bill Lawrence, one of our founding partners, seen here (centre) hard at work.

As we celebrate our 85 years of service in Brampton, we remember ways in which the life of our firm is tied in with the life of our community. Lawrences grew as Brampton grew; we changed as Brampton changed. Giving back to the community was one of our founding values and it is still emphasized today. All new Lawrences lawyers and staff are encouraged to become involved in a community activity when they join us. We’re proud of the many ways in which Lawrences supports the community, from coaching sports teams, to chairing committees for churches and temples, to organizing political campaigns. Here are some of the community organizations that we’ve helped over the years:

- Brampton Board of Trade
- Brampton Caledon Community Living
- Brampton and Area Community Foundation
- Brampton Safe City Association
- Brampton Special Needs Hockey
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Canadian Congenital Heart Alliance
- Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce
- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Canadian Weightlifting
- Cheung’s Charity Golf
- CIBC Run for the Cure
- City of Brampton Rose Theatre
- Cure Foundation
- Daily Bread Food Bank
- Dora Foundation
- Downtown Brampton Business Improvement Association
- Economic Development Committee, City of Brampton
- Halton-Peel Grant Review Team, Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario
- Hospital for Sick Children
- Junior Achievement of Peel
- Juvenile Diabetes Donation
- Kiwanis Club
- Peel Children’s Aid Foundation
- Peel Memorial Hospital
- Peel Safety Village
- RBC Charity Trust
- Regeneration Outreach Community
- Ride to Conquer Cancer
- Rotary Club
- Sant Gyaneshwar Ashram
- Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
- Sikh Angel Foundation
- Sikhs Against Genocide
- St. Eugene Church
- The Salvation Army
- Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council
- Trillium Health Centre Foundation
- United Way of Peel
- William Osler Health Centre Foundation
- YMCA, Brampton
- Zonta Club of Brampton - Caledon

Life at Lawrences: Staff Perspectives

Any busy law firm relies heavily on its staff to keep the work organized and moving. Lawrences is fortunate to have several staff members who have been with the firm for over 25 years. We asked them to reflect on the changes they've seen over the years; here are some of their comments.

The practice of law was very different before documents were sent by e-mail and messages could be left on voice mail. Clients would come in to the office much more, to review documents and ask questions. Jean Hather, who works with Lawrences' Estates Group, notes that now, "Clients are able to access information easily and they come prepared with more detailed questions on how things will work." Jean comments that this is partially due to the fact that "clients' assets are much more complex now, so the estate planning is also more complex."

Debbie Sparrow, who works with Lawrences' Corporate & Commercial Group, remembers deals being much more paper-intensive that they are today: "They were typed up on typewriters, with carbon copies. What legal assistant starting out today would even know what carbon paper is?" In fact, Lawrences was one of the first law firms in Brampton to adopt new technology. Debbie remembers being the first assistant chosen to get a computer; the firm wanted her "to see whether it was really an effective tool"! Now, every employee at Lawrences has a computer and all the lawyers carry BlackBerries.

Shelly Evans, who at the time worked with Lawrences' Real Estate Group, remembers the days before real estate transactions were registered by computer: "The Friday before the July 1st long weekend, it seemed that every child of a Lawrences employee would be hired to go down to the Land Registry and stand in line to register documents," before the registry closed for the holiday weekend.

The staff has many memories of the firm's clients over the years. Judy Achong, who works with the Lawrences' Real Estate Group, comments: "Some clients have become more like friends, as their families have been with the firm for generations."

Asked what they have enjoyed most about working at Lawrences over the years, all four agree: it's the people. As Jean puts it "The work is interesting, but it's the people who really make the place special."

The firm has also had its share of light-hearted moments over the years. Jean remembers something that probably wasn't funny at the time but can be laughed about now: in the early days of sending

international faxes, the staff wondered why the police kept turning up. One of them, who shall remain nameless, kept dialling 9 for an outside line, then 11 for...oh, wait, that's 911!

What advice would these veterans of law firm life give to those starting out in their careers? Debbie and Shelley are adamant that you have to like the work and you need to have an excellent understanding of your clients' needs and goals. Jean notes that long-time staff will always answer questions, so "don't be afraid to ask". Judy is a big proponent of continuing education. She and many of the staff have undertaken continuing education initiatives over the years to upgrade their designations and enhance their understanding of the areas of law in which they work.

Many thanks to Debbie, Shelley, Jean and Judy—you and all of our staff are one of the keys to Lawrences' success!



THE LAWRENCES® LETTER

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In 2000, the Brampton Board of Trade produced a heritage edition of their newsletter *Trade Talks* and asked members to produce lighthearted 'period' ads. The lawyers at Lawrences had fun coming up with this ad for their services:

W.H.R. Lawrence, William C. Lawrence and Basil J. Stevenson

take great pleasure in announcing
the establishment of their law practice

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in the premises formerly occupied by
T. Mara & Son, Tinsmith and Plumbing



Sample of Fees for Legal Services*

Trespass to Property Involving Persons	\$2.00/day in court
Trespass to Property Involving Livestock	1 cow or 3 lb of butter
Injury to the Person from Horseless Carriages	\$2.00/day in court
Testamentary Documentation	\$2
Breach of Promise	The diamond ring
Acquisitions and Sales:	Boundary Disputes:
Farms	Win
Town Property	Lose
\$6.00	\$4.00
\$4.00	\$2.00

**Fees in effect during the reign of His Majesty King George V.*

We would be pleased to provide other legal services at your favour. Please attend at our offices at 43 Queen Street West, Brampton.