



THE CANADIAN
BAR ASSOCIATION
Saskatchewan Branch

2022 Distinguished Service Award

Presented: January 12, 2022

Introduction of Douglas Hodson, Q.C. by Shaunt Parthev, Q.C.

It is a great honor to introduce my friend and colleague, Douglas Hodson, Q.C. as a co-recipient of this year's Canadian Bar Association – Saskatchewan Branch Distinguished Service Award. Doug joins a very impressive list of recipients, from now-Senator Brent Cotter, who I know Doug worked with at the College of Law, to one of Doug's former mentors—retired justice Ronald Barclay, to of course D. K. MacPherson, and many others. It is a great honor, of course, to be recognized with such a group.

Doug is a senior partner at MLT Aikins, working out of the Saskatoon office. He is a member of our firm's Executive Committee and the head of the Saskatoon Litigation Group. Doug is also one of the early members of then MLT's Saskatoon office when he came up from Regina with a small group of lawyers after completing his articles down there back in 1984. In fact, we just celebrated (remotely, unfortunately) the 40th anniversary of our Saskatoon opening and Doug has been here and an integral part of this office from almost day one. Given his spending habits, he might still be here for some time to come, despite our "65 and you are out" policy. Many of you, however, would know Doug from his tireless community participation. His name is regularly in the paper for his involvement in numerous community events and charitable organizations. I am going to talk about some of those shortly. His office is a shrine to many of Doug's accomplishments in the community. In fact, I don't think that his mother has as many pictures of Doug at her house as Doug has of himself in his office.

As many of you know, Doug presents as a most distinguished and sophisticated figure, with never a hair out of place. Well, he still has hair at his age, which is a distinguishing feature for a litigator on its own. Doug might appear very worldly, given his Italian suits and the German cars he drives. But he is far from that. What most people don't know is that Doug's only job, other than being employed at MacPherson Leslie and Tyerman, was as a manager at the 8th Street McDonald's, where he is still a legend. In fact, he had that job through high school and then university and right through law school. He grew up in Saskatoon, went to school in Saskatoon, and completed his university in Saskatoon. He has not strayed too far from home, or office, ever. He has now completed this loop by living in the tower right next to our office. In fact, the only place he ever lived before marrying his wife, Kim Hodson, was with his mom at

their house on Louise Street. He is a city kid throughout. I can share a story that when the family did move out of the city to an acreage, Doug wanted to prove that he did possess some connection to the land and got on the brand new lawn tractor mower and spent the better part of a Saturday afternoon riding up and down the lawn. After he was done, he called in his wife, Kim, to check out his handy work. As he stood there proudly Kim pointed out that he hadn't engaged or lowered the mowing blade.

Many of you will know Doug as a fair but tenacious advocate. He loves word play and can arguably be a bit of cheap shot artist in court with a witty come back against counsel opposite. The irony here is that Doug absolutely hates conflict in his personal life. Doug winces when a waiter shows up at the table and asks how the meal was for fear that someone might say something uncomplimentary about the meal. He buys vehicles without asking the price because he doesn't want to appear unreasonable and haggle. In fact, the only time I heard Doug swear is when he bought his new car, and received his invoice by email on delivery only to find out how much the vehicle cost. Also, Kurt Wintermute tells a story of the time the firm had to part ways with a former assistant of Doug's. Doug called Kurt to make sure that the assistant was gone before he was prepared to step back in the office.

Doug practices in the area of commercial litigation, including transportation, constitutional and resource law. He regularly appears before Courts and tribunals in Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario, and he has appeared before the Federal Court and the Supreme Court of Canada. You have to have pretty thick skin to act for railways in Saskatchewan. Hence, Doug has developed quite the appellate practice as well. Some of the case highlights over the years include:

- From 2004-2007, Doug served as Commission Counsel to the Inquiry into the Wrongful Conviction of David Milgaard. The case had national prominence and involved a 192-day hearing, with evidence from 125 witnesses.
- If Lucille Ball was responsible for shifting the trend of evening shopping— from Monday night to Thursday night—Mr. Hodson is partly responsible for all of us being able to shop on Sundays. One of the first big cases that Doug worked on with Fred Kovach, later Justice Kovach, was the ban on Sunday shopping.
- Doug acted for Mosaic in the file that kept on giving—in the epic dispute with PCS that ran for many years and involved counsel from across the land.

- He was also involved in a major class action certification attempt in Alberta, *Jackson vs. CNR*, where not only were they successful, but ended up recovering nearly half a million dollars in costs—good to pay for a good month’s worth of Doug’s time.
- His relationship with CNR, of course, relates to the precedent-setting case on a lawyer’s duty of loyalty to his clients and scope of the conflicts of interest rules governing clients, which wound up at the Supreme Court.
- *Great Western Brewing Co. v Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission* relates to the constitutionality of the liquor mark ups targeting out-of-province brewers. In many ways I think that this is one of Doug’s most significant cases, because it was truly “bet the company litigation” where a different result would have been a death blow to a local company.
- These are, of course, high profile cases. But what people do not know about is the number of cases where Doug has quietly advocated for individuals who got an unfair shake, from a student who might have been treated unfairly during final assessment to many other instances of off-the-street calls where he felt that someone was unfairly treated.

Doug has tight connections to the University of Saskatchewan

Doug and his family are all graduates of or are currently attending the University of Saskatchewan. Doug received his Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) degree in 1981 and his LL.B. (with distinction) in 1984.

Kim is a graduate of the College of Education (1988). Andrew received his Bachelor of Commerce degree (with distinction) in 2016 and his Master of Professional Accounting in 2017 and is in-house at a major local IT company. Brooklyn just finished her fourth year of the Commerce program at the Edwards School of Business and has a job starting with one of the chartered banks, and Paige is in her third year of her science degree.

Doug received the University of Saskatchewan’s Alumni Association Humanitarian Award in 2001. He served as Vice-President of Sponsorship for the University Cup Canadian University Men’s Hockey Championships (2013-2014) and he served on the National Campaign Cabinet for fundraising for Merlis Belsher Place at the University of Saskatchewan.

Doug has extensive Board and Governance Experience

Doug has served as a director on many Boards in private industry, the public sector and charitable and community organizations, including:

- Saskatchewan Roughriders Football Club
 - Board of Directors (2018-present)
- Great Western Brewing Company
 - Board of Directors (2020-present)
- Remail Modern Foundation
 - Board Member (2018-2020)
- Saskatchewan Blue Cross
 - Board of Directors (2003-2015)
 - Board Chair (2010-2012)
- St. Paul's Hospital Board of Management
 - Board of Directors (2005-2012)
 - Board Chair (2008-2010)
- Heart & Stroke Foundation of Saskatchewan
 - Board of Directors (2000-2008)
 - President and Board Chair (2006-2007)
- Saskatoon District Planning Commission
 - Member (2000-2012)
 - Chair (2007-2012)
- Royal University Hospital Foundation
 - Board of Directors (1998-2004)
 - Board Chair (2001-2002)
- United Way of Saskatoon
 - Campaign Chair (1994)
 - Board of Directors (1995-2003)
 - President and Board Chair (2001-2002)
- The Saskatoon Club
 - Board of Directors (1997-2004)
 - President and Board Chair (2002-2003)
- Riverside Country Club
 - Board of Directors (1992-1997)
 - President and Board Chair (1996)

Community Involvement

Doug has served in a volunteer leadership role for many charitable and community events, including:

- Remai Art Gallery of Saskatchewan
 - Chair, \$20 Million Capital Campaign (2010-2015)
- Children's Hospital of Saskatchewan
 - Chair, Graham and Ruby DeLaet Foundation Fundraiser (2014)
- Children's Hospital of Saskatchewan
 - Chair - Mike Weir Miracle Golf Drive for Kids (2008) raised over \$1.5 million
- RUH Royal Care Campaign co-chair (2002-2006) – raised over \$15 million
- World University Games 2007 Bid committee
 - Vice-President
- Nokia Brier (2004)
 - Vice-President Sponsorship
- Labatt Brier (2000)
 - President and Chair of Organizing committee

Awards and Recognition

- Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal (2015)
- Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012)
- Cornerstone of the Community Award from the Saskatoon Community Foundation (2012)
- One of the University of Saskatchewan College of Law's "100 Distinguished Graduates" at Centennial Celebrations (October 2012)
- Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers (Since 2007)
- Appointed Queen's Counsel (2007)
- Saskatoon Centennial "100 People, 100 Reasons" Award (2006)
- Saskatchewan Centennial Medal (2005)
- Rotary Clubs of Saskatoon Golden Wheel Award for Excellence in Community Service (2005)
- Canadian Bar Association Community Service Award (Saskatchewan, 2002)
- University of Saskatchewan Alumni Association Humanitarian Award (2001)
- B'nai B'rith "Proud of You" Award (2000)

It is amazing that, despite all of the community activities, he still finds time to practice law. Our Firm's compensation guidelines recognize community involvement, but it is clear that Doug does all that he does for the community because of his core belief to give back in effort, time, and his own cheque book. Make no mistake that all these efforts are no substitute for performance at this office where Doug excels and has performed at an extraordinary level his entire career. On the work front, his first priority is putting the client's interest first. He is legendary around the office for being completely absorbed in any file he takes on and barking out orders to the team of associates he involves in the file, usually as he is leaving the office and has his back turned. We usually know how stressed he is by how tall his hair stands at the end of the day.

I am proud to call Doug a friend and a colleague. I can say unequivocally that Saskatoon is a better place to live because of Doug's efforts. The same can be said for the legal profession in the province and the national prominence that Doug's efforts have given our Bar as a whole. Please join me in congratulating Doug for this great accomplishment.