

Trish Fedewich



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Education + Strong Support = Success

Notary Trish Fedewich, B Comm, has been practising in Cloverdale since 1993, in the same block where her father El Fedewich opened his first Notary office in 1978. Now retired, El is writing his memoirs (see page 76) and helps out at the office now and then. He still enjoys working with the people of the community that have made him a success.

Trish’s partner in the family-owned Notary business is her husband Norm Witt. The couple and their two children enjoy sports together, especially skiing, SCUBA diving, snorkelling, and kayaking.

In addition to her work in education for The Society of Notaries Public of BC, Trish volunteers as a speaker on legal topics for seniors’ centres, legions, financial institutions and investment companies, the CGA Association, MS Society, and the People’s Law School.



Norm Witt, Trish Fedewich, and El Fedewich

We had a pretty carefree childhood and spent a lot of time outside. In the Summertime, we were usually gone all day.

BC Notary Trish Fedewich In Conversation with Val Wilson

THE SCRIVENER: Trish, please tell us about your childhood.

TRISH: I’m the youngest of three girls. We grew up on a 5-acre hobby farm in the Newton area of Surrey with a lot of trees and horses, cows, chickens, cats, and dogs. Five of us lived in a house with only two bedrooms and one bathroom.

We had a pretty carefree childhood and spent a lot of time outside. In the Summertime, we were usually gone all day. In those days, parents didn’t worry about kids riding their bikes way down the road to their friends’ houses.

My sisters and I did a lot of Girl Guide activities because my mom Noreen was a leader for 8 years. I was a Guide leader for 5 years; my one sister is a Guide leader and my other sister is a Cub leader. My husband was a Cub leader and my brother-in-law is currently a Cub leader.

When I was 12, my family sold the property and we moved out to White Rock. It was quite a big change, going to a subdivision.



From left: Nancy, Cathy, Trish (formerly called Patsy) on top of our pony Smoky

THE SCRIVENER: Why the move?

TRISH: All our neighbours had subdivided; we were one of the last families to sell. Soon about 23 homes were built on our property. It was sad to leave. Our old house is still there.

THE SCRIVENER: Was your dad already a Notary when you moved?

TRISH: He became a Notary after the sale of that property. It gave my dad the money to buy a small office, two doors away from where we are now. It gave him the cushion of money to start on his own, hire some staff, and set up a business without having any clientele yet. It was a big turning point for our family in a lot of ways.

I remember my parents took us to Vancouver to Trader Vic's at The Bayshore to celebrate the sale of the property. We all got dressed up. That was the first really fancy meal I remember having in a restaurant.

THE SCRIVENER: What did your dad do before he became a BC Notary?

TRISH: He was a manager in the finance industry; he managed offices throughout Western Canada.

THE SCRIVENER: Why did you decide to become a Notary student?

When someone is so passionate about a job, you are drawn to it. Dad never said, "Why don't you become a Notary?" It just happened as a natural transition.

TRISH: When I was working for the bank, I was helping manage small branches in Vancouver—mostly training branches. A lot of staff members were 18 to 20 years old.

I believe the technical aspects of jobs can be mastered easier than managing the people, especially young people. Sometimes we would get a directive from Ontario to do something that wasn't a good fit for a little branch on the West Coast but we had to go with it. It was frustrating; sometimes the head office did not understand what we were dealing with out here.

I sought my dad's advice on the challenges I was having. I kept hearing, "That wouldn't happen in my office. That just wouldn't happen."

But I didn't have the power to change things.

My dad had always loved his career and his colleagues Earl Stewart and Dave Rowan and many of his good friends all loved being Notaries.



Earl Stewart

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Dave Rowan

THE SCRIVENER: Let's talk about the education of BC Notaries.

TRISH: When I think in terms of the development of Notaries, our CEO Wayne Braid has played such a huge role—so significant from Day One [in 2000]. He is such a forward thinker and a great leader. We're lucky to have him. His contribution is massive. For my part, I've tried to fill in where The Society has asked me to help.



Wayne Braid

When I first started to teach 16 years ago, I involved Notaries who had a lot more experience and credibility than I did.



Roy Cammack

I asked Roy Cammack and Dave Rowan if they would co-present with me. Both graciously said they would. They have been incredible mentors for me for many decades.

I had taken Toastmasters for 5 years, been on their executive, and won the Rookie of The Year Award. I was comfortable with public speaking and that helped me significantly.

To start my planning, I work to understand what the Notary is trying to get out of the education session—what would be most helpful?—then I structure my presentation to that goal. My teaching style is open and informal. People respond to that.



El and Noreen Fedewich at the BC Notaries' 2013 Fall Conference

THE SCRIVENER: Where do you make the presentations?

TRISH: I've made presentations at the BC Notaries' annual Fall and Spring Conferences and have been teaching the new Notary students for 15 years. I teach the course on how to buy and



Laurie Salvador

sell a business. When the executor course was being developed, Notary Laurie Salvador asked if I would co-present with her and Notary Lorne Mann, which I did.



Lorne Mann

Just this year, because she is teaching a huge number of education courses, Laurie asked if I would take on more of the courses she's teaching. I have very large shoes to fill, with Laurie's

expertise and her knowledge. She has put all the groundwork in place.

THE SCRIVENER: Do you mentor Notary students in your office?

TRISH: Yes. We've had quite a few students going back many years. I haven't mentored Notaries in the last 3 years because I had a car accident but I will get back to it.

Students often phone me with questions. That's the other part I play in the Notaries' education. For certain questions, our PAL Line [help line] will refer people to me for assistance. Lots of people mentored me and provided me with support when I was new. It's so nice to be able to give back that way. My office also mentors legal assistants during their practicums. My staff find it very rewarding.



THE SCRIVENER: What do you think of the Master of Arts in Applied Legal Studies (MA ALS) program at Simon Fraser University?

TRISH: That training has elevated the status of our Society. It gives the students the confidence that they can do the research and the high-level work. They tell me they wish they had more time in the mentoring program.

Lots of people mentored me and provided me with support when I was new. It's so nice to be able to give back that way.

I can appreciate that. I spent a full year of observing in my dad's office. His practice was diverse and covered many areas of Notarial practice—conveyancing, mortgages, Wills, Powers of Attorney, business purchases and sales, and subdivision work.

Practical training is a different type of learning than textbook learning. When I was working for my dad



Michael, Norm, and Rachel in Alaska kayaking

that first year, we would see clients together. I was mostly quiet during the meetings. When we returned to our offices, I might say, "Well, Dad. I didn't think that was the best thing to do . . . because of this or that" or "I thought that wasn't correct . . . because of this or that." Then I'd show him something from my textbooks.

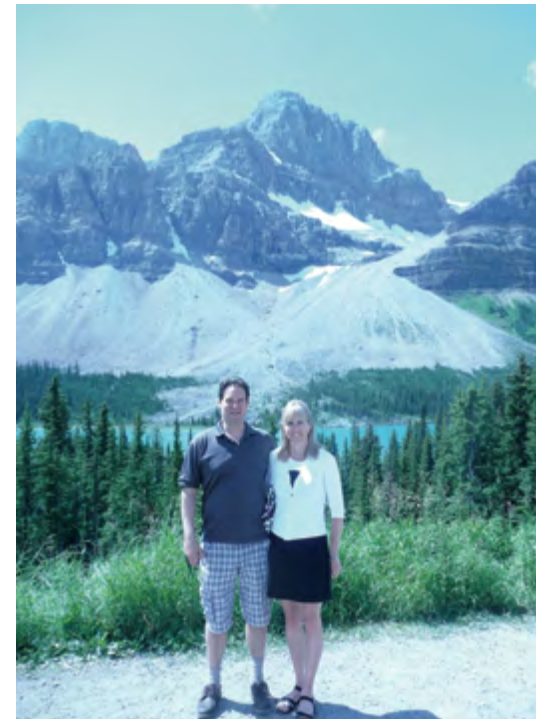
Within the hour, he would have gone through some precedents to show me an example of why he had to do what he did. Sometimes we went back and forth on points 3 or 4 times. A couple of times he said to me, "You know, I've had many articling students over the years and usually if I gave them an answer, they accepted it."

LAUGHTER

Well, of course his daughter didn't simply accept his answer. I would push him. Those were invaluable learning opportunities for me.

THE SCRIVENER: Your husband Norm Witt is a Notary, too. What work did Norm do before he chose that career?

TRISH: Norm has an MBA and worked in managing real estate. He had worked in property management, had managed commercial and residential properties, and was very well versed in a lot of aspects of real estate.



Icefields Parkway, between Banff and Jasper, Alberta. Summer 2013

And he knew how much my dad and I loved being Notaries. Although Norm enjoyed the work he was doing, there were a lot of night meetings and he did want to be self-employed.

One evening after our kids had gone to bed, we were sitting together downstairs doing our own work, each with a pile of files in our lap. Norm said, “Trish, what do you think if I became a Notary?” I didn’t even put my head up. I said “Great” and kept on working.

LAUGHTER

We’d thrown the idea around before but we were both just so busy. I was going through a challenging time with two little children and a business that was growing like mad. I worked really long days.

Roving Notary Dave Rowan helped me get through that difficult period. He made such a difference to our lives; he worked every Monday for me so I could go to the preschool and do things with my kids. Just having that extra day to recharge my batteries was really, really important to me.

THE SCRIVENER: How would you sum up the strengths of The Society’s education program?

The Board listens to the members about what they want to learn and The Society hires people who can deliver on those topics.

TRISH: Our Society has great education. I served on the Board for a number of years. The Board listens to the members about what they want to learn and The Society hires people who can deliver on those topics.

We’re fortunate to have so much support within our Society. About 3 weeks ago on a file, I had an issue come up that I’d never experienced in 20 years. I phoned Ron Usher, our in-house counsel—he’s so quick. He confirmed that I was handling the file correctly.



Ron Usher

That kind of professional support gives us so much confidence going forward with our clients. Some things are situation-specific. Help from our peers can save hours of research. As a small Society, we support one another. That is key to our individual and our collective success. ▲



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I Love Reading!

Rachel Witt

Last year, I read 572 books.

The Goodreads website helps find new books and tracks books I have already read. The site shows synopses of books and the reviews others have written.

Based on my own reviews, the site recommends titles I might like. I have received many books through Goodreads giveaways and a few authors have sent me books to review because they like the reviews I have written.

Fiction is my favourite genre, especially fantasy authors John Green, Rick Riordan, J. K. Rowling, and J. R. R. Tolkien.

I use the library a lot and order many titles through my small local library. It has a book club to which I’ve belonged for 4 years.

www.goodreads.com



Rachel Witt will be starting Grade 10 in the Fall.



Costa Rica, Spring 2013