

ON THE FRONT COVER



JENNIFER BRUN

By Lyle Harris, Q.C.

On September 1, 2020, Jennifer J.L. Brun ascended to the office of president of the CBABC.

It seems a very short time ago when my wife and I first went over to the Brun household in North Vancouver to introduce ourselves and our children to the Brun family. We were greeted at the door by a curious two-year-old girl, who looked at the new guests with some suspicion. Thirty-five years later, that two-year-old is now the *de facto* chief operating officer of Harris & Brun Law Corporation.

By a serendipitous convergence, the three Brun children are the same ages as the three Harris children. The six children and their parents spent many golden times in the summers enjoying CBA conferences across the country and internationally. As Justice Bill Veenstra, a former colleague of Jennifer's at CBABC, has remarked, "Jennifer's introduction to the Canadian Bar Association came as a child and teenager, as she and her brothers attended CBA conferences with their parents, often participating in the associated family programs as well as observing some of the plenary sessions."

Jennifer's only sidestep came after completing a bachelor of science degree from UBC, when she considered—albeit only briefly—going to medical school (having completed the MCAT and the LSAT in her fourth year). Fortunately, the medical profession's loss is the legal profession's gain. She graduated from the University of Calgary Faculty of Law, clerked at the B.C. Supreme Court and articulated and became an associate at the well-known Vancouver firm of Guild Yule LLP from 2007 to 2016. Her father, Robert,

then in his role as a bencher, proudly handed Jennifer her credentials at the call ceremony. While working full-time at Guild Yule, she completed her master's degree at Osgoode Hall from 2013 to 2015. Most importantly, while at Guild Yule LLP, she came under the mentorship of Paul Walker, now Justice Walker of the B.C. Supreme Court, who picks up the narrative as follows:

Jennifer Brun first arrived on the legal scene in Vancouver in 2007 with summer articles at Guild Yule. Her legal savvy and work ethic quickly caught the attention of the partners, resulting in Jennifer's being flooded with high-quality work. Those same attributes secured her a much-coveted clerkship with the Supreme Court of British Columbia, where her passion and drive helped her judges meet the expectations of former Chief Justice MacEachern to "do the right thing" in each case.

No one needs to ask Jennifer who her role model is: it is her father, Robert C. Brun, Q.C. Jennifer is fiercely proud of her father's reputation as one of B.C.'s most highly regarded advocates and his contributions to the CBA and to the profession more broadly. Like her father, Jennifer determined that an appropriate path to serve the profession was through the CBA. As Justice Veenstra writes:

As she moved into the practice of law, Jennifer very quickly became immersed in CBA leadership roles, initially through the Young Lawyers sections. She was elected as vice chair of the national Young Lawyers section in 2011 and assumed the position of chair for the 2012/2013 year. That position came with a seat on the national CBA board of directors. Uniquely, Jennifer shared her time on the board with her father, who was then president of the CBA. As national chair, she represented young Canadian lawyers in two international meetings of young lawyers chairs from around the world, learning that issues facing young lawyers are often very similar.

More recently, Jennifer has turned her focus to the B.C. branch of the CBA, having been elected to Provincial Council and to the CBABC Executive Committee in 2017. Her time in leadership roles with the CBABC has coincided with the NDP government's time in power and its various efforts to effect major structural change to the compensation of those injured in motor vehicle accidents in the province. Jennifer has leveraged her knowledge of the current tort system and the needs of accident victims, gained through her legal practice, and has been a key contributor to the CBABC's advocacy with the government, highlighting the important interests of victims and alternatives that the government should be considering in preference to the abolition of a tort-based compensation system. More recently, during her year as first vice president and chair of the Policy and Advocacy Committee, Jennifer has overseen the CBABC's advocacy efforts on a number of important fronts.

Jennifer joined Harris & Brun in 2016. Upon its reorganization as a law corporation in 2019, she became one of its directors. In her second week at

Harris & Brun, Jennifer successfully conducted a liability-only trial (*Ceperkovic v. MacDonald*, 2016 BCSC 939). A few months later, Jennifer and Robert conducted their first trial together (*Gaebel v. Lipka*, 2016 BCSC 2391), which later afforded them an opportunity to appear together in the Court of Appeal (2017 BCCA 432). More recently, they had the opportunity to conduct a jury trial together. I can only imagine the joy that they each must have felt, father and daughter, lawyer and lawyer, tag-teaming their examination skills on opposing witnesses and working together on final arguments.

In 2016, I asked Jennifer if she would take on the task of co-authoring the annual revisions to *Discovery Practice in British Columbia*, which CLEBC initially published in 1999 and is revised annually to account for new cases and evolving practices. The first of our joint annual revisions occurred in 2017. Not a lot is left of the initial version of the book as it read in 1999, and it is now truly a joint effort: another Harris & Brun, so to speak.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic struck British Columbia, and all businesses except those that provide “essential services” were locked down. Jennifer organized us in such a way that the entire operation of the firm transitioned to a remote model over a single weekend! Since that point, Jennifer has been guiding the firm of 17 lawyers, paralegals and support staff through the pandemic and has effectively become the chief operating officer of the firm.

Jennifer married Daniel Moore in 2011. Justice Walker presided over the marriage. On Jennifer's marriage and family life, Justice Walker writes:

Jennifer's fierce dedication to her clients and their success is surpassed only by her dedication to her family—in particular, to her husband, Daniel, and her son, Oliver. Jennifer works full-time in Vancouver, and Daniel works full-time in Whistler. It's not a problem. They make it work. Some say it's due to Jennifer's keen organizational skills. Others say that having married Daniel, whose support for Jennifer's decision to pursue her law practice on her own terms is unwavering, Jennifer is unquestionably lucky in love. From my point of view, having been fortunate enough to officiate over their wedding ceremony and to witness Jennifer's diplomacy and organizational skills and Daniel's compassion and fortitude in action, I would say that they are both extremely fortunate to have found each other.

To some, Jennifer's management of a busy family life and her burgeoning practice, plus ongoing contributions to legal education through writing and speaking, is confounding because it seems so effortless. To those who know Jennifer, her work ethic and her love of the law, it is no surprise. She carefully considers the pros and cons of every decision she makes—such as where her family should live, what home to buy and how best to manage and promote her firm—before acting.

Oliver was born to Jennifer and Daniel in 2018. Before COVID-19 struck, it was not uncommon for me to look out my office door and see a crawling baby, staring curiously at me, with some suspicion (as his mother stared at me so many years ago), with father Daniel standing in the background. During those periods of time, I looked at Jennifer's high billable hours and wondered if she was working herself into exhaustion. "Not so," said Robert, "this is what she does." As Justice Veenstra writes, the Brun family's relationship with the CBA has come full circle yet again: "Oliver regularly attends CBA meetings and events. In his younger years, Oliver was known to make the occasional appearance at mediations as well. Both Oliver and his mother have shown an amazing ability to take these appearances in stride. Jennifer carefully balances her commitments to the CBA with her commitments to her work and her family."

Justice Walker describes Jennifer as "insanely smart, fiercely tenacious, highly ethical, uber-organized, ferociously hardworking and unwavering in her devotion to her family and clients." Of her public policy and courtroom advocacy abilities, Justice Veenstra writes:

Jennifer has demonstrated both her great intelligence and a depth of understanding of a broad range of issues confronting the justice system and the legal profession. She is thoughtful and acts with purpose. She has a great skill at taking complex concepts and breaking them down in an understandable and compelling manner. She deserves significant credit for the tone and high professional quality of many of the CBABC's recent written submissions to government and public information pieces, cogently making a convincing case as to the public interest in maintaining a tort-based system that compensates victims for their actual losses.

When it comes to the business of the CBABC, Jennifer is a calm and stabilizing influence on difficult issues. She is always very well prepared and thorough, and she is respected by her colleagues for her wisdom. She is a polished speaker, whose every word is carefully chosen. She is as formidable an advocate in the public policy forum as she is in the courtroom.

Those who deal with Jennifer in her legal practice see many of the same characteristics. Opposing counsel describe her as formidable but fair, competent, insightful and extremely professional. She is a lawyer who does not oversell a position, knows every file inside and out, and is able to shift gears quickly to best represent the interest of her clients. She has an innate understanding of when to make arguments and when to be conciliatory, and is at all times collegial.

I would humbly join with Justice Walker and Justice Veenstra in a unanimous opinion: the CBABC is fortunate to have Jennifer Brun as its president.