
IN MEMORIAM JOHN HODGSON

David Stevens

IT WAS WITH SADNESS THAT JOHN'S COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS LEARNED OF HIS passing on Monday, January 24, 2011. John and I were fellow members of the Ontario bar, and I thought it would be fitting to say a few words about John's contribution to our profession. John practised law for nearly 65 years as a student, associate lawyer, partner, and then partner emeritus at Blake Cassels and Graydon, LLP. In his curriculum vitae, John described his area of practice as follows:

A practice focused on clients as individuals – taxes and inheritances, planning and wills and management and administration.

It is noteworthy that immediately following this description of his practice area, John went on to write the following:

This [practice area] led to a significant involvement in the development of studies and skills for lawyers in the field.

It also led him extending his involvement beyond the charitable work for clients into extensive personal participation in development and training seminars.

John's idea of life in the law, thus, was equal parts law as a liberal art, loyalty to his clients as persons that that concept of legal practice entails, care for the development and mentoring of his colleagues in the profession, and the pursuit of worthwhile charitable projects in the wider community. John was more than a trusted advisor, then. He was also an active citizen of our profession and in his community. John took responsibility for and devoted time, energy, and influence to advance lasting improvements. Not one of his colleagues, of course, needs reminding that John's contributions were many and lasting – most continue to be participants in several institutions which John founded or was active in founding.

To cite a few of John's contributions in regard to the legal profession:

- John was the first Chair of the Trust and Estate Section of the Ontario Branch of the Canadian Bar Association, holding the position from 1964 to 1966.
- He was the first Chair on the establishment of an education committee of the Ontario Bar Association, holding the position from 1968–1969.

DAVID STEVENS practises tax law and charity law with Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP in their Toronto office. Prior to joining the firm, he taught at the Faculty of Law, McGill University. He is on the Editorial Board of *The Philanthropist* and is an active member of the OBA and CBA Charity and Not-for-Profit Section executives. Email: David.Stevens@gowlings.com

-
- He served as president of the Ontario Bar Association in 1971.
 - He planned, organized, and administered continuing education programs used across Canada in taxation and other areas for the National Education Committee of the Canadian Bar Association from 1972 to 1976.
 - John was instrumental in establishing and administering a three-day annual institute on continuing legal education starting in 1976 for the Ontario Bar Association.
 - John was instrumental in establishing a national committee on charities in the Canadian Bar Association.
 - And of course, John was one of the founders in 1972 of this journal. John was a big supporter of *The Philanthropist* until the day he died and several weeks prior to his death *The Philanthropist* celebrated his contribution to the Canadian charity sector. The speeches that day in John's honour were enthusiastic and touching for all who attended. John was visibly thrilled.

In regard to the broader community:

- John was a director of the Laidlaw Foundation from 1962 to 1984.
- John was the co-founder and first president from 1981 to 1986 of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (now Imagine Canada).
- John served as the secretary of the Agora Foundation and a Trustee of the Quetico Foundation.
- John was instrumental in developing the leading Canadian library and resource centre at Imagine Canada, named in his honour: The John Hodgson Library.

On a personal note, as many of you know, I directed a project with the Ontario Law Reform Commission in the late 1980s dealing with the law of charities. As a youngish academic at the time, I have to say that I did not know the first thing about the law of charities when I started. However, I think that at that time in Canada I had plenty of good company in the legal profession. It was in the context of that project that I first met John and received his sound advice on what was involved. I quickly learned that the project itself would not have been possible had there not been at that time multiple issues of *The Philanthropist* to cull and an excellent resource library at the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy. Outside of those two institutions, both of which John was instrumental in establishing, there was very little writing on charity law and the charity sector in Canada from which we could begin our work.

As we all know, writing begins with the writing of others. Similarly, institutions grow and develop and beget other institutions. John's vision and energy in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s reverberate through our profession and community today. It is therefore fitting that

we set down in writing our tribute to John – to remember him and to do our small part in ensuring that his legacy lives on in our communities and our country.

The Philanthropist
2011 / VOLUME 24 • 2