

Curriculum Vitae

Joyce Dassonville

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Profile: Family, Disability & Special Needs Consultant, combining the skills of a Family Mediator, Health & Disability Advocate and Special Needs Coach.

Background includes 17 years' in Family Law Litigation, Collaborative Family Law, and Family Mediation, as well as Health & Disability Law, including Workers Compensation, Canada Pension Plan, Private Disability Insurance Claims, Motor Vehicle and ICBC Claims/Civil Litigation. 4 years as a Registered Nurse as well as a parent/advocate with 15 years experience with Special Needs Family Members.

- Called to the British Columbia Bar on March 19, 1986, and to the Nova Scotia Bar on April 9, 1999;
- Quasi-Judicial adjudication and final decisions of Workers Compensation Appeal Tribunal, including both worker and employer administrative appeals;
- Court of Appeal and Supreme Court Trial and Chambers proceedings;
- Representation of clients at Administrative Law Tribunals; including Workers Compensation Appeals, Canada Pension Plan Appeals, School Board and Community In-Home Program Appeals, Social Services Hearings and Professional Discipline Hearings;
- Representation of client health related civil litigation matters as well as family and divorce proceedings, including litigation, mediation and collaborative Family Law approaches;
- Nursing experience included operating room, recovery room, labour & delivery, private duty nursing, special care nursery as well as general medical surgical nursing;
- Special Needs Experience with families includes Autism, Aspersers Syndrome, Mental Disorders, Cancer, Neurological Disorders, and Senile Dementia, including Alzheimer's.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

Family, Disability & Special Needs Consultant

September 2005-Present

Family Dynamics
Surrey, British Columbia

- Family Mediator, Health & Disability Advocate and Special Needs Coach.
- Family Mediation, including divorce, separation, custody & parenting agreements, child & spousal support, division of family assets. Disputed estates and family disputes between adult family members and the elderly, including hospital discharge planning.
- Health & Disability Advocacy, including children, adults and seniors with special needs, Workers Compensation claims, Canada Pension Plan claims, as well as challenges with Schools & School Boards and with health care providers.
- Special Needs Consultant, including achieving effective Individual Education Plans in the school system, accomplishing effective and sustainable health care treatment plans and effective communication of special needs to service providers. Goal setting and planning, adjusting, coping and management of special needs.

Barrister & Solicitor

2003-2004

Dassonville Law
Surrey, British Columbia

- Private Practice restricted to Administrative Law (Workers Compensation) and Civil Litigation including Health & Disability issues, Family Law, and Family Law Mediation.
- Advocate for children with special needs, and in particular, extensive pro-bono advocacy on behalf of children with autism, including legal, health and education issues.

Barrister & Solicitor

2000-2002

Dassonville Law
Halifax/Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

- Private Practice restricted to Family Law, Administrative Law and Civil Litigation including Health & Disability Law, Collaborative Family Law and Family Law Mediation.
- Advocate for children with special needs, including ongoing civil litigation file with significant challenges under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Appeal Commissioner

1997-2002

Nova Scotia Workers Compensation Appeals Tribunal
Department of Justice, Province of Nova Scotia

- Managed a team of Appeal Commissioners responsible for deciding backlog workers compensation appeals through significant organizational change, and assisted in the reduction of the backlog by 50 percent within eight months.
- Conducted performance management reviews for team members of Appeal Commissioners.
- Conducted oral hearings and paper reviews and issued final decisions as a senior administrative tribunal quasi-judicial adjudicator. Analyzed written evidence, oral testimony and legal argument.
- Advanced a distinct approach to the legislated standard of proof under the Workers' Compensation Act of Nova Scotia. *My decisions were upheld on two occasions and were accepted and expanded upon by the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal.*

Administrative Tribunal Representative / Family Law Mediator

1996-1997

Dassonville Mediation Services,
Ottawa, Ontario

- Represented workers in appeals before the Ontario Workers' Compensation system.
- Mediated and negotiated practical solutions to family disputes.
- Promoted the advancement of mediation skills training and public access to mediation.
- Researched, co-drafted, and presented a mediation paper to the Ontario Attorney General on behalf of the Ontario Association for Family Mediation, Ottawa Chapter.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (CONT.)

Barrister & Solicitor

1986-1992

Dassonville & Company,
Vancouver British Columbia

- Conducted all aspects of a civil litigation practice, including client representation at Provincial, Supreme and Appellate Courts.
- Conducted trials and chambers applications, discoveries and settlement conferences.
- Prepared all court documents including petitions, statements of claim and defence, affidavits, notices to admit, agreed statements of facts, legal arguments, final agreements, bills of costs and factums.
- Managed the conduct of a high-profile controversial family law case involving freedom of speech and religious freedoms, challenging the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* at Trial and Appellate Courts.
- Managed Family Law and Personal Injury claims, (ICBC), including trial when settlement not reached.
- Established and administered all aspects of a private law practice in both sole proprietorship and space sharing arrangement, building firm on client and lawyer referrals.
- Managed human and material resources, identifying staffing and budgeting requirements for private 3-lawyer firm.
- Prepared and modified firm's policy and procedures.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS:

Baccalaureate of Common Law

1984

Dalhousie University

Arts Program

1979-1982

University of Toronto

Nursing Diploma

1977

Victoria General Hospital

SELECTED ADDITIONAL EDUCATION:

- Leadership Development for Middle Managers (105 hrs), Government of Nova Scotia
- Administrative Tribunal Training for Quasi-Judicial Decision Makers (14 hours), Government of Nova Scotia
- Effective Judicial Writing (14 hours), Government of Nova Scotia
- Conflict Resolution Program (245 hours), Justice Institute of British Columbia
- Alternative Dispute Resolution Training (60 hours), Collaborative Family Law, Negotiation & Mediation Association of Collaborative Family Lawyers of Nova Scotia
- Family Law Mediation, (40 hours), Continuing Legal Education of British Columbia
- Advanced Legal Internet Research (4 hours), Continuing Legal Education of British Columbia
- Numerous Civil Litigation, Family Law and Administrative Law CLE courses from 1986-2003, with many seminars pertaining to health issues as they arise in a legal context.
- Numerous Seminars on Autism and Special Needs Children.