



Report 2002 National Family Law Program

Grand Okanagan Hotel & Conference Centre, Kelowna, BC
July 15 – 18, 2002

By Heather Walker, Coordinator

The 2002 National Family Law Program was held in Kelowna, British Columbia from July 15 – 18, 2002 at the Grand Okanagan Hotel & Conference Centre.

Planning Committee members included Madam Justice Colleen Kenny (Court of Queen's Bench, Alberta), Mr. Justice James Williams (Supreme Court of Nova Scotia) Trudi Brown, Q.C. (Victoria, British Columbia) and Lonny Balbi, (Calgary, Alberta).

An invitation to submit proposals for papers and presentations (Call for Papers) was circulated extensively to lawyers and judges in all the provinces and territories. Approximately 70 submissions were received and reviewed by the planning committee. The committee selected a number of these proposals and then added topics to the program that they felt should also be covered with respect to recent developments in practice of family law.

There were a total of 33 sessions and 38 faculty members (this includes panel members). The format included a keynote address by Madame Justice L'Heureux-Dube, plenary sessions, a number of workshop selections, panel discussions and demonstrations. All of the sessions were well attended. Some of the most popular topics were collaborative law, custody law reform, tax principles, spousal support and social science research. A luncheon was also organized after the collaborative law session for those registrants interested in meeting with faculty to continue the discussion on collaborative law.

In addition to the program a number of social events were organized which included a reception, golf clinics, golf games, dinner at the Eldorado Hotel and Marina and a dinner, wine tasting and tour at Summerhill Estate Winery. All of these events were well attended by registrants and their families. Over three hundred people attended the dinners organized on both evenings.

There were 378 registrations this year. The evaluation forms and feedback from the registrants and faculty is extremely positive this year. The quality of speakers, topics covered, quality of the material and venue were given very high ratings.

The program is expected to show a profit this year. Final Invoices for all the program expenses should be submitted shortly.

Trudi Brown, Q.C. is planning to meet with representatives of the bar in Whitehorse later this month to discuss the possibility of scheduling a family law program in the Yukon.

The planning for the 2004 program is already underway. The Call for Papers was distributed to registrants at the 2002 program. The program will be advertised in provincial mailings and advertised in legal publications this fall. The dates have not been at this time. Charlottetown, Halifax, Quebec City and resort destinations outside Quebec City are being considered for 2004.
