



MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

INTRO :

Member Name : Judyth Re kai

Year of Call : 1979

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Photo :

QUESTIONS :

1- How did you get into criminal law?

I started my family before I started practicing. Gloria Epstein (later to become Justice Epstein of the ONCA) and I went through bar ads together when we were both pregnant. I believe we were the first women to do that. After taking a few years to be with the children I began working as a per diem Crown. When I had my third child, I only had one week off. That child became ill during that week

and was admitted to Sick Kids. The Monday after my week off, I had to walk from Sick Kids where I had been all night to 311 Jarvis to resume work and then walk back to Sick Kids at the end of the day to be with my child. After that I moved to a defence practice because it gave me more control over my schedule and gave me greater flexibility to be with my children.

2- What type of cases do you enjoy defending the most and why?

I like interesting cases with lots of issues. Also, I like winning, who doesn't?

3- How did the practice of criminal law change you?

It made me more open, more aware of people's situations and how lucky I really was. I always say, "There but for the grace of God go all of us".

4- If there is one thing only you would like to see change in criminal law, what would it be?

I hate it when accused people are referred to as "bodies". It's demeaning. It's the first step to negating humanity. I would also like to change Pretrial custody.

5- What advice would you give to your younger self when you first started practising criminal law?

Go into Tax Law

6- How do you deal with bad work days?

I used to be able to talk it out with my late husband (Rob Nuttall). Now, I cry, I beat myself up, and then I get back into getting the job done, realizing we all try our best, we all make mistakes, and we can't be perfect all of the time.

7- What do you think of Zoom court?

That we have finally come into the 21st century. I do think, though, that we should be using Zoom only for things where neither witnesses nor the clients are needed. I like having clients and witnesses in the courtroom because it brings home the solemnity of the proceeding.

8- Any embarrassing court story you're willing to share?

When I first left the Crown's office and started defending clients, I was so used to acting as the Crown that I read the facts in myself at a client's guilty plea.

9- Who is your role model/inspiration in criminal law?

Lord Denning

10- What's your favourite song?

Anything written by Stan Rogers

11- How do you maintain work life balance and how you deal with the stress of the job?

I ask for help. I was very lucky that, for most of my career, I could discuss things with Rob. Now I do that with my eldest son who does criminal appellate work for the public defender office in New York City. This is a very difficult job and everything is stacked against the defence so it's important to have someone to talk to about it. I also do a lot of quilting and am looking after 7 horses, 4 donkeys, some sheep, and many barn cats. Being around the animals brings peace.

12- What is your biggest legal inspiration?

The social obligation we have to do this work. Rob and I instilled in our children the need to contribute to society because it is something we both strongly believe in.

13- What do you do outside of the law?

Raise competition horses with one of my sons. One of our horses, Bilodeau, is currently doing very well in the top international level show jumping competitions held in Wellington, Florida every winter.

14- What would your defence bar colleagues be surprised to learn about you?

That I have a Masters Degree in Museology (the study of museums) and that, when I was 19, I spent a summer in Paris learning to cook at Maxim's.