



MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

INTRO :

Member Name : Mary E. Murphy

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Photo :

QUESTIONS :

1- How did you get into criminal law?

I started as duty counsel in Toronto after being called to the bar.

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

Robberies –serious, but usually no one really gets hurt; often good id issues. Unfortunately for robbers, most of the real money has moved on–line, so there is little profit and lots of risk

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

Friends say I started swearing more...

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

Not so much criminal law, but the collateral consequences of conviction for someone who is a permanent resident facing a sentence of more than 6 months custody. It's one thing to be punished for what you have done, but I find it far more extreme to face banishment. It's particularly sad to see when this happens for a young adult who has been struggling with mental health or addiction issues, who has come here with family as a child, gets in trouble with the law, can't become a citizen because of that trouble, and winds up facing deportation for serious criminality to a country virtually unknown to them.

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

Be more confident and stop procrastinating.

6- How do you deal with bad work days?

Talk it out- colleagues, friends, family. I have learned that nothing is ever as bad as it seems at the time.

7- What do you think of Zoom court?

It keeps things going for now, it works well for administrative appearances but when you have a bad day - or even a fun day - I miss the collegiality of being there in person, or of having people in the lawyer's lounges - such as they are - to laugh or commiserate with.

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

Endless numbers of them! How about the home invasion robbery witness, friend-with-benefit of my client's co-accused ex-girlfriend; I was cross-examining about all the purchases he made for said ex-girlfriend co-accused (which she was coming to reclaim during the home invasion): "I like my women to look nice. For example (with derisive gesture at my jacket) if I was f#cking you, I would buy you clothes ...". Or the guy I called out on his THUG LIFE tattoos.. "Oh! You can't judge people by what they have tattooed. What if I judge you on what you

wear? Like where'd you get that jacket? Zeller's". If only I had the presence of mind to say at the time – at least at Zeller's, the lowest price is the law. And what is it with my jackets, anyway?

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

When I started as duty counsel there was a group of women who were maybe 1 – 5 years ahead of me in practice as defence lawyers–Helen Kersley, Vivian Ropchan, Iryna Revutsky, Katherine McLeod, Jan Mills, Louise Botham, Rebecca Rutherford, Mavin Wong, Katharine Corrick – to name a few from that cohort. Those women were, in my view, at the forefront of changing the demographics of the practice of criminal law, at least in the GTA, and I recall thinking at the time that those were the lawyers I would emulate.

10- What's your favourite song?

Just one? The Mary Ellen Carter.

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

You need to get away from it – for a day, for a vacation, for dinner with friends who aren't lawyers. Find things to laugh about and never take yourself too seriously. Accept when you have something big on the go, it will be all-consuming, but schedule recovery time after. Plan office days with no court, so

you can bill or catch up on e-mail. Most of us do two jobs – law, and the business of being a lawyer.

12– What is your biggest legal inspiration?

From my life? I would say my uncle who was the first executive director of Nova Scotia Legal Aid. More generally, Beverly MacLachlan and Louise Arbour.

13– What do you do outside of the law?

Sail, bike, kayak, ski, travel, take pictures, wander beaches looking for pretty stones and beach glass, and generally eat, drink and be merry. I also try to do some community work by sitting on volunteer boards.

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

I used to sing in a children's choir – and when I sing you the Mary Ellen Carter, you will understand why that is a surprise.