



THE **VOICE** OF
THE **CRIMINAL**
DEFENCE BAR

MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

INTRO :

Member Name : Katie Heathcote

Year of Call : 2018

Twitter Handle: N/A

LinkedIn Page: Katie Heathcote

QUESTIONS :

1. How did you get into criminal law?

I knew that I would be a criminal lawyer from a very young age. I recall watching “Law and Order” and thinking that I would love to be in a courtroom one day. Certainly, real practice is nothing like TV, but that’s where I found my inspiration and I followed that path for the many years to follow.



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

I enjoy defending clients charged in the domestic context. I find that the issues are rarely as straight forward as they seem on paper.

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

I am definitely more compassionate as a result of my work. I would also say that I now come with a healthy dose of skepticism, which isn't necessarily a bad thing!

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

A properly funded Legal Aid system which does not allow for self-represented accused's unless it is truly by choice.

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

You cannot solve all of your clients' problems. Healthy boundaries are a necessary part of this work. While I always want my clients to know that I care, sometimes certain issues need to be handed off to another professional.



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6. How do you deal with bad work days?

Talking with other colleagues who truly understand your work and the uphill battle we sometimes face as criminal lawyers. I often chat with my business partner, Cassandra DeMelo, after a bad day at work. Other times, I just need to carve out a day in my schedule and take some time to myself when I'm feeling overwhelmed.

7. What do you think of Zoom court?

Zoom court has allowed for increased access to justice for my clients and a greater work-life balance for myself. It has also allowed me to conveniently expand my practice into surrounding jurisdictions. Clients should always be entitled to in-person Court appearances if that's how they wish to proceed, but it's great having the virtual option available. As it relates to bail matters especially, I have found that it is much more convenient for sureties such that I am able to pull together a plan much faster.

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

I recall being an articling student and being asked if I would "Attorn to the Jurisdiction". While this is not a complicated concept, but I had not a clue what it meant the first time I was asked. I stood there like a deer in headlights, when the Court clerk began nodding her head, I looked behind me at a bench full of defence counsel also nodding. I panicked and said "yes". The Justice of the Peace chuckled. Thankfully, that is what my principle ended up wanting me to do but to do this day, I always remember that whenever I am asked that question.



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9. What's your favourite song?

Too hard to choose and changes far too often!

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

I try to block off a set time in my calendar and not budge on being "unavailable" for those dates. Only if it is truly urgent will I make an exception.

11. What do you do outside of the law?

I love to cook, I find it very therapeutic to turn the music up and make a good meal. I also enjoy travelling!