



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

MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

INTRO :

Member Name : Dawn Quelch

QUESTIONS :

1- How did you get into criminal law?

I was working as the Executive Assistant to Publisher Jack Stoddart when the company sought creditor protection. I intended to go to law school to study intellectual property law to better protect the creative interests of authors during insolvency. Within the first 3 months at Queen's Law I realized the only classes that weren't putting me to sleep were the criminal law courses. Participating in the Correctional Law Project as a student and then articling for the Crown in Kenora, ON solidified that path.

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

I like working for the underdog. The one's who haven't felt heard by the system in the past. I like tilting at windmills I guess.



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

I believe in luck a lot more than I used to. Most criminals did not wake up wanting to hurt someone. Bad choices, bad circumstances and bad luck exist.

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

Carefully manage your expectations for what you can accomplish on a file. An acquittal is not the only measure of success. The dye is cast long before we even get the station call. Our job is not to defeat justice and to secure an acquittal. One of my senior colleagues told me he saw his role as including the duty to ensure his guilty clients were “properly convicted.” I think that is accurate. You can feel good about your role in a file without an acquittal as the result.

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

“In Zippo lighter he sees the killer's face
Maybe it's someone standing in a killer's place
Twenty years for nothing, well, that's nothing new
Besides, no one's interested in something you didn't do”
- Wheat Kings, The Tragically Hip.
I'll always be interested in something you didn't do.



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

I know myself well enough in my 40s to realize I am not an entrepreneur. By choosing to be an employee, I can do what I do best – work cases.... And I do not have to fight with Revenue Canada any more. My advice is to delegate what you aren't good at to someone else and focus on those parts of the job that bring you satisfaction. I've chosen to practice in Napanee, Ontario with an all-female firm offering criminal, family, real estate and Estate services.

7- What do you do outside of the law?

I drive too fast and enjoy live music.