



SOUNDING BOARD



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GREATER VANCOUVER BOARD OF TRADE AND ITS MEMBERS | MAY 2022 | VOLUME 62 / ISSUE 5 | BOARDOFTRADE.COM

2022 Rix Awards recognize extraordinary contributions

RECOGNITION | Celebrating community leaders

The Rix Awards are a special initiative of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, presented in honour of the late Dr. Don Rix, who served as the 2008-09 Chair of The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. The award recipients are chosen each year by a special selection committee and are presented at the Board of Trade's annual Governors' Gala each spring.

"Celebrating extraordinary commitments to B.C. and Canada is what this event is all about. The Rix Awards highlight outstanding contributions that benefit our community and pave the way for a prosperous and sustainable future for our region," said Radha Curpen, Gala Chair and Senior Vice Chair of the Board at the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.



This year, the event paid tribute to Chief Wayne Sparrow, who was awarded the prestigious Rix Award for Engaged Community Citizenship for his decades of service to the Musqueam Indian Band and innovative approach to

economic development.

The Board of Trade presented its Rix Award for Engaged Corporate Citizenship to London Drugs recognizing its role in supporting small businesses through the pandemic, its outstanding track

record of charitable giving and working towards reconciliation.

In recognition of the extraordinary events of the past two years, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry received a Special Rix Award for Outstanding Public Service on behalf of all healthcare workers for their tireless work protecting the health of British Columbians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The recipients of the 2022 Rix Awards exemplify the resilience and community mindedness that enabled our region to weather the storm of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to recognize the remarkable achievements of our award recipients as they continue to lead and make an incredible impact in our business community

with leadership and purpose," said Bridgitte Anderson, President and CEO of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

In addition to the presentation of the 2022 Rix Awards, the immediate past Chair of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, Brent Cameron, Office Managing Partner for Vancouver and Board Chair for Boyden Canada, was inducted into the prestigious Council of Governors by Board Chair, Kirsten Sutton, Chief Technology and Information Officer at Vancity.

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade is donating a portion of funds raised at the Gala to the Chief Ernie Campbell Memorial Fund, founded by Chief Wayne Sparrow, and the BC Cancer Foundation. **SB**

Sustainability Series

CLIMATE | Innovation and resilience

The 2022 Sustainability Series includes three sessions, each tailored to a specific facet of sustainable business practices.

The business community's interest in ESG factors – environmental impact, social impact and governance impact – at all levels of business decisions and policy-making is stronger than ever before. Businesses are working hard to adjust to these realities and lay the foundations for a sustainable, socially responsible economy in which the private sector and its partners drive widely shared growth and prosperity, protect the environment and improve the quality of life for everyone.

A key part of this emphasis on ESG factors is building climate resiliency across all sectors in our economy. This series will bring together panellists from the Greater Vancouver business community who serve to exemplify climate resiliency in action, including the primacy of

reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, technological transformation in our economy, sustainable financial investments and advancing circular economy models.

May 3 – Achieving the Triple Bottom Line (Finance & Investment)

Climate change and government policy responses are driving the imperative for decarbonization through business innovations, technologies and partnerships. The first event of the series features a keynote address from Christine Bergeron, President and CEO of Vancity, and a panel discussion on innovating and growing the bottom line, while also moving the needle on climate-change and growing ESG expectations.

May 10 – Climate Innovation Through Transformative Technologies

Discover how big data, artificial



intelligence (AI), and data visualization help organizations make wise decisions to build a more resilient economy and society. The impact of extreme, climate-induced weather events can be mitigated by using data to predict and prepare for these events, and by leveraging new technologies in our preparation and response.

A panel of industry experts will discuss technology-driven innovation to prepare for the permanent impacts of climate change that go beyond individual weather events.

May 17 – Circular Economy and Urban Climate Solutions

The final event in the Sustain-

ability Series is devoted to the circular economy. Circular economies are models of production and consumption that involve sharing, reusing, recycling and repairing existing resources, infrastructure, materials and products for their entire possible lifespan to maximize efficiency, reduce waste and the impact of consumption on the environment. As cities and businesses partner with First Nations and Indigenous communities to pursue solutions to these challenges, Indigenous knowledge is also helping to transform thinking in these areas. Panellists will discuss the importance of innovative circular models for advancing sustainability across sectors and industry in both the consumption and also the production of goods. **SB**

Both virtual and in-person attendance options are available. Register today at boardoftrade.com/events.

LEGACY | How to build a centennial brand

Building a business that stands the test of time

Bennett Jones is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2022. Over the past century we have developed an esteemed reputation by putting clients first, expanding our enterprises across Canada, and maintaining our unique culture—all while adapting to ever-changing circumstances. Along the way, we have learned some important lessons about how to build a centennial brand.

Get the Right People on the Bus

From the beginning, Bennett Jones' leaders understood that success would depend on the ability to attract and coach bright, enterprising people with a strong work ethic. This is as true today as it was one hundred years ago.

Our recruitment of students and young lawyers has always been about preparing them to be our future partners and leaders. When hiring experienced lawyers, we look for alignment with the business strategy and culture of the firm.

Bringing the right people on the bus can include a combination of strategies when the right opportunities are there. We opened our Vancouver office with one

lawyer in June 2014. We quickly grew and within four years, Bennett Jones merged with McCullough O'Connor Irwin. The move has exceeded all expectations. We continue to grow and we now have over 60 lawyers in Vancouver.

Know Your Clients' Industries

Being a trusted advisor means having a deep knowledge of your clients' businesses and industries. This knowledge can be gained by:

- Joining, and being active in, industry associations that are most relevant to your clients.
- Educating yourself on the critical issues facing clients by staying up-to-date on the latest reports, studies, news, events and government and regulatory developments.
- Speaking with your clients at both an operational level, as well as a management and governance level. This will give you a far better understanding about how their organization works and the key opportunities and risks.
- Working closely with them to find solutions to their complex problems. There will be times when you



Radha Curpen, Bennett Jones

will be able to grow with your clients as new industries or areas of business emerge. These are tremendous opportunities to help clients succeed and build lasting relationships.

People Innovation

Innovation is not just about technology. It is also about how team members work together and with their clients. A lasting organization should create the environment for its members to do what they do best. This can be developed through:

- Empowering people and motivating them with common goals.
- Providing employees with opportunities to grow as people. This elevates the entire organization.

- Embracing change and emphasizing the positive outcomes that come with it while dismantling barriers that stand in the way.
- Structuring the whole of your organization to serve clients. At Bennett Jones, this means working with our lawyers who provide the best solutions to our clients from across our offices.
- Innovating with best practices that are cultivated along the way.

Be True to Who You Are

An organization's culture and the core values that define it should be non-negotiable. Strong values and culture will stand the test of time if they are clear, driven from the top and lived every day throughout the organization.

One of the foundations of culture is the way that clients are served. When the priority is always the client's interests, a culture of teamwork and problem-solving can be created and sustained. With this outlook, individual interests shift to the peripheral.

Mentorship and sponsorship is critical to instilling an organization's culture and values in younger members. At every step of the way, it is imperative that words and organizational actions align to build enduring

credibility.

At Bennett Jones, who we are can be summarized by our Firm First philosophy. This maintains that the interests and welfare of the firm and our clients are paramount. We have not wavered from this view since 1922 and it continues to define who we are today.

Stay Entrepreneurial

Organizations are not likely to last in the long-run if they do not stay entrepreneurial and continuously look at what is ahead. They need to consistently focus on where things are going and what is beyond the curve. Opportunities naturally arise when this perspective is engaged.

Having entrepreneurial members in a large organization requires a balance—one that is best suited to its industry and people. At Bennett Jones, our approach is disciplined entrepreneurship. This is the pursuit of coordinated teamwork that does not inhibit the entrepreneurial spirit and independence of our partners, associates and other colleagues. **RC**

Radha Curpen is Vice Chair; Vancouver Managing Partner; National Leader, ESG Strategy and Solutions; and Co-Head, Environmental and Aboriginal Law at Bennett Jones. She serves as Senior Vice-Chair of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

LEADERSHIP | One-to-one with Abi Coman-Walker

Meet the COO of Acuitas

What was your first job?

My first job was as a waitress. I worked in a business hotel to help support myself while I was at university. I spent a lot of time serving drinks and food to business travellers back then. Fun-nily enough, several years later – when I was in my first full-time position with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), a global consulting firm – I ended up being back at that hotel and this time, I was one of those businesspeople staying there.

What do you like most about doing business in Greater Vancouver?

Greater Vancouver is an easy place to do business. It's more down-to-earth than some cities I have worked in – and there seems to be a culture of connection and engagement. If there is a professional connection that you want

to make, you can pretty much find someone to introduce you. It's a six degrees of separation kind of place.

What is your most prized possession and why?

I don't really have any prized possessions. I have spent my entire adult life living in different cities for my career. Everything I have is designed to fit into a suitcase.

Where do you see untapped potential in Greater Vancouver?

I think that this goes back to the cost of living. We have this great opportunity to continue to build out an exceptional, best-in-class biotech sector here. However, how do you do that when everything – from the lab to real estate – costs so much? It makes it cost-prohibitive to expand and grow in the downtown core.



Abi Coman-Walker, Acuitas Therapeutics

There is a great deal of biotech talent here – and we want to keep it here and grow this sector. To do that, something has to be done about the cost of living.

What do you think makes a great leader?

Compassion. Empathy. Energy. Enthusiasm. Honesty. Authen-

A good leader can be themselves instead of trying to pretend that they are something they aren't



ticity. These are foundational values that will always be found in a good leader. A good leader can be themselves instead of trying to pretend that they are something they aren't. They will support their team and have their backs. They care.

Where is your favourite place in Vancouver?

Jericho beach – I love it. I go there with my family, and I paddleboard and swim there. It is just a magical place. I still get excited when I see seals.

What do you think Greater Vancouver needs more of?

I think that more access to culture would be a good thing. There are some great art galleries and museums here – and I am grateful for them, but it would also be fabulous to have more. More visiting exhibits and more access for students, seniors and others who might not be able to afford to go.

What might someone be surprised to know about you?

Now that's an interesting question. I think people might be surprised to know that until university, I didn't do very well in school. I found that school was a challenge and I got into trouble quite a bit. Once I hit university, I settled in much better – but it took until then to really find my place when it came to education. **AC**

Abi Coman-Walker is the Chief Operating Officer at Acuitas Therapeutics.