



SUPREME COURT JUSTICE HEATHER ROBERTSON PASSES AWAY

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Updated: Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2021



The Supreme Court of Nova Scotia lost an accomplished jurist and dear colleague last week when The Hon. Justice M. Heather Robertson passed away suddenly on Feb. 11. She was 73.

“Justice Robertson was an amazing individual who tackled every challenge with dignity and determination,” said The Hon. Deborah K. Smith, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. “She had a marvelous sense of humour and a frankness about her that I admired greatly, as well as an innate sense of fairness that led her to treat all who appeared before her with respect.”

Her contributions and presence in and outside the courtroom will be missed. My deepest condolences go out to all those who had the pleasure of knowing her.”

Justice Robertson was born in Halifax, N.S., in 1947. She graduated from the Convent of the Sacred Heart and obtained her first degree, a Bachelor of Arts, from Dalhousie University. She worked briefly as a welfare officer for the City of Halifax before returning to school, earning a BEd *summa cum laude* from Saint Mary's University and her LLB from Dalhousie University. She received an honorary Doctor of Commerce degree from Saint Mary's University in 2013.

Justice Robertson was called to the Nova Scotia Bar on Nov. 13, 1975. She articulated with Lloyd Caldwell, Q.C., and joined Walker Dunlop at the end of 1975. She took a brief break to work in the fishery with A. M. "Sandy" Cameron, before returning to the law to work at Burchell, MacDougall and Gruchy. In 1995, she was appointed Chief of Staff to then Premier John Savage. She served as Chair of the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board before her appointment to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia on June 30, 1998.

Justice Robertson performed many administrative tasks for the Supreme Court, in addition to her regular duties as a judge. She was always eager to take on a project and as such she sat on several judicial committees. She was most proud of her work on the Courthouse Standards Committee and her involvement in the construction of new courthouses and renovations of existing courtrooms and judicial chambers.

She was always committed to public service. Before her appointment to the Bench, Justice Robertson served as a director of various corporations, including Canada Post, Nova Scotia Resources Limited, and Halterm Acquisition Corp., as Vice Chair of the Bluenose Preservation Trust, and as a member of numerous organizations, including the Dalhousie University Board of Governors and the Fund Council of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party. Before and after her judicial appointment, she devoted much energy to many charitable projects.

Outside the courtroom, Justice Robertson had a zest for life and especially loved sports. In spite of a 1995 skiing injury that required her to use a wheelchair for the rest of her life, she continued participating in golf, swimming and kayaking.

But her true love was sailing, which her official positions in the sport demonstrated. Justice Robertson was a Commodore of the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron, President of the Nova Scotia Sailing Association, Vice President of the Canadian Yachting Association, and President of the Bluenose Class Association. She competed as an athlete in the 2007 Mobility Cup, the first time the event was held in Atlantic Canada, and later chaired the 2014 International Federation of Disabled Sailors World Championships, which was held in Nova Scotia that year.

With the lifting of many COVID-19 restrictions across Nova Scotia, a celebration of Justice Robertson's life is now planned for Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021. The memorial will begin at 10 a.m. at the Lord Nelson Hotel, 1515 South Park Street, Halifax, N.S.

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