

Interview with Neil Wilson, Stevenson Whelton MacDonald & Swan LLP

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Q: Why did you become a litigator or advocate?

A: A friend was writing the LSAT and convinced me to do it with him. I've always liked arguing and writing so it seemed like a natural fit—and a natural progression from a history degree.

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Q: Which word do you prefer: litigator or advocate?

A: Litigator. If I told people I'm an advocate I don't think they would know what I do!

3

Q: What is your year of call?

A: 2011.

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Q: What do you like most about the practice of law?

A: The diversity of constantly learning about new things you may never have thought about before. I find that as litigators our cases frequently require us to become experts in new subject matters, from an accounting practice to a medical procedure to a line of business.

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Q: What is your greatest extravagance in your everyday life?

A: Travel, the occasional nice meal and taking time to sit back and relax with some Netflix.

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Q: What would you consider your greatest achievement?

A: Being featured in *Keeping Tabs*.

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Q: What is your greatest fear in practice?

A: Becoming jaded and unempathetic.

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Q: What is the latest non-legal book you've read?

A: Right now I'm reading *Maximum City* by Suketu Mehta. It's a book about Mumbai that follows a series of meetings between the author and residents of Mumbai of all stripes including politicians, architects, crime bosses and police officers (no lawyers yet).

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Q: Which living lawyer do you most admire?

A: Joseph Arvay—one of Canada's top constitutional litigators who has argued many of the biggest cases in the country since I became a lawyer, including *Insite* (safe injections), *Carter* (assisted dying) and *Henry* (Charter damages and Crown liability).

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Q: How would your colleagues describe you?

A: Glass half full guy.

11

Q: Who or what is the greatest love of your life?

A: Family. I don't play favourites but our two-year old daughter is pretty close to the top of my list right now.

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Q: What is your favourite case?

A: *The Hearing Clinic (Niagara Falls) Inc. v. 866073 Ontario Limited*—I've had more laughs reading this decision than any other. A small sample:

Fridriksson has taken everyone on a hideously time-consuming and obscenely expensive journey down his private yellow brick road to the outskirts of the Emerald City where, it appears, he has a residence. It was not a worthwhile adventure.

[Editor's note: This case is *amazing*. Thank you Neil.]

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Q: Which talent would you most like to have?

A: Unlimited patience.

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Q: What is your most distinctive characteristic?

A: Red hair.

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Q: What is your favourite drink?

A: Beer, preferably on tap. During the summer a Paulaner and during the winter a nice Mill Street Cobblestone Stout.

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Q: From whom have you learned the most about the practice of law?

A: Maureen Whelton. She is a force to be reckoned with in court and in a negotiation, and manages to do it all with empathy and a healthy sense of humour. More generally, lawyers I see in court, both from my firm and opposing counsel. Seeing a range of styles and habits has been key to working out what works for me and what doesn't.

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Q: If you weren't a lawyer, what would you be?

A: Journalist—probably as a foreign correspondent in some far-flung and hopefully warm location.

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Q: What unique knowledge have you gleaned in your practice that you can share with other young advocates?

A: Never underestimate yourself. If someone trusts you with litigation (or a piece of it) it is because you can do it and do it well. ♣

Upcoming Events



**Wine & Cheese with
The Bench
(Barrie)**
March 1, 2017



**YASC Pub Night
(Windsor)**
March 9, 2017



**Trivia Challenge
for Charity
(Toronto)**
March 23, 2017



**Trivia Challenge
(Kingston)**
March 27, 2017



**Wine & Cheese with
The Bench
(Toronto)**
April 6, 2017