

Remarks by Chief Justice Deborah E. Fry
On the passing of William (Bill) Augustus Collins Q.C.
Retired Member of the Bar
Court of Appeal, Duckworth St. St. John's, NL
November 26, 2018

I would like to take a moment at the beginning of this sitting of the Court of Appeal to recognize the passing of a retired senior member of the Bar, **William (Bill) Augustus Collins Q.C.**, who passed away on November 21, 2018. Mr. Collins Q.C. was born on December 19, 1946.

Bill Collins was a graduate of St. Francis Xavier and Dalhousie Law School and was called to the Bar of Newfoundland on December 14, 1971 where he was entered on the Barrister's Roll as #322. He received his Queen's Counsel designation in 2001. Bill retired from practice in 2014 following a highly respected and varied legal career spanning 43 years. He carried out an extensive practice in criminal and civil litigation. He served as president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Association and served two terms as a commissioner with the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

The lawyers with whom he practiced, judges before whom he appeared and clients of Collins Q.C. have spoken of him not only with great respect for his legal intellect, his ethical and principled approach to the practice of law but also to his compassion and humanity. He has been described by many as a true gentleman, a wise and generous mentor to young lawyers and a passionate advocate for equity and equality. He was an able barrister, a force to be reckoned with in the courtroom, and especially effective in front of a jury. He is described as being a very thorough counsel, always prepared and laser focused on serving his client's needs.

He was an example of the best in advocacy and civility amongst the Bar and he brought out the best in those with whom he had contact, whether from within the Bar or the community at large.

The civil rights activist and poet, Maya Angelou, said: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Bill Collins cared about how people felt. A person's dignity was always at the heart of his professional life; he was an early volunteer leader in the community, and he worked hard and effectively to achieve fairness and equity for the disenfranchised.

Bill made his mark by being true to who he was. He was guided by his beliefs and the best practices of his profession. If a legacy is etched in the minds of others by the stories they share about you, Bill Collins leaves a strong and lasting legacy not only to his family, children and grandchildren, but also to the legal community.

Bill had a charming sense of humour, a quick wit and an easy disposition. He was a gregarious person who lived a full and happy life surrounded by a family he loved, many friends and activities that he enjoyed. Bill always had a smile for anyone and everyone who crossed his path.

Former Chief Justice Green is attending Bill's funeral this morning. He was a classmate of Bill's at Dalhousie Law School, a former neighbour on Russell Street and, of course, a colleague of his at the bar for many years. Justice Green has asked me to express his condolences to Bill's family, especially his wife, Christine, his brothers Tanny and Andrew - who Justice Green and his wife have known for many years - as well as to Terry and Jane Healey (Justice Green's current neighbours) who are related to Bill by marriage. Justice Green remembers Bill as a respected advocate who practiced with integrity and professionalism and brought credit to the legal profession with his passionate defence of his client's rights.

On behalf of my colleagues at the Court of Appeal, I wish to extend our sincere condolences to the family on their loss of William Collins Q.C.