



Joan Braun, LLB, MSW, LLM

Executive Career Biography

Providing Expertise in Justice Sector Management & Consulting

A hallmark of Joan's career has been leading organizations through periods of growth and change, creating new innovative programs, and developing effective legal service delivery models. She can quickly assess an organization's needs, and she consistently develops strong and effective working relationships with staff, boards and stakeholders. Her ability to adapt to new challenges, and to lead effectively, was described by one organization, in her initial 6-month performance evaluation, as follows:

Joan has demonstrated that she has the experience and acumen to very quickly acclimatize, make assessments and provide the leadership to executive a plan (President of the Board, 2014).

Joan brings a unique set of skills to her management work. She is a lawyer and a social worker, who worked directly with clients in both professions before moving into justice sector management. She is passionate about increasing access to justice and providing quality legal services to those who cannot afford counsel.

Joan practiced law for six years prior to her executive management career, and has continued to maintain a small law and mediation practice in complement to her management work. Joan is strongly committed to excellence in service delivery, and is a lifelong learner who has completed two graduate degrees and numerous practice based courses. Her strong legal research skills, knowledge of law reform, and teaching experience enhance her ability to develop and implement effective justice sector services.

Joan is the former executive director and senior counsel for the *BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support*. While in that role, she successfully established the first legal aid clinic for older adults in western Canada. Her responsibilities included overseeing all aspects of the Elder Law Clinic set up, program development, clinic management, and client file work. During the initial four-year pilot project phase, she developed new programs that complemented legal representation services in the Elder Law Clinic, and found new funding to pay for these initiatives. Through fundraising she doubled the agency budget over four years.

Joan's career moved to a new level when she accepted a position as executive director of the *Manitoba Human Rights Commission*, an agency with provincial reach and double the budget and staff size as compared to *BC CEAS*. Her career took another leap forward when she was recruited from the *Commission* to an executive director position at the *Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta*, where she successfully implemented a staff and program restructure, ensuring long-term financial sustainability for the agency. Throughout her career Joan has demonstrated effective staff, program, and budget management.

Joan is currently working in private practice as a lawyer, mediator and consultant, while also studying towards a PhD in law on a part-time basis. Her PhD research focuses on social justice and law reform. She recently completed her PhD comprehensive exams, and is now available for a full time executive management position. She is available to answer questions at 604-780-4870 or braun@joanbraun.ca.

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Representative Leadership Initiatives

Legal Resource Centre

Accomplishment: Joan successfully resolved a financial crisis and obtained secure ongoing funding.

One week after Joan stepped into a new position as executive director at the *Legal Resource Centre*, the LRC received a letter from its core-funder advising that funding was being reviewed, and that the agency must address six areas of concern to avoid losing some or all funding. The most pressing concern was finances, as the LRC was at risk of an operational deficit. To address this crisis Joan implemented a staff and program restructure, which reduced annual expenditures by 20%. She worked with the board on a new strategic plan, and implemented it, developing new programs and services that aligned. Joan presented a report to the funder outlining the steps that had been taken to address its concerns. She then successfully negotiated renewed core-funding.

The Elder Law Clinic

Accomplishment: Joan established the first legal aid law office for older adults in western Canada.

BC CEAS, a multi-service agency, received funding to establish the *Elder Law Clinic*, a legal aid service that represented seniors throughout the province of BC. Joan oversaw the project. During the 'set-up phase', she consulted with legal aid experts, discussed practice issues with the *Law Society of BC*, and conducted a community needs assessment. Based on this consultation, Joan developed a service delivery model, service priorities, and policies. She also created intake and file allocation systems, implemented a case management system, and hired and trained new staff.

Once the clinic was open, Joan oversaw service delivery, including managing file allocations, doing quality reviews and periodically seeing clients. During the first 18 months, the intake line received 2054 calls and 411 files were opened in the *Elder Law Clinic*. The clinic also was involved in public legal education and law reform initiatives. The pilot project phase ended in 2011, and I successfully obtained renewed funding.

In 2012 the *Elder Law Clinic* received a prestigious award from the *Simon Fraser University Gerontology Research Centre* in the "Innovative Programs" category.

"Seniors Reaching Out to Seniors" a Public Legal Education Program

Accomplishment: Joan developed a program that was delivered to thousands of seniors across BC.

Joan successfully obtained funding for a three-year project to develop an educational program for seniors about fraud, financial abuse, and the law. The educational modules were innovative, and the program uniquely trained volunteer seniors to teach other seniors about the law. Workshops were delivered to thousands of seniors throughout BC using a peer-to-peer service delivery model. In 2011, Alice Wong, Federal Minister of Seniors, profiled this project in a press conference at our office (*BC CEAS*). In the press conference, she described it as an outstanding program, and the best elder abuse prevention education project funded by her ministry in the previous funding cycle.

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Representative Teaching Experience

Sessional Instructor

- Skills Instructor - various courses: Justice Institute's, Centre for Conflict Resolution (2004 - 2012).

Instructor - Clinical Legal Skills

- Mentor: law students in the Small Claims Court Mediation Practicum (2006 - 2012).
- Clinical Supervisor: summer and articled law students at *BC CEAS* (2007 - 2011).
- Clinical Supervisor: pro bono law students at *WCDWA* (2003 - 2004).

Guest Instructor – Clinical Legal Skills

- Guest Instructor/ Coach: Various dispute resolution and mediation classes, UBC School of Law (2005 - 2012).
- Guest Instructor/ Coach: Law 483 - Competitive Moots and Advocacy: Client Counseling, UBC School of Law (2002 - 2006).

Academic Guest Lectures

- Guest Lecture: "Client Advocacy: Using or Changing the Law", UBC School of Social Work (2005).
- Guest Lecture: "Immigration Law for Social Workers", UBC School of Social Work (2004).
- Guest Lecture: "Legal Challenges for Domestic Violence Victims", UBC School of Law (2002).
- Guest Lecture: "Women, the Law and Equality Rights", Trinity Western University (1998).
- Guest Lecture: "Women, the Law and Equality Rights", Simon Fraser University (1998).

Continuing Legal Education & Other Conferences

- Presented papers and/ or gave presentations at four *Continuing Legal Education Conferences*
- Regular presenter at academic conferences and community events on legal practice issues.

Curriculum Development

- Oversaw development of public legal education materials on many topics at Alberta's largest public legal education organization.