

Lawyer lands *BIV* Influential Women in Business lifetime achievement award

Law firm partner and former BC Ferries executive Elizabeth Harrison recognized with 2012 *Business in Vancouver* honour

By Glen Korstrom

Elizabeth Harrison has impressed countless legal clients through the years with her strong legal knowledge and ability to solve problems.

But her influence in the field of law and elsewhere also stems from an eight-year stint as chairwoman of **British Columbia Ferry Services Inc.**

The role showed younger women that it's possible to have a busy and successful career while taking on significant responsibilities outside of work and family. It also helped land her *Business in Vancouver's* 2012 Influential Women in Business lifetime achievement award.

"She is both influential and persuasive," said **MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates Ltd.** (TSX:MDA) CFO **Anil Wirasekara**, who has known Harrison since the 1990s and worked with her on MDA's two IPOs and multiple acquisitions.

Harrison had no female lawyer role models when she was growing up in small-town Alberta in the 1950s and 1960s.

She earned her law degree at the **University of Alberta** in 1972 and was hired as an articling student at **Farris, Vaughan, Wills and Murphy LLP.**

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When the B.C. government brought in a new Companies Act in 1973, Harrison was the point-person at Farris to ensure clients'



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books complied with new regulations.

A Farris partner since 1978, Harrison has worked on a number of significant mergers and acquisitions, including the complex takeover

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battle between **Inland Natural Gas** and **Trans Mountain Pipeline Co.** in the early 1980s and the **BC Telephone Co.** and **Telus Corp.** merger in the late 1990s.

Her board involvements have included the **St. Paul's Hospital Foundation** and **Vancouver Opera.** She sits on the boards of directors at the **Forum for Women Entrepreneurs** and **BC Ferries.**

"I've learned aspects of business as well as the practice of law," Harrison said. "I've been able to apply that knowledge, and try to be of assistance to clients in a way that is not pure legal but provides solutions that fit a business requirement."

Harrison will receive her award March 6 at the 13th annual Influential Women in Business luncheon at the **Fairmont Waterfront Hotel.**

Tickets are still available and can be purchased online at (www.biv.com/iwib). ■
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