

From Melanie's Desk: 20 Years and Counting!



On February 12, 2022 I will celebrate a milestone. Back in 2002, I remember the excitement as I, along with my graduating class from the University of Windsor Faculty of Law, were Called to Bar. After 3 years of law school, professional development, articling, then a few more months of studying and writing exams, I finally crossed the finish line. It's now been 20 years that I have been a lawyer.

I will tell you that it's gone by fast. I have a favourite country song right now that contains the lyrics "cause the truth about it is – It all goes by real quick". I know I am not alone in this sentiment.

Now that I've told you it's been 20 years, it should be no surprise that when I went to law school, very few students had laptops. We wrote lecture notes by hand. Heck, I didn't even get a stick cell phone until I was articling in 2000. We did very little email. We faxed letters and waited for faxed replies. We photocopied – a lot. Law has always been paper based until very recently.

I will be forever grateful for the mentorship back in the day of Bill Chapman and Donald Gordon. They saw my potential as a young lawyer and were willing to teach me the tricks of the trade. They are both happily enjoying a well deserved retirement and we remains friends.

Negative Changes in the Field of Personal Injury Law

The field of personal injury practice has changed over the last 20 years. In my opinion, this is the worst that it has been for injured accident victims in terms of compensation for their injuries and funding for recovery.

If you have been injured in a car accident there's a deductible on pain and suffering. Prior to 2015 it was \$30,000. Then it started to increase every year. On January 1, 2022 it increased to \$41,503.50. It's scheduled to continue to increase every January 1st. This deductible is a savings to the insurance company on each and every motor vehicle accident case in the province on damages for pain and suffering (with very few exceptions).

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Melanie and her parents on graduation day

Said another way, if you're injured, your first \$41,503.50 worth the pain in suffering isn't worth anything. This is very unfair and disheartening to people who push through the pain to live their "new" lives after an accident.

I've also seen Statutory Accident Benefits eroded. These are the benefits that you get when you buy auto insurance. These benefits used to be much more generous to help people recover after an accident. This is where you would receive income replacement and medical rehabilitation benefits. Some benefits have been taken away altogether and some have been greatly reduced. Again, very unfair when all people want to do after an accident is recover and get back to their normal lives. Someone just last week told me that they would take back their crappy van and prior life to avoid being rear ended. This sentiment rings true for almost all the people I work with after their accidents. I actually can't think of one single person over 20 years that was happy they had been in an accident.

It's a tough time in history to be injured in an accident. Now, more than ever, clients need strong representation and effective advocacy. Fighting against the insurance companies is something we do every day for all of our



Adrienne, Melanie, Erin, Alicia, and Deborah

clients. The satisfaction of helping people recover and move forward with their lives continues to fuel my passion for personal injury and disability work. I can honestly say that I still love what I do. So does Ruth.

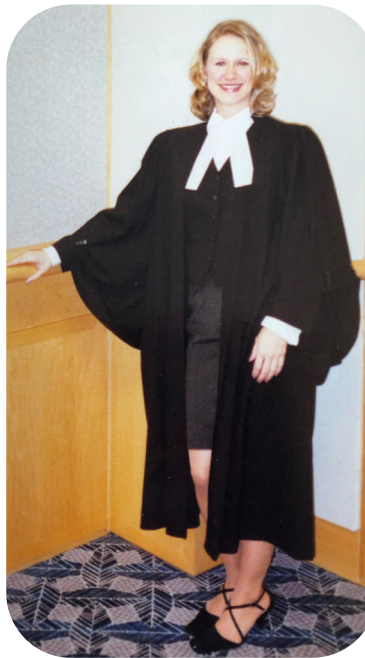
Career Highlights

Over my 20 years, I have been grateful to receive a few awards. In 2011, I won an **Odyssey Award from the University of Windsor**. This award recognizes University of Windsor alumni who are in the early stages of their career path, having distinguished themselves through successes in career endeavors, notable achievement in their local community or the University of Windsor, or through significant or innovative achievement in their professional or personal life. I am a proud graduate of Windsor Law and continue to keep up to date on what is happening at the law school. I can't wait to see the new renovated building!

In 2014, I received a **Volunteer Award from the Ontario Brain Injury Association** for outstanding support of individuals living with the effects of brain injury. I spent 4 years on the Board of Directors and really got to know first hand about the amazing services, support and advocacy happening on a provincial scale. I continue to keep in touch with OBIA to this day and really recommend that if you or someone you know has a brain injury you look into what they can offer. www.obia.com

In 2015, I was awarded **Outstanding Individual by the Windsor-Essex Accessibility Awards** for making an impact on improving the inclusion and awareness of accessibility issues for all people in our community. For the last 12 years and continuing I have been on the Board of Directors of the Beyond Disability Rehabilitation Network. www.beyonddisability.ca

In 2018, I received an **Ontario Service Award for 10 years of service with the Brain Injury Association of Windsor & Essex County**. This is a charity near and dear to my heart. I have met so many wonderful people and have so many great experiences from working with this organization who help so many in our own community. www.biawe.com



Also in 2018, I was awarded the **Charles J. Clark Award by the Essex Law Association**. This award is given annually by the Essex Law Association to a member who best exemplifies the qualities of professional integrity and community service which were the hallmarks of the practice and life of Charles J. Clark. This award is special because I received recognition from local colleagues for my contributions to our community.

So What's Ahead?

As a lifelong volunteer in our community, I am absolutely certain that I will continue to volunteer into the future. There is no shortage of worthy causes in our community that make it a better place to work, live and thrive.

Professionally, I am thankful for my partner Ruth Stewart and our wonderful all-female team at Velocity Injury Law. I am truly grateful for so many of you who continue to refer your family and friends to me and to other members of our firm. I plan to continue in this line of work for many, many years working hard to represent my clients and treating them like family.

Cheers to 20 years and counting!

VALENTINE'S DAY TOP 5

ROMANTIC COMEDIES

- **When Harry Met Sally**
- **Annie Hall**
- **Harold and Maude**
- **Groundhog Day**
- **A Matter of Life and Death**

LOVE SONGS

- **"Endless Love" – Diana Ross & Lionel Richie**
- **"How Deep Is Your Love" – The Bee Gees**
- **"We Found Love" – Rihanna & Calvin Harris**
- **"Silly Love Songs" – Wings**
- **"I'll Make Love to You" – Boyz II Men**

Just For Fun: Relationship Advice from Dr. Benjamin Karney

Communication is the key to a lasting relationship: this piece of advice is repeated so often that it has become a cliché. After years working as a social psychologist, and being married to a couple's therapist, Dr. Benjamin Karney puts a new twist on the old advice. Karney says:

"I used to think that the purpose of communicating in relationships was to solve problems, to solve disagreements. I now think that disagreements do not get solved. They just get managed."

In long-term relationships partners are always going to disagree about something. Karney advises that couples should learn how to *manage* disagreements instead of solving them. It could take a lot of stress off of the relationship to realize that you don't need to convince your partner that you're right as long as you can compromise and move forward together.



About Us: Who Do We Work With at Velocity Injury Law?

- Sometimes our clients are the families of loved ones who have died in a tragic accident.
- Most of our clients became injured as a result of a motor vehicle collision or slip and fall accident.
- Sometimes our clients are residents of a nursing home who have been injured.
- Some clients have not been involved in an accident, but have become ill. They look to us to help them with their short-term and long-term disability claims.
- Most of our clients are from Windsor and Essex County, but occasionally people from other parts of the province request our services. We have some clients in Chatham-Kent, Sarnia, London, Toronto and a few in northern Ontario.

For more information about our services, visit our website: www.VelocityInjuryLaw.com or give us a call at **519-946-4300**.