



It is with great sadness that I share the news of Elaine Keenan Bengts' passing on August 8, 2022.

Elaine grew up in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories since 1970, where she graduated from high school. After high school she attended the University of Alberta, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1979 and her LLB in 1982. She began her professional career in Yellowknife, originally working with the firm of Searle, Richard, Kingsmill before launching her own firm in 1988 under the name of Keenan Bengts Law Office, focussing largely on family law.

Elaine blazed a trail as the Northwest Territories' first Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC), appointed in 1997. In 1999 she was appointed as the first Information and Privacy Commissioner for Nunavut.

She served as Information and Privacy Commissioner for both jurisdictions for over two decades, closing her law practice in 2015 and retiring from her IPC appointments in 2020 (NWT) and 2021 (Nunavut).

As a lawyer, Ms. Keenan Bengts was an active member of the Canadian Bar Association (BCA) and served in a number of capacities with the NWT Law Society. She also served on the National Executive of the Family Law Section

of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA), as a branch President, and on several CBA committees, including as Co-Chair of the National Women's Lawyer Forum. In 2008 she was a key player in bringing a national level CBA meeting to Yellowknife, and in 2013 she won the Douglas Miller Award, awarded to a CBA member who demonstrates "characteristics of leadership to the profession" and for "bringing professional development programs to Yellowknife that helped to improve access to justice".

Elaine gave much of herself to her community. Beyond her professional life, she provided leadership through her involvement with Sport North, NWT Gymnastics Association, Yellowknife Gymnastics Club, and the Yellowknife Volleyball Association. Until recently she continued to serve her fellow citizens as board member of the Yellowknife Community Foundation.

Through many years of dedicated service to the public and her community, Elaine demonstrated unwavering commitment to her fellow citizens, to justice, and the upholding of democratic rights, values, and freedoms foundational to our democracy. She is survived by family and friends who have much to cherish and celebrate in her memory.

She will be missed.

A memorial service was held at St. Joseph School gymnasium on Saturday August 13 at 11:00 am.

In lieu of flowers, the family asked for donations to be made to the Yellowknife Community Foundation or the Canadian Cancer Society.

Click here for Elaines' Obituary : [Elaine Keenan Bengts 1958-2022](#)