

2010

# Distinguished SERVICE AWARDS

*Presented By*  
The Law Society of Alberta  
Canadian Bar Association - Alberta



SERVING  
*the* PUBLIC  
INTEREST

2010  
Distinguished  
SERVICE AWARDS



January 29, 2010  
Westin Hotel  
Calgary, Alberta  
Noon - 1:30 PM



Gerald Gall, OC  
*Distinguished Service  
in Legal Scholarship*



Solomon J. Rolingher, QC  
*Distinguished Service  
to the Community*



Virginia M. May, QC  
*Distinguished Service  
to the Profession*



*Late* John A. Weir, QC  
*Distinguished Service  
in Pro Bono Legal Service*

**GERALD GALL, OC**  
*Service in Legal Scholarship*



The commitment made by Professor Gerald Gall, OC, to legal scholarship and to human rights organizations is unsurpassed. Law students at the University of Alberta

have been enriched by his world-class expertise through his roles as scholar, champion of human rights, educator, author, mentor and advisor.

Professor Gall has served, since 2001, as the President and Chair of the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights, an organization dedicated to advancing the culture of peace and human rights through education and community organizations. For 24 years, he has played a prominent role with the Canadian Human Rights Foundation.

His expertise with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is well known, and he is recognized as an expert on Constitutional Law. As a legal scholar, Professor Gall is co-editor of a newly published casebook on Constitutional Law, and is author of the treatise, *The Canadian Legal System*, now in its 6<sup>th</sup> edition and translated into many languages.

Professor Gerald Gall received his Bachelor of Arts from Queen's University at Kingston in 1969, and his Bachelor of Laws from the University of Windsor in 1972. Two years later, he was admitted to the Law Society of Upper Canada. Professor Gall's longstanding dedication to humanitarian causes was celebrated when he was appointed in 2001 as an Officer to the Order of Canada.

**VIRGINIA M. MAY, QC**  
*Service to the Profession*



After three decades of trailblazing and career challenges, it's not surprising that Virginia May is regarded by many lawyers as an inspirational role model.

Few individuals have overcome the obstacles that challenged Virginia May when she left a successful broadcasting career in England to enter law school as a mature student. Her choice of law as the centerpiece of her life reflects her passion to help those in need, to make the world a fairer place, to oppose oppression.

In 1980, she graduated with her law degree from the University of Calgary, and articulated with Burnett, Duckworth and Palmer LLP. In 1986, she became partner, one of the first women to do so at a major law firm. In 1995, she founded May Jensen Shawa Solomon LLP and is now senior partner.

Her service to the profession began in the 1990s with four consecutive elections to the Benchers of the Law Society of Alberta. The pride she felt in her profession and the concern she harboured for her community informed her work around the board table. As a Bencher, she chaired five major Law Society committees and served on more than a dozen others.

Virginia May is known as one of Alberta's leading litigators, as a mentor and guide for many junior lawyers, and is held in high esteem as a role model and inspiration.

**SOLOMON J. ROLINGER, QC**  
*Service to the Community*



As an inspired community builder who is dedicated to improving cultural relations, Solomon J. Rolinger's service has significantly made a difference in the quality of life in Edmonton.

His visionary work brought together Edmonton's Islamic, Jewish and Christian leaders to help diffuse growing tensions in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The founding of the Phoenix Multi-Faith Society for Harmony, unique in Canada, has become a role model for other cities seeking to unite disparate and conflicted communities.

He initiated and continues to chair his law firm, Duncan & Craig's, hugely successful Laurel Awards lunch which recognizes the enormous contributions made by volunteers in non-profit organizations. His greatest project is the River Valley Alliance, for which he has secured funding to create a metropolitan riverfront park in Edmonton.

Notwithstanding his inspired and varied contributions to the general community, he is recognized as an outstanding lawyer who works tirelessly and with passion for his clients, and who has contributed towards mentoring and education within the legal profession and the general community. He serves the University of Alberta as a university governor, senate member and with four faculties.

Solomon Rolinger graduated as a petroleum engineer from the Colorado School of Mines in 1965, and then graduated as Juris Doctoris in 1968. He was called to the bar in 1969.

**LATE JOHN A. WEIR, QC**  
*Service in Pro Bono Legal Service*



For more than five decades, the late John Weir, QC, expressed his commitment to pro bono service by taking on hundreds of pro bono cases, virtually all of them on a client-by-

client basis. His clients found him to be a kind advocate who had a genuine affinity for the underdog. John Weir's decades of selfless dedication to pro bono work ensured access to justice for many Albertans who may otherwise not have received it.

Born in Edmonton, Alberta, John Weir earned his arts degree (1956) and law degree (1956) from the University of Alberta. He articulated under Arnold Fraser Moir of Edmonton, was admitted to the bar in May 1958, and began practising with Newsom Brumlik. In 1990, he created the firm of Weir Bowen LLP, partnering with Maurice Bowen. In the late 1980s, he was appointed by Canada's Solicitor General to conduct the Gringras Inquiry.

John Weir was personally committed to ensuring that everyone had access to justice, even if it required him to provide services without compensation. He provided these professional services without any expectation of personal recognition, and always exhibited the highest levels of excellence and professionalism.

Maurice Bowen, John Weir's friend and professional colleague, believes that the hardships John faced early in life kindled and fueled his powerful sense of empathy and compassion. Presented posthumously, the 2010 Distinguished Service Award for Pro Bono Legal Service honours John A. Weir, QC, for his dedication to access to justice.