

B. C. HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION

ANNUAL REPORT

1998 - 1999

**Produced for the Annual General Meeting
Held at Kiwassa Neighbourhood House
May 12, 1999
6:30 p.m.**

**The B. C. Human Rights Coalition gratefully acknowledges the Law Foundation of British Columbia for our core funding, as well as Canadian Heritage, Multiculturalism B.C. and the City of Vancouver.
Board of Directors 1998-1999**

Table Officers:

President: Leila Harding
Vice-President: Kenneth Smith
Treasurer: Fif Fernandes
Secretary: Judy Lynne

Members at Large:

Gerard Bremault
Serena Chandi
Doronn Dalzell
Mandeep Gill
Evelyn Hortobagyi
Terry Kennedy
Alicia Mercurio
Matthew Yun

Staff 1998-1999

Peter Beaudin (Advocate)
Nafysa Lalani (Administrative Assistant)
Marilyn Minkler (Office Manager)
Susan O'Donnell (Executive Director)

Bookkeeping and Accounting:

Administration: Cat L'Hirondelle, (L'Hirondelle Financial Services)
Auditor: Joanne Dorman, C.A.

Legal Supervision:

Barb Cornish, Robertson Downe
Rob Horricks

1998-99 Recipient of the Renate Shearer Memorial Award

Robert Turner

REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our last Annual General Meeting was held May 20, 1998, where we elected a new Board of Directors. We had our traditional one day meeting with Board and Staff on June 20, 1998, and set our priorities for the upcoming year. We decided to continue our commitment to education in the upcoming year, while still maintaining our advocacy work. As a part of this commitment, because education takes us out of the office, we decided that we should hire an administrative assistant to work Thursdays and Fridays, so that our advocate would not be working alone.

This was the first year the Coalition did not start off with a deficit, and we are pleased to announce that we have not had a funding crisis at all this year.

The Coalition was proud to co-sponsor a human rights forum and reception for the Human Rights Commissioner and the Attorney General of South Africa on July 9th, 1998. Close to 100 people showed up at the Wall Centre to hear a report on the human rights progress being made in South Africa. The other co-sponsors were, the Law Courts Education Society, the B.C. Human Rights Commission, and Multiculturalism B.C.

In September, 1998, the Coalition hired Nafysa Lalani as our part-time administrative assistant. As well, we purchased new equipment and furniture for our offices. We have brand new computers, bookcases, and decent chairs for our boardroom library. In December, 1998, the B.C. Human Rights Commission put out a request for proposals for a legal clinic in human rights, which would provide representation for complainants. The Coalition and CLAS (Community Legal Assistance Society) submitted a joint proposal. We were interviewed by the Commission in February, 1999, and met with the Attorney General and the Deputy Minister on April 9th, 1999. We are currently awaiting a decision on this.

Our International Human Rights Day celebration (December 10) was a big success this year. We had lots of entertainment, a great host in Bill Richardson, a silent auction and a great door prize! The event was held at the Coast Plaza at Stanley Park, and once again co-sponsored by Canadian Heritage. Coordination and work on this event was contributed by the fundraising committee of the Coalition.

The Government Liaison Committee was active as usual this year. We had several meetings with the Deputy Chief Commissioner of Human Rights, and hopefully

assisted with the criteria for intervention in a complaint. This year saw the founding of the human rights sub-committee of the Canadian Bar Association. Meetings are usually about once every two months, and a wide variety of interesting human rights topics are presented. Our committee also participates in shared meetings with the private bar to assess and track the work of the B.C. Human Rights Commission. We are also participating in the Dispute Resolution Design Project of the Commission. The Supreme Court of Canada has recently granted us leave to intervene in the *Blencoe* case. Frances Kelly from CLAS will be representing the Coalition in this matter.

The Services and Staff Liaison Committee worked hard last year as well. This committee was an integral part of the creation of our new staff position, and the ensuing hiring process. We also negotiated staff salary increases in November, 1998. We have been attempting to monitor work load, and to establish some objective criteria for case selection. We are currently looking at the collective agreement in terms of our future growth

Our Board meets once a month, with committee meetings in between.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS B. C. HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION

Education and Consultation: 1998 - 1999

We provided education to over 1,080 students last year.

With regards to consultation, this can take a variety of forms. We meet with individuals and groups who wish to know more about us, or who wish some assistance in accessing our library and resources. We also assist groups and employers and unions who wish some assistance in developing policies on human rights issues. We also consult on a regular basis with the B. C. Human Rights Commission. We did over 143 of these consultations since our last AGM.

Advocacy: 1998 - 1999

As you can see, we carried 208 human rights complaints this year, that is an increase

from 205 last year. We closed 120 files this year, compared to 51 last year.

As of March 26th, 1999, the Coalition is carrying the following files:

Sexual Harassment	29	
Sex Discrimination	37	
Race Discrimination	22	
Physical Disability	35	
Mental Disability	10	
Marital Status	3	
Place of Origin	25	
Age Discrimination	3	
Political Belief	1	
Criminal Record	2	
Family Status	14	
Religious Belief	6	
Sexual Orientation	12	
Section 20	5	
Employment Equity	1	
Hate	-	
Other	3	208 Open Files

In addition to these, the following files were closed between February 10th, 1998 and March 26th, 1999:

Sex Harassment	30	7 settled, 7 dismissed, 11 advice and/or opinion provided, 5 abandoned
Sex Discrimination	15	1 settled, 2 dismissed, 6 advice and/or opinion provided, 6 abandoned
Race	15	1 settled, 2 dismissed, 4 advice and/or opinion provided, 8 abandoned
Physical Disability	25	2 settled, 5 dismissed, 10 advice and/or opinion provided, 8 abandoned
Mental Disability	6	1 settled, 1 dismissed, 4 advice and/or opinion provided
Religion	3	1 dismissed, 2 abandoned

Place of Origin	2	dismissed
Sexual Orientation	6	3 advice and/or opinion provided, 1 judicial review denied, 2 abandoned
Age	5	2 dismissed, 3 abandoned
Family Status	1	dismissed
Marital Status	1	advice and/or opinion provided
Criminal Record	1	dismissed
Section 20	4	3 settled, 1 dismissed
Investigation	1	Investigation Report provided
Other	5	4 advice and/or opinion provided, 1 abandoned

120 Closed Files

In conclusion, the Coalition carried 208 human rights complaints over the past year. Each of our files is reviewed approximately every three months by our supervising lawyers. These are Barbara Cornish who is with Robertson Downe, and Rob Horricks.