

SUSTAINING A LEGACY



Darren Bieganek, KC, Managing Partner

A donor-advised fund ensures Duncan Craig LLP will make community contributions in perpetuity

by Caitlin Crawshaw

With 130 years in operation, Duncan Craig LLP is one of the oldest law firms in the province and one of the most community driven.

“Relationships and community are two of Duncan Craig LLP’s cornerstone values,” says Darren Bieganek, the firm’s managing partner.

“We believe that these values are integral to why we have been able to continuously provide legal services to Albertans since 1894.”

The firm’s founding partners, William Short and Charles Cross, held roles as Edmonton’s first mayor and Alberta’s first attorney general, respectively. Since then, generations of Duncan Craig LLP



The team at Duncan Craig LLP

alumni have served as MLAs, aldermen, city counsellors, and volunteers for political parties at all levels of government. Many others have been appointed as judges at the Provincial Court of Alberta and various superior court levels.

In addition to leadership roles, the firm's members have a long history of contributing to the community at a grassroots level. Bieganek notes that Duncan Craig LLP encourages its members and staff to volunteer for community, athletic and charitable boards, organizations and service clubs.

"One of our community initiatives is to give each staff member a paid half day of work each year to volunteer at an organization of their choice during work hours," he says. "We also set up quarterly volunteer events where we lend a hand to a variety of Edmonton organizations."

The firm also prioritizes corporate giving and in 2013, consolidated its philanthropic efforts by creating a donor-advised endowment fund with Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF).

Established by corporate donors like Duncan Craig LLP — as well as individuals, families and charities — endowment funds provide long-term support to the charitable sector. The funds are invested and a percentage of the value of the fund is donated to the fund founder's charity of choice annually. Each year, ECF endowment funds generate millions of dollars for the charitable sector.

At Duncan Craig LLP, a 12-member community giving committee leads a process to choose the

year's recipients. It starts with polling the firm's partners, associate lawyers and staff to create a list of preferred organizations. A vote is then held to determine the top three or four charities. Last year, the firm supported the Stollery Children's Hospital, Edmonton Food Bank, Kidney Foundation of Canada and Second Chance Animal Rescue.

Over the last 11 years, the endowment fund has grown steadily thanks to careful investment by ECF fund management and regular contributions by Duncan Craig LLP management, as well as staff-led fundraisers.

"The fund is constantly growing," says Bieganek. "Corporate giving is about giving back to the community that has supported us for generations. It is about doing good things not for ourselves, but for the good of the community."

Visit dcllp.com to learn more about Duncan Craig LLP and the services they provide.

Learn more about how a corporate fund can help establish your company as a community leader and enable your staff to play an active role in social responsibility at ecfoundation.org.

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