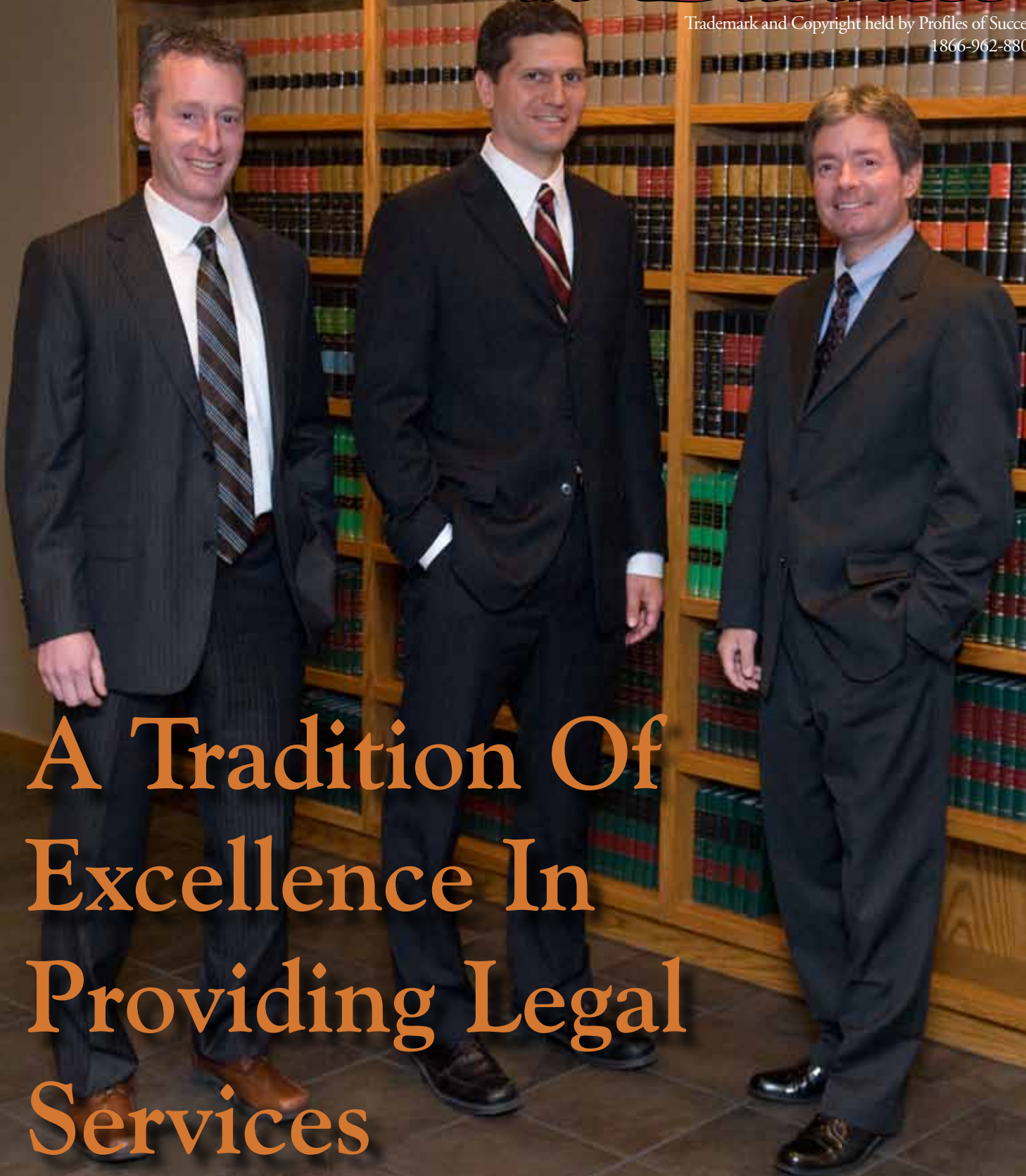


Profiles of **SUCCESS** *in Business*

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A Tradition Of
Excellence In
Providing Legal
Services

A Tradition Of Excellence In Providing Legal Services

By Heather Navarra, The Write Type



Tracing its origins back to 1958, the firm of Campbell Froh May and Rice LLP (known as CFMR) has a tradition of excellence in providing legal services across the province of British Columbia. Located in Richmond, their team of legal advisors is family-oriented and community-minded. With their exceptional reputation, it's clear that they care about every client they have the privilege to serve, taking pride in cutting through the jargon in order to share valuable, practical legal advice that their clients can use.

The firm has existed in its present form since the 1970s. There are now 12 lawyers: 6 partners and 6 associates, with 25 legal support staff. Senior partners Ray Froh and Ralph May are joined by partners Mark Standerwick, Eric Schroter, Katherine Ducey and Jefferson Froh. Ralph May, whose family has farmed in the area since the 1880s, brought with him considerable name recognition when he joined the firm in 1975 and, along with Ray Froh, helped establish the long-standing history that sets the firm apart from its competitors. The other partners also have strong ties and involvement in the community, significantly contributing to the growing success of the practice.

Over the years, the firm has grown and evolved, adapting its expertise to meet changing clients' needs at a sophisticated level. Its lawyers understand the value of continuing education in order to expand their skills and provide their clients with the best possible legal advice.

Although the partners are each quite different in personality, similar goals and a shared vision for the firm's future provide common ground. Each brings to the firm unique and valuable experience, as well as noteworthy achievements. "We are all dedicated to client service and strive to maintain the highest ethical





standards in our practice,” says Eric, who has been with the firm for 16 years. “Our combined knowledge is greater than the sum of its parts. As partners, we are constantly in touch with each other; we brainstorm to solve difficult problems and act as each other’s sounding boards on all matters.”

This suburban law firm relies on the latest technology to keep pace in their busy profession. CFMR constantly upgrades its computers and relies on speciality software to deliver exceptional service, such as client contact systems and an accounting package specifically designed for the legal industry. Blackberries, wireless headsets, and voice recognition software on computers to take dictation – technology is used selectively where it adds to efficiency. “Although our use of technology does not define our practice, we seek to implement new and innovative technology where we believe it will allow us to better serve our clients,” shares Katherine.

Assisting clients from all over B.C.,

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CFMR is one of the larger full-service firms in Richmond. With their wide range of expertise, CFMR’s lawyers have strong communication skills and are active in providing legal advice to a wide variety of corporate and individual clients, ranging from a large provincial utility company (where the firm’s efforts in effectively collaborating with inside counsel were recognized nationally in an industry publication) to financial institutions and small to medium-sized, privately-held companies and businesses. They also assist individuals with commercial and residential real estate transactions, wills and estates. Dynamic and unique because of their commitment to customer service and excellence in their profession, these lawyers provide advice with friendliness and dedication.

It’s clear that their approach is getting results: the majority of their business now comes from repeat clients and referrals, leaving very little need for advertising. “Most of our business is referral-based,” says Mark. “People rarely choose their legal counsel from the Yellow Pages; they need to feel comfortable with their lawyer and have confidence in his or her ability before entrusting their affairs. Our reputation speaks for itself.”

Other measures of success come along regularly: partner Jeff Froh was recently voted ‘Best Lawyer in Richmond’ in a readership poll in the local newspaper, The Richmond Review. The firm assisted a client in restructuring that led to the client being voted ‘Best Employer in Richmond’. Many of CFMR’s lawyers have received recognition for their professional excellence, community involvement and charitable work. Of significant note: former partner Eric Rice was appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court of B.C. and Eric Schroter was elected

as a member of the Provincial Council of the B.C. Branch of the Canadian Bar Association. The firm’s lawyers also teach or assist with law school and continuing legal education activities.

A major contributor to the firm’s success is its ability to attract lawyers and staff with the same ethics and values. “The quality we can deliver is directly related to having the right people who can contribute to the success of our clients,” says Mark, who has been with the firm for 20 years. “Once you have the right people, you can choose a strategy for growth and a vision for where you want the firm to go. That’s what makes a business successful.”

In the short term, goals include improving the firm’s ability to provide cost-effective, timely customer service. Long-term goals include a focus on orderly succession to ensure the overall success of the practice. As partners consider retirement, they are mentoring the next generation to take over in order to continue to serve clients with a seamless transition. Over the next



Eric Schroter, Jefferson Froh and Mark Standerwick



decade, the firm intends to strengthen their role as a regional leader in providing advice to businesses.

Working for a smaller, suburban firm provides a variety of benefits. Members of the firm are committed to having a work/life balance. "We live in the communities we serve," shares Mark. "Our children go to the same schools as our clients' children. We participate in the same

community events and fundraisers. Our clients recognize that we are 'real people'. They respect us for our professional contributions, and they like us because we are fellow members of their community. That has become an important aspect of building lasting relationships."

These professionals enjoy the interaction with clients that a smaller firm allows. Richmond is one of the most multi-cultural communities in Canada, and its diversity means that the partners have developed a strong understanding of the needs of individuals from a variety of backgrounds, including Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Korean, Persian and eastern European. Staff members speak a number of languages and can be called on to interpret in Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi and Japanese. "I enjoy meeting new people and getting to know them," says Eric. "All of us are very people-oriented and involved in our communities."

The firm is focused on building long-term, lasting relationships with clients that will endure beyond their careers. To do that, they recognize that clients must relate to their lawyers for



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reasons other than their professional abilities. Competent, professional, timely, cost-effective, practical advice must be tempered with caring, empathy and compassion. "We often provide legal services on matters such as wills and estates or property purchases, which allows us to get to know our clients more personally," says Eric. "We visit them at their businesses; with farmers, we go out to their farms. We value the opportunity to be involved in charitable causes that are important to our clients."

The quote, 'Clients don't care how much you know until they know how much you care' captures the firm's dedication to client service. "We strive to build a reputation for excellent service, practical advice and trustworthiness," says Eric. "Our partners share a commitment to our clients, our families and our community. Our clients know that they can trust us and that we will provide them with practical advice."