

Elaine Keenan Bengts

1958 – 2022



CBA's Doug Miller Award for her contributions to the Canadian Bar Association.

Elaine's grit and determination were not limited to her professional life. She was active in the leadership of northern sport including as a board member of Sport North, dignitary for the Arctic Winter Games, and involved with Volleyball NWT. In her younger years she played slow pitch with the Legal Eagles.

But her most significant contribution, by her own telling, was the work she did as a parent volunteer, board member, and then President of the Yellowknife Gymnastics Club.

Through her leadership the Gymnastics Club raised funds to build the gymnastics facility in the Multiplex. Elaine's fundraising efforts included leading a group of four families in pledging their homes as security against the gym's mortgage – without which the gym could not have been built.

Elaine also served as a member of the board of the Yellowknife Community Foundation from 2018 to 2022.

As a mother of three girls, Amanda, Lauren and Stacie, Elaine had her hands full at home as well. She lived vicariously through her girls. Their successes were her successes. And she was always there to provide love and counsel when they needed it. Her girls gave her 6 grandchildren – with a 7th on the way -- who became the sunshine in her late years: Araya, Paisley and Oakley (Amanda), Jaxon, William and Sadie (Lauren).

Elaine retired in 2021 and had been looking forward to spending more time with her grandchildren and at her summer home in PEI.

Elaine succumbed to cancer on August 8, 2022.

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

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

Elaine Keenan Bengts died at home in Yellowknife Monday after a valiant battle with cancer. Among those grieving her loss is her husband Peter, Amanda (and Corey) Appelt, Lauren Bengts (and Tyler Andrews), Stacie (and Devon) Stocker, 6 grandchildren, and her siblings, Vaughn (and Hilda) Keenan, Leanne (and Glenn) Tait, and Rena (and Mike) Buhler. She is predeceased by her parents Jeanne (Boulanger) Keenan and John (Jack) Keenan.

Elaine was born on October 3, 1958, in Saskatoon Saskatchewan. She grew up in Sherwood Park, Alberta. In 1969, Elaine's family moved to Yellowknife, NWT, "for two years". She went on to spend 50 years of her life in Yellowknife growing up, raising a family, practicing law, and contributing to community.

Inspired by her dad, Elaine earned her law degree from the University of Alberta, and was called to the NWT bar in 1983, and, after articling and practicing with a local law firm, opened her own practice. In her law practice, she was ferocious. Once having taken up the cause of a client, she fought for them strenuously. She was stubborn, direct, incredibly hard working, often spending long and arduous hours preparing for court examinations and motions. She was fearless in court, standing firm for her clients even when challenged by judge or opposing counsel. She was known as a bulldog and her representation for standing up and fighting for her clients.

Fighting for the right thing was also a hallmark of her long tenure as the NWT and Nunavut Information and Privacy Commissioner. She served more than two decades as the NWT's Privacy Commissioner and strongly believed that our democracy depended on the vigilant protection of privacy rights and the accountability of public institutions.

Elaine was active in various committees of the Law Society of the NWT, as well as the Canadian Bar Association. For a time, she represented the NWT on the Family Law practice committee of the CBA and chaired the CBA Women's Law committee. She was nationally respected for her work and her commitment to the profession and the people she served. She was recognized with the