

## Stephen Graf & Company

**S**tephen Graf has built a law business that mirrors the community he works in: personal, welcoming and growing every year.

“I’m a sole practitioner, and the benefit in that is that I really get to know my clients, I can make myself available to them when they need it,” he said. “I want my clients to walk away feeling that I was helpful, approachable, that I made the process comfortable for them.”

Graf opened his own firm on Columbia Street in 2013, bringing with him his years of experience focusing on wills, trusts, and estates; real estate; and corporate and commercial law.

“I’ve been a lawyer for 10 years, and my three main practice areas have been stable in that time – so being able to take that and develop my own office was wonderful, it was the right time and the right place,” he said.

With a long-time family connection to the area – he grew up in North Burnaby and his wife hailed from New Westminster – the decision to create a home base for his business was an easy one.

“New Westminster has this great community spirit, it really does have that feeling of connection very much like a small town – and at the same time, downtown New Westminster is seeing this wonderful revitalization. You put that together and it’s going to be an exciting place to work for a long time, and a place to grow with.”

The location has the added benefit of being centrally located for clients coming from around the region but also convenient in its proximity to the courthouse library, the Land Title Office, legal support service providers and branches for the major banks.

“From that perspective, it’s just ideal for me and for my clients,” he said.

But Graf says the key to success is, ultimately, client satisfaction – and that’s where he is focused as he continues to

build his reputation in the city and beyond.

“I have the privilege of serving a very wide range of clients, and I do my best to be sensitive to their needs and really tailor the services I provide to each client,” he said. “I value communication, business sense, attention to detail, people skills – those are critical.”

Graf says experience and versatility – the ability to give clients what they need, in the way that works best for them – are hallmarks for his firm.

“I do what I can to be a mobile professional and accessible to clients – it’s part of being helpful and approachable. I like to use legal technology, as long as it gives my clients a better experience. It helps me work faster without sacrificing accuracy, and provides more ways to communicate,” he said. “What I particularly value is ensuring timely client communication. It’s very much a two-way street, actively listening and then explaining legal matters in everyday language.”

He also credits strong relationships with the legal community and legal support services in the area in helping his business growth.

“When you’re a sole practitioner, what’s really important is your interdependence among the referral partnerships as well as support services, such as Dye & Durham. I also work with an amazing real estate paralegal – those relationships make all the difference.”

Graf says he’s hoping to see his business continue to grow and flourish – just like New Westminster itself – in the coming years.

“Part of working in a close-knit community like this is that word gets around. You build a good reputation and people hear about it and clients refer you to others. I love that aspect of the city and this business. It’s an exciting time.”

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