

# BEING THE CHANGE

DIANE CAMPBELL WANTS TO SEE MORE WOMEN LEAD BUSINESSES AND GAIN RECOGNITION FOR THEIR WORK

BY RICHARD WOODBURY



When Diane Campbell learned she was being inducted into the Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame, she went online to learn more about previous inductees. What she found surprised her.

"I was a little bit shocked actually when I went on the website and discovered that there had only been six women inducted previously," she says, "and actually four on their own, two of those women were part of a couple, so I was somewhat shocked by that because there are all kinds of women locally who have businesses and successful businesses and should be honoured."

She wants to help make that happen. "I'll certainly try to help Junior Achievement push that concept forward because I do think more women need to be nominated who are probably more deserving than I am," she says.

Of the Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame's 92 inductees, Campbell, 74, marks just the seventh woman to receive the honour, meaning 7.6 per cent of inductees are women.

Campbell's used to being surrounded by men, whether it was law school where she was just one of three female graduates in a class of 56 or on the many male-dominated boards where she's served.

Today, Campbell is the president and CEO of The Berkeley, a retirement home with four locations in the Halifax area. It opened in 1990; she bought it in 1994, and later opened more locations.

When it first opened, The Berkeley was an unusual addition to the local

real-estate market. "An apartment with services" as Campbell puts it, the units had kitchenettes but not stoves, rather, people would get their meals at an on-site full-service dining room.

The building had a nurse on duty 24 hours a day, there was a recreation co-ordinator who would provide residents with options for exercise and entertainment, and the residents didn't have to worry about cleaning their units or doing their linens. "All of those jobs are carried out on behalf of the resident, so they don't really have a whole lot to be concerned about," says Campbell. "They can just enjoy themselves."

The Berkeley wasn't an immediate success. Campbell's husband, Wes, was an investor in it. "It was a new concept and it didn't fill up very quickly," she recalls. "In fact, they didn't have enough money to operate it and ultimately in 1993, my husband put the building into receivership."

When the opportunity to put in a bid to purchase The Berkeley came up, Campbell was attracted by more than just her husband's connection to the business. She also knew the inner workings of it from another standpoint: her mother-in-law had moved into the building in 1993. Campbell bought the building a year later.

During her career, Campbell encountered sexism, but it hasn't held her back. One reason is she has a thick skin, while another reason is the circumstances that got her into the business world.

She graduated from law school in 1967, joined the bar a year later and practiced law

“I think women bring a very different culture to an organization ”

—DIANE CAMPBELL



**R. DIANE CAMPBELL**

Diane Campbell is President and CEO of Berkeley Holdings Limited, operator of four retirement residences in Halifax. Campbell was born and raised in Halifax. She graduated from Acadia University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree and received her Bachelor of Law Degree from Dalhousie University.

Campbell was admitted to the Nova Scotia Bar in 1968 and practiced law with Daley Black Moreira & Piercey for several years. She served as co-chair of the Heart and Stroke Foundation's door-to-door campaign as well as serving on many boards, including the Canadian Cancer Society (NS Division), Halifax Herald Limited, NS Business Capital Corporation, Discovery Centre, Neptune Theatre, Victoria General Hospital Board of Commissioners, Canadian Stroke Network and Canadiana Fund. She was the founding chair of the Victoria General Hospital Foundation.

She has also served on the Capital Campaign Committees for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Neptune Theatre, and Mount Saint Vincent University's

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until 1975, but gave that up to focus on raising her children. In 1980, Campbell's father died, which meant the businesses he owned needed stewardship, including Maritime Photoengravers (which became Maritime Digital Colour), Maritime Graphic Arts, and an office building in downtown Halifax.

Because Campbell has been in senior positions throughout her business career, she's managed to escape some of the sexism other women have faced, but she hasn't been immune to it. "I was able to do things on my own, whereas not everybody would be able to do that," says Campbell.

On boards she's served on, when financial matters have been discussed, sometimes other board members have said inappropriate things. "There have been men who have made comments about the fact that, 'Well, oh, the women wouldn't understand that,'" says Campbell. "I guess I just let that roll off my back and don't pay too much attention to it. You do hear it."

And there have been times in business where people haven't helped their case in trying to get trades work from Campbell. "I've had the experience where people have been condescending," she says. "Of course, if you're interviewing three or four different people to do some of these things, you're obviously not going to be thinking about them when the time comes to make your decision. I have just avoided people like that. If that's their attitude, then I have no intention of working with them."

Campbell advises women working their way up the corporate ladder to stay focused. "The next thing you have to have is a passion for what it is you're trying to accomplish, and I think if you have that passion, I think other people feel it and it gives them a motivation to really help you to succeed," she says.

Campbell is pleased sexist attitudes seem less prevalent in the local business scene but thinks it's important that people be educated about the different skills women bring to the table.

"I think women bring a very different culture to an organization," she says. "I'm not quite sure how to say it, maybe a kinder [element]. I think they bring a little bit of a different sense to an organization. I think they're better team players in many cases and that may seem like an odd thing to say, but I think in many cases that men are looking at how they're going to get to the top of the ladder, they may not be so interested in the relationships that they're developing within the organization as women are."

Campbell points to The Berkeley as an example, an operation that employs mostly female workers, including in the executive positions. "I just find in our organization we care about one another, we care about how people are being looked after, both financially and emotionally inside our organization. That may be something men are not so attuned to," she says.

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“It is such a great honour to be inducted into the JA Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame. I feel privileged to join the ranks of the esteemed business people previously inducted, and to be considered a role model for youth who demonstrate entrepreneurial interest and leadership. As a business woman, I am delighted to be named a laureate and it is my hope that my induction will pave the way for other Nova Scotian women to earn this recognition.”

—DIANE CAMPBELL



Project TWENTY12. Campbell is past chair of the Board of Trustees and former member of the Board of Management, Finance and Property Maintenance Committees of First Baptist Church Halifax, the Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation and Medical Dean's Advisory Board. Campbell served as vice-chair of the Discovery Centre Rediscover Campaign Cabinet and currently serves on the Board of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia.

She and her husband, Wesley Campbell, have two children and four grandchildren. In 2013 Campbell was the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

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Congratulations to our Dr. Paw Team of students who worked with us throughout the year from the Junior Achievement Company Program!

L-R Ethan Johnston (VP Production), Laurel Broten (President and CEO, NSBI), Eric Zhang (VP Finance), Alice Song (President), Michael Baldrige (VP Digital /VP HR)  
 \*Missing from photo is Hala Abu Nahia (VP Sales and Marketing) and Tatyana Kovtun (VP Social Media)

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