

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

**2015 Business Leader of the Year Announced by Kelowna Chamber**

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*Kelowna, BC* – The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce announced today that Theresa Arsenault, QC has been named Business Leader of the Year for 2015. The award recognizes and celebrates Ms. Arsenault for her outstanding contribution to the business community in Kelowna.

Theresa Arsenault has been practicing business and estate planning law as a partner with Pushor Mitchell LLP for the past 30 years. She has been a leader in her firm, serving 18 years on the Management Committee, 4 of them as Managing Partner. She developed a very successful practice, with her many valued clients relying on her expertise in commercial transactions, real estate developments, including on First Nations lands, trusts and estate planning. She acts as a mentor to lawyers within her firm and to other lawyers in the community.

Theresa has been a leader in her profession as well, presenting at continuing legal education seminars on First Nations land development, real estate matters, and estate planning topics. She serves as a practice advisor to lawyers in the province, and was awarded the designation Queens Counsel in 2009 in recognition of her outstanding contributions to her profession.

Theresa has contributed in many volunteer capacities in the community: as a director and vice president economic development for the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, as a director and chair of the board of directors of the United Way, as a board member and vice-chair of the KGH Foundation, as a trustee for the BC Cancer Agency, and in numerous other volunteer capacities. As a steward and later co-chair of the Okanagan Partnership, Theresa was instrumental in a helping advance a number of valley wide initiatives, including regional planning, and regional water and transportation initiatives.

The community has been the beneficiary of Theresa’s significant efforts to improve access to higher education for the Okanagan Valley. She successfully led the “Getting There by Degrees” campaign to have Okanagan College granted the ability to offer 4 year courses. When Okanagan College became Okanagan University College, she served on the board of directors and as vice-chair. When UBC expanded to the Okanagan in 2005, she served as an advisor to the president of UBC on the External Advisory Committee, and subsequently served 6 years on the board of governors, finishing her term as chair of the board of governors of all of UBC. She continues to serve the cause of higher education and to help UBCO as co-chair of the External Advisory Council for UBCO. She is passionate about improving access to higher education for aboriginal students, and celebrates the successes UBCO has had with its Aboriginal Access program and its outreach programs to bring higher education to the community, such as the recent very successful pre-entry course at the Ki-lowna Friendship Centre.

“The importance of UBCO to the Okanagan Valley cannot be over-stated: it is the finest kind of clean industry, and the long term effects of being a university town are of incalculable value. The influx of bright students and faculty are changing our demographic from a retirement centre to a centre of innovation . The research partnerships between the university and industry, and the opportunities for the students to create positive social change have so much potential to accelerate the development of the Okanagan to be the best it can be.”

When Theresa moved here with her husband Stuart Marshall 30 years ago, she was determined to help this city develop into the best possible place to raise her family and live. They greatly enjoy the natural beauty of the Okanagan, the many recreational opportunities: skiing, cycling, and hiking, and the fabulous wine and art of the area.

{insert info on Chamber awards night}

*The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce acts as a single powerful voice for their 1200 members and their 25,000 plus employees to promote local business interests. The Chamber provides a cohesive business network for its members to expand their business contacts, value-added benefits, programs, and services aimed at improving the bottom line of Chamber members. Their mission is to foster a positive business environment by providing members with leadership, advocacy and services of value.*

For the past 35 years, Small Business Week® has paid tribute to Canadian entrepreneurs and created opportunities for them to share success stories and innovative ideas.  Unprecedented synergy has resulted from the active participation of members of the Chambers of Commerce, and various national and local partners/sponsors in organizing events with BDC branches across the country – all dedicated to the growth and development of small and medium sized business.

*For more information:*

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