

NOIA NEWS

A photograph of a sunset over a vast ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow that reflects on the water's surface. The sky is a mix of light blue and orange. The overall mood is serene and hopeful.

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Bruce Grant, QC, senior partner with Stewart McKelvey's St. John's office

Stewart McKelvey celebrates 30 years with Noia

With a rich history in Atlantic Canada, Stewart McKelvey is being recognized for 30 years of Noia membership and service to the oil & gas industry. Since becoming the first regional law firm over 25 years ago, it has grown to become one of the 20 largest law firms in Canada, employing more than 200 lawyers and 300 staff within six offices in St. John's, Halifax, Saint John, Fredericton, Moncton and Charlottetown.

The company has a long history in the region. The original Newfoundland firm, Sterling Ryan, came through a merger of two St. John's firms, the oldest of which dates back to 1847. The current firm was created through a 1990 merger which brought together the largest law firms in each of the four Atlantic provinces at the time.

Bruce Grant, QC, senior partner with the St. John's office, said the decision to create a regional firm was a major shift in the legal community.

"It was a bold move at the time and we've found that most of our best decisions are bold decisions. That's something that we bring to the entrepreneurial mindset that most of our clients have."

Grant added that all of the firm's offices work collaboratively for the benefit of clients.

"We're all pulling on the oar in the same direction and it gives us a depth of expertise which is paramount to us."

One of Stewart McKelvey's many areas of specialty is the oil & gas industry.

"Historically, we've always had a strong expertise in the admiralty field and, of course, that has certainly come into play now with the offshore work," Grant said.

The firm's early oil & gas work in Newfoundland and Labrador involved litigation such as the Come By Chance Oil Refinery bankruptcy, the Ocean Ranger inquiry and the Hibernia constitutional reference. In the early days of the industry, Grant said many clients were in need of legal support to help with joint venturing as a means to break into the supply and service side of the industry. Over time, more companies entered into direct contractual arrangements.

The firm has acted for a number of the industry operators, including the Hibernia, Terra Nova and Hebron projects, as well as Newfoundland Transshipment Limited, the Canaport LNG facility and several tank farms in Atlantic Canada.

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Stewart McKelvey has also worked extensively in the areas of acquisitions, financing, chartering and sales of vessels.

More recently, Grant said technological development and innovation has become a focus for the firm.

“I think, for Newfoundland firms to prosper, we’re going to have to start being exporters of that expertise, as well as just doing it here in our own backyard. And, in order to be able to service the clients at the highest level and in an ethical and efficient way, we’ve had to grow in all those areas with them.”

Grant said Noia has been an important part of the region’s oil & gas industry growth. His own involvement in Noia has provided him with valuable knowledge, as well as a way to give back to the industry which has helped shape his career.

“I’ve many times said I don’t know what my legal practice would have looked like had we not had the oil & gas development off our coast,” Grant said. “On a personal level and on a firm level, the whole development of the industry has been a real boon. I’d hate to think how dull my practice would have been without it these last 38 years.”

Grant added that Noia serves an important role for the industry.

“Noia has been that voice that, sometimes, nobody else can be in regards to protecting and promoting the industry.”

Grant said he always directs those looking to work in the oil & gas industry to Noia.

“It’s all part of that philosophy that the firm has that we succeed when our clients succeed, so we want to make sure that we do everything to help them that we can.”

Grant said a key to Stewart McKelvey’s success is staying current and keeping ahead of trends. As such, it employs a chief innovation partner to find new and innovative ways to deliver the firm’s services.

“We like to think that we’re not just lawyers but also trusted advisors to our clients. To do that you have to have the industry knowledge, you have to be on top of the trends and you have to be innovative.” ■



NOIA FALL Seminar

November 14, 2018 • Delta St. John’s Hotel

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