

Daily Commercial News spotlights Sandra Astolfo, 2019 recipient of the OBA's construction and infrastructure law excellence award

October 28, 2019

Dan O'Reilly of *Daily Commercial News* spoke with WeirFoulds Partner, Sandra Astolfo, after she was awarded with the 2019 Construction and Infrastructure Law Award of Excellence by the Ontario Bar Association.

Astolfo is the youngest person and the first female to receive the award which is based on wide criteria including candidates' excellence in construction law matters and their volunteer commitment to the profession.

The award was presented at the OBA's Construction and Infrastructure Law Section's year-end dinner.

"I was humbled and shocked (to be named)," says Astolfo, who only received notice of the selection a few weeks before the June event.

Asked why she believes she was nominated, Astolfo cites several factors such as her past record serving on the OBA executive, her willingness to speak and/or chair legal continuing education programs, and her legal demeanor.

"I always try to treat other lawyers with respect and deal with disputes in a courteous manner. You can be tough/firm, but there is no need to be rude or be a bully."

Nominating a female lawyer may also inspire other women to remain practising in the construction law field, says Astolfo who recently established an informal mentor group to connect younger female construction lawyers with women who have specialized in that discipline for some time.

"For whatever reason there is a large turnover of female lawyers in construction law," she says in explaining the rationale for the group's creation.

If the award was a major milestone for someone still very much in the prime of their profession, the beginning of that career, or at least her introduction to construction, can be traced back to her father. After immigrating to Canada from Italy, he became a mason and later started his own home building business.

"I had been on construction sites since I was a young girl and as I got older I helped my dad issue cheques to pay invoices."

Other people have influenced her career choices such as a family friend who was a lawyer and who Astolfo describes as a 'mentor'.

In her fourth year of university she was considering whether to apply to teachers' college or law school, but ultimately choose the

second option in large part because of the impression the lawyer friend made.

“I always enjoyed speaking with him and respected the way in which he spoke of his profession. I admired the way in which he thought about problems and communicated his opinion.”

“After my first year of practice, I knew this was an area of law that was exciting, ever changing, and would keep me engaged for a long time.”

Visit canada.constructconnect.com to read the full article.

WeirFoulds^{LLP}

www.weirfoulds.com

Toronto Office

4100 – 66 Wellington Street West
PO Box 35, TD Bank Tower
Toronto, ON M5K 1B7

Tel: 416.365.1110

Fax: 416.365.1876

Oakville Office

1320 Cornwall Rd., Suite 201
Oakville, ON L6J 7W5

Tel: 416.365.1110

Fax: 905.829.2035