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Elizabeth Brown's OBA Award of Excellence Acceptance Speech

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On June 14, 2017 Elizabeth Brown, of Hicks Morley Hamilton StewartT Storie LLP was honored by her peers at a special award dinner at Archeo restaurant in Toronto. The OBA Award of Excellence in Pensions and Benefits Law was established in 2007 to recognize exceptional contributions to the field of pensions and benefits law.

Below is an excerpt of Elizabeth's speech upon receiving the award.



As we know, most people, including many in this room, would rather stick pins in their eyes than wrestle a pension issue to the ground.

But this is precisely what I love about it. As my partner Michael Kennedy will tell you, I also like that you can sometimes work around the case law – there isn't much although there is a lot more now than there used to be! When you start inside the box, you will sometimes find the answer or the solution or the thing that will work, there and then, a given. But sometimes with pensions, outside is the only place you can find the solution your client needs. Then it is magical.

If you are closer to the beginning of your careers, the single most important thing you can do is to find something you really like, or love, to do. To love the law, which I was lucky to have been able to learn from Chris Riggs, who gave so much to Hicks Morley and whose spirit is with us tonight, is to understand that the practice of law, the work, is hard and long and there are no short cuts to knowing your craft. But it can be a joyous work if you give it not just your mind, but your heart.

The work is nothing without our community. Our pension law bar is small, but our community is vast, encompassing colleagues, counsel in other firms, counsel in other bars, actuaries and consultants, decision makers, law makers, and of course, our *raison d'être*, the clients.

We are incredibly fortunate to have such a network. It is broad and deep and rich. We have so much to teach each other, I learn something every day from the interactions I am privileged to have. People in our community are patient, generous with their time, generally give the benefit of the doubt, are overwhelmingly trustworthy and a pleasure to know.

The ability to intersect, to connect, to listen to, to learn from, to get frustrated with, to be challenged by each other ultimately shapes each one of us. I do not think of this wonderful award, then, as just to me. It is a manifestation of the rich, nurturing, supportive relations we share with each other, the community I have grown in and grown to love and respect. My deepest and most sincere thanks to each and every one of you.

View the event [photo gallery](#).

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