In memory of Alexander K. Paterson

It is with deep sadness that we learned of the passing of Alexander Kennedy Paterson on August 6, 2025. Alex began his law career in 1957 at the firm of Heward, Holden, Hutchison Cliff, McMaster & Meighen and was made partner in 1969. He retired from the same firm known as BLG in 2008, although continued to return to the office until a few years ago.

There were many facets to AKP's life. He would often talk about his family, his dear wife and cheerleader extraordinaire Joany as well as their children (Robb, Tim, Angie, and Alex), only to be followed in subsequent years by many grandchildren.

Alex was a talented and accomplished barrister who pleaded before all courts of Québec, the Supreme Court of Canada on multiple occasions, parliamentary commissions, and administrative tribunals. He was a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers Association, awarded the Medal of Honour of the Montréal Bar and was bestowed the distinction of Advocatus Emeritus (2010) by the Barreau du Québec. Most notably, he was the lead negotiator on behalf of the Québec government during the Oka Crisis and was retained as the Québec government's special inquirer in relation to labour disputes in Québec school systems (1976). He also acted as Québec counsel for Sergei Nemstanov, who defected from Russia to Canada at the Montréal Olympic Games.

Alex made an extraordinary commitment within the community, for which he was appropriately recognized when he was awarded the Order of Canada (1982), Ordre national du Québec (1993), Order of Montréal (1998), and several honorary degrees.

In the education field, he was a member of the board (1995-2005) and chancellor of Bishop's University, chairman of the Board of Governors of McGill University (1990-1995), and chair of the Advisory Council of the Québec English School Board Association.

In the health sector, he participated in the development of health legislation in Québec for 30 years, taught medical law at McGill (1973-1979), was the chairman of the Steering Committee responsible for setting up the MUHC, at one point interim chair of the board of the MUHC (1994-1995), as well as president of the Mackay Centre and its foundation, the Butters Home Foundation, and the Adaptive Sports Foundation.

More generally in the community, he was chair of the Foundation of Greater Montréal, co-chair of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, founding chairman of Alliance Québec (1982), vice-president of the Québec / Canada Pre-Referendum Executive Committee for the No. The citation at the time of the awarding of his Order of Canada reads: "In the past ten years he has come strongly to the fore as champion of the English-speaking minority of Québec, and of cooperation — rather than separation between language groups. So great was his zeal for Canadian unity that he has been nicknamed the "Confederation Man."

In the business community, he was a director of several companies over the years, including APV-Hall Crepaco, Laurentian Bank of Canada, Laurentian Trust of Canada, and the Fondation de l'Ordre des Ingénieurs du Québec.

He was also a raconteur extraordinaire. The essence of the man and his love for storytelling can be read in his autobiography published in 2005, entitled *My Life at the Bar and Beyond.*

Alex built an ironclad reputation rooted in four guiding principles: supporting his fellow partners, delivering outstanding client service, nurturing professional excellence, and giving back to the community. In living out these principles daily, Alex was an impressively versatile man: he could charm nine justices of the Supreme Court one day and then read to school children the next; he could draft a legal opinion for high-profile clients one day and then lead fundraising efforts for the Montréal Children's Hospital Foundation the next. No matter what he was doing, Alex led by example and introduced a wonderful character, Chaim, to our mail room to provide him with real-life experience. Alex had a caring and personable leadership.

"It is often said that you won't remember what someone said, but how they made you feel. Alex greeted everyone with a smile, made them feel at ease, and treated them with respect. Alex was a role model to countless lawyers and members of the Firm, including myself. His generosity for helping others knew no bounds. His principles laid the foundation for generations of BLG lawyers to come and constitute core values of the Firm's culture today," concludes close friend and BLG Partner John G. Murphy.

Details regarding a celebration of life will be forwarded when provided by the family.

For more information, please contact:

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