

HON. P. DEREK LEWIS, Q.C.



P. Derek Lewis, Q.C., who represented Newfoundland in the Senate of Canada for 21 years, and was among the world's most senior lawyers, died on January 19, 2017, at St. John's. He was 92.

Born in 1924 at St. John's—his lifelong residence—he was graduated from high school at Bishop Field College in 1941; then attended Memorial College for two years. He never attended law school. Instead, he 'read' law—which involved legal training in a lawyer's office—for four years.

He was admitted to the Newfoundland Bar in October, 1947. For the next 69 years and three months—until shortly before his passing—he practised law; most recently as senior partner of the law firm Lewis, Day, with offices at and near St. John's. No other Newfoundland-licensed

lawyer has practised longer, since licensing began in 1826. His junior partner, David C. Day, Q.C., said that “few lawyers in the world have ever spent more years of their lives devoted to the law.” His law partners, during his legal career, included statesman Hon. John C. Crosbie; lawyers Gerald F. Lang, Fintan J. Aylward and J. Douglas Cook who became Supreme Court Justices, and Barry R. Sparkes, later Registrar of the Supreme Court.

He appeared as legal counsel in all Newfoundland courts, in the Exchequer (now Federal) Court, and Supreme Court of Canada.

His law practice was temporarily restricted while, as appointee of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, he served in the Senate of Canada from 1978 to 1999. In 1984, he co-authored a report by the Special Joint Senate-House of Commons Committee on Reform of the Senate.

He had earlier been treasurer of the Newfoundland Liberal Party from 1968 to 1982, and secretary of the Liberal Federation of Canada, from 1970 to 1975.

He served as an executive member of the Law Society from 1962 to 1978; and for 25 years was the inaugural chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Law Foundation. In recognition of his contribution to law and public life, the Law Society, in 2015, conferred on him the Degree of Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa), and in 2016, Life Membership in the Society.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Grace (French) Lewis.

Details will, in the near future, be announced of a memorial service in celebration of Mr. Lewis’ legal career and public service.

David C. Day, Q.C.
Barrister/Master of Supreme Court of
Newfoundland and Labrador
1.709.753.2545
dcdqc@lewisday.ca

[Contributed photo taken October 1947]