



THE REPORT OF THE

# CGRA

Canadian Grandparents Rights Association Established in 1986

## PROGRESS IN CANADA— RECOGNITION FOR FAMILIES

- Parental Alienation Awareness Day on April 25th is now marked annually in many corners of the globe— and progress is being made on various fronts.
- The first World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was on June 15, 2012.
- Intergenerational Day is also in June and it's on June 1, 2014

### HELPING FAMILIES IN DISTRESS

Since 1986, the Canadian Grandparents Rights Association has been helping Canadian families in distress after a divorce or death in the family.

QUESTIONS ?

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**HELLO, EVERYONE:** Spring has arrived in all its beauty. Although CGRA's long struggle since 1986 isn't over yet, thanks to our present federal government we may finally witness some changes to the Divorce Act.

Bill C-560 was tabled in the House of Commons before Christmas, and it is expected to be presented in the coming months. This legislation will impact The Divorce Act, which (hopefully) will make progressive reforms similar to the recommendations stated in the 1998 Report, *For the Sake of the Children*. The cornerstone of the 48 recommendations was the call for *shared parenting*. We can but wait and hope.

CGRA's message has always insisted that children need the continued love and care of both parents. It shows awareness, even 30 years ago in 1984, that Minister of Justice Mark MacGuigan, who was the architect of the phrase "best interests of the child," also stated at the time that, "A child should have maximum access to both parents."

It is unfortunate for all Canadians that successive Ministers of Justice ignored his words, and that this failure has contributed to situations of mistreatment and child abuse and—through the denial of family involvement for many children and their grandparents—to what the CGRA considers to be elder abuse.

### **IN MEMORY OF FLORENCE KNIGHT**

It is with sadness CGRA received this message from Florence Knight's family: Florence Knight passed away in Calgary, on Saturday 3, May 2014, two days short of her 84<sup>th</sup> birthday. Florence was a National Director of Grandparent's Rights, Alberta, and a close friend of Nancy Wooldridge.



Under Florence's directorship, the Grandparents Rights Association impacted hugely on federal parliamentarians, members of the Alberta Legislature, jurists and senators, demanding that changes be made with respect to grandparents being acknowledged as "persons" in law, and also being "important in a grandchild's life." Florence was instrumental in bringing Alberta's Bill 204 before the Legislature and receiving assent as law.

*Heather Forsyth, MLA for Calgary Fish Creek sent this letter to Florence:*

*Dear Florence:*

*I am sending you a copy of the original Bill 204 which was signed by the Lieutenant Governor when it received Royal Assent May 29, 1997.*

*Thank you for the many hours, days, weeks, and years of hard work which you have put into achieving more rights for grandparents. Your persistence has paid off and I thank you for your help. I know that your dedication and the efforts to assist me to achieve Bill 204 will be remembered as grandparents re-establish relationships with grandchildren.*

*Florence, we were a great team and we did it! Thanks for your help.*

*Yours truly, Heather Forsyth, MLA*

Those of us who knew Florence knew she was a very special person. She knew how to stay the course, in spite of the pain in her personal life. She will be forever in our hearts.

**Daphne Jennings, National Director, CGRA**