

We are very pleased to announce that, exceptionally, the Québec Bar, this year, is conferring two *Mérite* awards on lawyers from our firm. Two of our partners, Michel Yergeau and Jean Saint-Onge, are being honoured with these awards by their professional governing body in recognition of their remarkable careers.

First, Mr. Yergeau is being honoured with a *Mérite* award in recognition of his professional career as a whole, including his pioneering work in the development of environmental law and public consultation practices in Quebec.

As vice-president from 1979 to 1984 of the *Bureau des audiences publiques sur l'environnement* (BAPE), a Quebec government agency which holds hearings on environmental protection issues, he played a decisive role in the establishment of the agency and its rules of practice, which are used as a model throughout Canada. For more than 30 years, he has practiced environmental law exclusively, and was the first in private practice to do so. He authored the annotated edition of the *Environment Quality Act*, the forerunner of several similar annotated statutes. He has also served on the Québec Bar's environmental law committee for nearly ten years. In this capacity, he has represented the Bar on several occasions before parliamentary commissions studying various draft environmental laws. Mr. Yergeau is also the chairman of the board of Lavery, de Billy and a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

Secondly, Mr. Saint-Onge is receiving a *Mérite* award for his continued support of the Québec Bar and his contributions to the community.

Very involved in his profession, he chairs the Québec Bar's class actions committee. He has served on several of the Québec Bar's other professional committees, including the committee on the future of the profession, the motions committee and the committee on women in the profession. He was president of the Young Bar Association of Montreal in 1989 and served on the Bar of Montreal's Council and on the Québec Bar's administrative committee in 1990 and 1991.

Regularly asked to be a speaker, he organizes and leads every year the Bar's continuing education seminar on recent developments in class actions in Canada and the United States.

Mr. Saint-Onge practices mainly in the field of litigation, more particularly as defence counsel in class actions, including national class actions, against corporations and public bodies and involving, among others, issues of manufacturer's liability or competition, consumer, environmental or insurance law.

In addition to his professional activities, Mr. Saint-Onge has devoted himself for nearly 20 years to the cause of children who are victims of abuse, notably as chairman of the board of the Fondation Marie-Vincent and the Centre d'expertise en agression sexuelle Marie-Vincent. The latter organization represents a social innovation in that it is the only organization in the francophone world to offer specialized and integrated services to young victims of sexual aggression and their families. He also participated in the work of the Government of Quebec's Comité consultatif sur la Stratégie d'action jeunesse 2006-2009.

New honorary title: Avocat émérite

As recipients of *Mérite 2007* awards, Michel Yergeau and Jean Saint-Onge will receive the Québec Bar's new honorary title of *Avocat émérite (Ad.E.)*. They join their partners, Ms. Odette Jobin-Laberge, recipient of a *Mérite* award in 2006, and Mr. J. Vincent O'Donnell, recipient of the *Médaille du Barreau* in 1999, who are also receiving this new title recognizing the excellence of lawyers having outstanding careers.