

MR. JUSTICE HARVEY BROWNSTONE

Harvey Brownstone is very likely the most famous and well-known judge in Canada. He has been a judicial trailblazer, single-handedly reinventing the public image of the judiciary with his bestselling book, public appearances, media interviews, and his TV show.

Canada's first openly gay judge

Having served as a legal aid lawyer and then as Director of Ontario's family support enforcement program, Justice Brownstone was appointed to the Bench in 1995 at the age of 38 years. His appointment made history because he was the first openly gay judge appointed in Canada. When same-sex marriage became legal in Ontario in 2003, Justice Brownstone made himself publically available to conduct wedding ceremonies for same-sex couples at his court house, as hundreds of lesbian and gay couples from around the world flocked to Canada to avail themselves of the right to be legally married. As a consequence, Justice Brownstone quickly became the face and voice of Canada's marriage equality laws throughout the world, and was featured in *People Magazine*, *CNN* and every major news network in Canada.

He has given speeches at many prestigious events and conferences in the USA on the topic of enhancing legal rights for the LGBT community. In October 2003 he was honoured as a "same-sex marriage pioneer" at a gala benefit held by New York's Civil Marriage Trail. On June 14, 2008 he was again honoured in New York City on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the legalization of same-sex marriage in Ontario, and he received a Proclamation of Appreciation from the New York State Senate in gratitude for having conducted wedding ceremonies for hundreds of New York same-sex couples. In 2008 Mr. Justice Brownstone was voted "Best Behind-the-Scenes Champion" by the readers of Xtra magazine, in recognition of his efforts to support and enhance human rights for the LGBT community throughout the world. Most recently, Mr. Justice Brownstone is featured in a multi-award winning documentary feature film on same-sex marriage entitled, "Edie and Thea: A Very Long Engagement", which was broadcast in the USA on the Sundance Channel in December 2009.

Reinventing the judiciary from adjudicator to public educator – Tug of War

Justice Brownstone is best known for being the first and only sitting family court judge in the world to have authored a national best seller that speaks directly to the public about the family justice system. *Tug of War: A Judge's Verdict on Separation, Custody Battles and the Bitter Realities of Family Court*, was released in February 2009, and spent 13 weeks on the national best seller list. The book, which is now in its 4th printing, was met with instant accolades both within and outside legal circles, because of its compelling message to warring parents, practical advice and penetrating glimpse into the complex maze of the family court system. Justice Brownstone boldly and unabashedly spreads his compelling message in a frank and refreshing way, urging parents in dispute to put

their children's needs ahead of their own and avoid high conflict litigation whenever possible.

Because of the strong media response to *Tug of War*, Mr. Justice Brownstone was catapulted into the national media spotlight, and was featured in every major newspaper, and appeared on over 100 radio and television interview programs, including *CBC's The National*, *CTV's Canada AM* and *W5*, *TVO's The Agenda with Steve Paikin* (twice), *CTS On the Line with Christine Williams*, and many others. Justice Brownstone has become one of the most sought-after speakers on the North American lecture circuit, and regularly addresses audiences at educational institutions, conventions for lawyers, mental health professionals, teachers, and the general public. Because of his natural charisma and penchant for 'telling it like it is,' and because he is one of the very few judges willing to engage the media and accept public speaking engagements, Justice Brownstone has become the face and voice of Canada's family justice system.

First Sitting Judge to Ever Host his Own TV Show

Following an intensive 15 month cross-Canada media and speaking tour throughout 2009-2010 to promote *Tug of War*, Justice Brownstone was convinced more than ever of the burgeoning public need for reliable, useful, easily accessible information about family law, the justice system and a wide variety of issues having to do with relationships, parenting and the wellbeing of children. Building on the strong foundation of public education he created with *Tug of War*, he took the courageous and unprecedented step of elevating his public profile (and that of the judiciary) to a new dimension: the Internet and Television. In April 2010 he agreed to host his own online talk show, *Family Matters*: <http://www.familymatterstv.com>. In collaboration with visionary lawyer-entrepreneur Nancy Kinney of [AdviceScene](http://www.advicescene.com), Justice Brownstone embraced modern technology to provide online public education in the form of in-depth interviews with a wide variety of professionals, educating the public about child support, mediation, collaborative law, child protection, and a great many other topics of interest to parents, families, and the professionals who work with them. In the Fall of 2011, Justice Brownstone and Nancy Kinney took the show to the airwaves with 15 new broadcast episodes on topics such as parental alienation, domestic abuse, grandparents' rights and mens' rights. The show broadcasts 5-7 times per week in BC and Ontario. It has proved to be very popular with viewers, enjoying continual positive feedback offline and online. The independent stations broadcasting the show report continual emails and phone calls about the show. Justice Brownstone's courtroom had to be shut down the day after the first episode aired in Ontario – there were over a hundred fans waiting for his autograph and photo. The email server at the courthouse was so clogged up with emails about the show, that it also shut down that day. Justice Brownstone and Nancy were featured in the *Globe and Mail*, *Vancouver Sun*, *Lawyer's Weekly*, *Law Times*, and many other smaller publications last Fall. And Justice Brownstone was invited on *CBC's The Current* last Fall too, which received huge attention from across the country.

A Philanthropist Judge

Justice Brownstone is also an important philanthropist. He has not received any financial benefit or remuneration from his public education activities. All of the royalties from the sale of *Tug of War* have been directed to the Children's Wish Foundation, to help grant the wishes of children suffering from life-threatening illnesses. In addition, Justice Brownstone receives no remuneration from the show, *Family Matters* while he is a sitting judge. If the show profits, he's directed that 25% of the proceeds be donated to children's charities in lieu of his remuneration while he is a sitting judge.