

Peel Biog. Br  
Jan. 30 - 85 H

## Spotlight on Nancy Mossip

# The law of a good woman

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Business Reporter

Oh, sure, Nancy Mossip wanted to change the world: Law school, government, a sprinkling of politics, and maybe even off to the Legislature to redress the wrongs of society.

But that's not how things worked out. And she doesn't mind one bit.

"I realized in law school that I wasn't going to change the world," she admits. "So I lowered my expectations about where I was going to be of most influence."

Mossip, 35, was called to the bar in 1979 and a year later opened up her own practice in Mississauga. She's the only practitioner in Peel who has restricted her practice to family law and divorce.

No small practice that one, with today's divorce rate. But then there's also Zonta, a professional women's service club which she presides over, and her work as first vice-president of the Peel Law Association; she was on the city's planning committee and has an endless list of speaking engagements.

All that, not to mention her five-month-old gurgling baby Daniel waiting at home.

How does she do it?

"I try to keep the two worlds separate," she says, praising the efforts of her live-in nanny. "In some ways you have to separate them. I hope I've been successful at that."

The fallibility of wedlock is all too evident to Mossip. She sees it every day in the bitter faces of her clients. But she says she has learned something from her practice.

"It has made me more aware of marital problems, and maybe more sensitive to the marital relationships. I see what the results are, so I work harder at my own marriage."

She says that while 90 per cent of her practice does not result in litigation but is settled out of court, sometimes she must wear many hats — that of lawyer, friend, psychologist and counsellor.

"I try not to be too much of a social worker," she says, "but occasionally I'm caught in some very emotional situations,



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and you have to play a little bit of a counselling role."

Mossip says the problem is "many lawyers do not help in neutralizing a volatile situation."

"I can sure do a helluva lot to make matters worse, but I can also exercise a lot of control over my clients, saving them money, time and a lot of anguish," she said.

Mossip says she thinks most lawyers are "responsible enough not to make money on other people's misery, or to take unreasonable positions and drag the case in to court."

And when lawyering gets to be a pain, Mossip says she's grateful for having the ear of her husband-confessor, Michael Balkwill, and their child, Daniel.

"When you're sitting around entertaining a five-month-old baby, you don't have much time to think about much else," she said.

