TURKESSA BLADES, MS.

CAREER PROFILE

Legal expert with strong leadership skills who provides exceptional quality service to both individuals and organizations that require legal expertise within the Public Law, Civil arena, Family Law, Company Law Alternative Dispute Settlement and Corporate Secretarial environments.

CORE COMPETENCIES

STRATEGIC:	Highly proficient in Corporate Law, Family Law, Civil Law and Alternative Dispute Settlements, affecting the legal arena in the marketplace.
COLLABORATIVE:	An excellent communicator with a consultative style.
INNOVATIVE:	Creative and proactive integration of technology with relation to business needs.
KNOWLEDGEABLE:	Well versed in all aspects of Corporate Law and local regulatory requirements.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

March 2010 – Present **PROPRIETOR – SENIOR LEGAL PRACTITIONER**

Opened a legal practice and has ascertained a client list comprising of private individuals and private companies in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Grenada and Guyana, where in summary the services provided include:

- Civil Litigation (The matters engaged in covers issues of contract, constitutional law, judicial review, conveyance, employment and insurance.)
- Contract negotiation, preparation and execution (in Health Services, Employment, Consultancy of varying in nature, FIDIC etc.)
- Family Law, Conveyance, Mediation, Estate Services, Environmental Law, Company Secretarial Services – These Services are provided for varying Companies e.g, Syncon Technologies, Soluna Company Limited, Barbados Fertility Centre(Trinidad) Limited, Smith Manufacturing , Worldwide Reinsurance Company Limited etc.

Arising out of the nature of matters dealt with the past nine (9) years the following consultants are also aligned:

- Mr. Phillip Lamount, Attorney at Law
- Nirad Samnadda-Ramrekersingh, Attorney at Law
- Gisele Sampson, Attorney at Law

- Tim Charriandy, Attorney at Law

September 2009 - March 2010 **NATIONAL INSURANCE PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED**

Head Legal Services/Company Secretary
Duties include:

- Created and developed a Legal Department.
- Created the department's budget and finances and ultimately the management of the budget and finances.
- Implemented all policies and procedures for preparation of all forms of leases that affected the organization.
- Prepared and/or review documents for the execution of Debentures, Guarantee Deeds, and Bonds etc.
- Performance of Corporate Secretarial functions in accordance with Company Law and its principles;
- Prepared all forms of contractual documents for the organization, for example, Memorandum of Understandings for the retention of service providers for Ministries, Information Technology Contracts, and Financial Documents for the issuance of loans to and from NIPDEC.

May 2009 – June 2009 **NATIONAL BROADCASTING NETWORK**

Acting General Manager (one month)

- Duties include:
- Provided advice and assistance to the Board of NBN with respect to its mandate to manage the debts, liabilities, receivables and eventual liquidation of the company.
- Ensured that NBN's assets are safeguarded and maintained and to ensure that all transfers and disposals of assets are properly recorded in accordance with International Accounting Standards.
- Disposed of any remaining assets of NBN, including developing the process to invite bids, assessing bids and completing sale by negotiating with the preferred bidder.
- Performed Corporate Secretarial duties ensuring that all legal and statutory reporting is compiled with and providing general support to the Board.
- Co-ordinated the Finance and Administrative functions of the 'post-divestment' office ensuring that it is adequately staffed and that all statutory reporting requirements are met.
- Ensured that the obligations to ex-employees (EAP and outplacement services, retraining procedures, health plan etc) are efficiently and cost-effectively handled.

November 2008 – May 2009 **THE CEPEP COMPANY LIMITED**

General Manager of the CEPEP Company Limited. Responsible for implementing the strategic objectives established by the Board of Directors. Further as the General Manager, I established intermediate goals consistent with the ultimate objectives and assumes responsibility for the employees in the organization. These objectives and goals are to be communicated with the officers of the company. Major duties, included:

- Is accountable to the Board through the Chairperson for the achievement of the company's declared purposes, policies, performance targets and for the implementation of Board Decisions;

- Finalized drafts of policies and procedures for the organization's Finance and Human Resources;
- Completed the organisation's asset base for Cabinet's approval, such as insurance coverage;
- Successfully revamped and implemented the jurisdiction of work for the contractors;
- Developed and implemented a disaster preparedness plan for the staff to work in conjunction with the retained contractors.
- Represented the organization at various Ministerial Committees formed to execute national works.

March 2007 – November 2008 **GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES LIMITED**

Legal Manager/Corporate Secretary. As the first employee of the entity, this position included tasks of project manager for the completion of the building in preparation of the impending employment of the remaining staff. Major duties include:

- Ensured compliance with all laws, regulations and other statutory requirements;
- Advised on all matters and liaise with and co-ordinate the work of external lawyers with respect to related legal issues;
- Performed Corporate Secretarial functions in accordance with Company Law and its principles;
- Provided advice on corporate governance.
- Drafted and negotiated International and Domestic Contract.
- Represented the organization at court where necessary.
- Provided mediation expertise, when necessary.
- Ensured with the assistance of NBN Staff the completion of the now GISL Building, including the management of the FIDIC Contracts, the outfitting of the building and the final sign off.

February 2004 - March 2007 **REGULATED INDUSTRIES COMMISSION**
Legal/Corporate Secretary
Duties include:

- Acted as the Legal Advisor to the Management of the Regulated Industries Commission on all aspects of its operations in the development and application of all legal aspects of the regulatory regimes, ensuring that the activities of the Commission are within the confinement of its legislation and the laws of Trinidad and Tobago;
- Prepared all contracts for which the Commission must enter in exercising its functions;
- Prepared all briefs and instructions that are required for external Counsel;
- Attended Court with Advocates as Instructing Attorney;
- Researched and prepared opinions on the license and/or legislation of its service providers(WASA, T&TEC, Trinity Power and PowerGen)

The Corporate Secretarial Services provided include:

- The preparation of all Commission documents for its Monthly Statutory Commission Meetings and reports of sub-committees of the Commission;

- The preparation and maintenance of all Commission and sub-committee minutes and Commission papers;
- The development of Board standing Committee policies and procedures for Tenders Committee, Human Resources Committee, and Finances Committee; and
- Function as the Secretary to all Commission sub-committee; and provide legal advice to the Commission in the development and the application of all aspects of the regulatory regime
- Represent the Commission before the courts and act as their in house mediator, when required.

January 1999 - February 2004 **MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**
SOLICITOR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

State Counsel
Duties include:

- Performed as Advocate Attorney in all proceedings in the High Court and Court of Appeal, as assigned.
- Assisted and provided advice in negotiations on International Treaties and Agreements;
- Provided advice on Governments Financial Agreements e.g. Bond Issues, Guarantees, Government Contract etc.
- Prepared Government Instruments for Presidential Appointments;
- Provided advice to Ministries, Statutory Bodies and any other Government Agency on all aspects of Government Business;
- Provided advice to Ministries, Statutory Authorities on handling of Government Agreements.

Served on the Teams for Treaty Preparation and Negotiation

- Extradition Treaty between the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago and the Netherlands;
- Reciprocal assistance between the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Columbia; and
- Inter-Ministerial Committee to facilitate Timely Enforcement Actions by State Agencies with respect to Environmental Issues.

Served on the following Committees while at the Solicitor General's Department

- Cross Border Unitization Committee re: Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela;
- Technical Coordinating Committee re: FTA Agreement; and
- Postal Services Reform Project.

CHIEF STATE SOLICITOR'S DEPARTMENT
Legal Officer

- Acted as Instructing Attorney in all proceedings in the High Court, Court of Appeal and appeals from the Tax Appeal Board.
- Appeared in court on behalf of the State in Chamber Court, Matrimonial Chamber Court, Petty Civil Court, Masters Court and Registrar's Court.
- Drafted and advised on contract(being BOLT Agreements, consultancy agreements, construction agreements, Mortgage Bills of Sale and conveyances in which the State is involved:
- Advised the State on all matters relating to the law of Landlord and Tenant:
- Provided advice to Ministries, Statutory Authorities on handling of Government Agreements.

- Provided advice on the Waiver of State Rights (Administration of Estates)

EDUCATION

May 2014 **MEDIATION BOARD OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO** - Registered Mediator

June 2003 **THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED SECRETARIES AND ADMINISTRATORS - Grad ICSA – (UK PROGRAMME)**

October 1999 **CALLED TO THE BAR OF THE SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

May 1999 **HUGH WOODING LAW SCHOOL** - Council of Legal Education

1994-1997 **UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES FACULTY OF LAW**
Bachelor of Laws

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

a) Member of the Lions Clubs International, Lions Club of Diego Martin West, Diego Martin since 1999; and
b) A Captain in the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force commissioned 2011 serving within the Special Services Battalion, providing legal expertise to the Force.
c) Lecturer, School of Business and Computer Sciences in Business Law

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

a. Participated in the UWI Inaugural Oil and Gas Law Conference on **"Key Legal Issues in Oil and Gas Law: A Caribbean Perspective"** held on the 30th April 2015 and the 1st May 2015.

b. Participated in the Workshop on **" Establishing a Mentorship Programme: Its Challenges, Solutions and Lessons learned from the National Mentorship Programme"** conducted by Ministry of National Security, 15th January 2014;

c. Participated in the Workshop on the **"Mediators' Forum Part 1: Dealing with Emotions in Family Mediation"** conducted by the Mediation Board of Trinidad and Tobago, 29th March 2014.

d. Attended a Workshop on the "**OSH Act addressing the implications for Companies and Insurers",** March 2007

e. Participated in the Workshop conducted by the Organisation of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OCCUR) on **"Public Participation & Communications in Caribbean Utility Regulatory Process"** – April 2006

f. Certificate of Participation on **"Advanced Mediation Workshop- Mediation Training"** – conducted by John L. Woods Jr. of NS&J group at the Dispute Resolution Centre, Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry & Commerce (September 2005)

PUBLICATIONS

a. "**Role of Alternative Dispute Resolution in the Utility Regulatory Process"** prepared and presented at the 4th Organization of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OCCUR) Workshop entitled " Public Participation and Communications in Caribbean Utility Regulation Process"(April 2006)

b. **"Organizational and Financial Autonomy of the Regulator - The Regulated Industries Commission's Experience"** prepared for the 2nd Organization of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OCCUR) Conference with the Theme: "Independent and Transparent Utility Regulation in the Caribbean"

c. **"The Organisational structure of the Regulated Industries Commission"** prepared and presented at the 1st Organization of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OCCUR) Workshop entitled "The Role of Administrative Law in Utility Regulation" (June 2004)

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST