

KELLIE WUTTUNEE

WUTTUNEE LAW OFFICE - Saskatoon, SK



Kellie Wuttunee brings force and conviction to any conversation. Her journey has been about facing tough times, and then to just keep on going. "Even in law school," she recounts, "I wasn't the student that got selected for things; finding my way through was tough, and then I went completely out on my own, into business, right out of law school."

Wuttunee Law Office, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan offers services in Indigenous Law, to Administrative, and even Will and Estate Law. Her personal and professional experiences certainly support her ability to take on all kinds of different work. She mentions she has looked at things in the past, and said to herself, "If I can't do this, then I'm not doing something right."

Her steadfast determination shows, even in the way she speaks, "You dive in kicking and you either drown or you start kicking your arms and legs until you get there," and then laughs, "I started kicking!"

With a background in social work, as well as in the legal profession, Kellie talks freely about her observations over the years. "I just wanted to do more," she says, "I saw how things were going under the Child Welfare Act, and decided I wanted to work to help keep kids with their families instead of taking kids away." So, with her three children in tow, she picked up and moved across the country, to pursue further education, and in her

words, just "went for it". "I applied to only one law school," she recalls, "and I got in!"

"I did a lot of soul searching - about how I wanted to impact my children, my community, and of course, myself. There was no one saying, hey, here is an opportunity for you. I just kept fighting for respect, to not be treated as 'less than'. And I can talk about that - that is the 'human' in all of us, to be able to talk about these things. I get frustrated, but I never victimize myself, regardless of circumstances." And then she adds, "Given the odds, and where I've been, it really makes me believe in choices. I always keep working on myself; as a human being you never stop growing and you never stop learning."

She begins to talk about Indigenous women, as entrepreneurs, as mothers, as members of a bigger community. "We, as women, need to be more accepting of our accomplishments. It's okay to be humble, but it's even more okay to be happy with our accomplishments."

She chuckles as she talks about running her own business. "No one teaches you how to run a business, in law school, you're there to learn about law. So, learning how to manage a business, and file management, accounting, all of those things, I had to just learn." Asking for help and support was a big deal too. "Relying on mentors was important," she claims, "it's part of what got me here."

She refers to a big support in her life, the Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation, and says, "They helped me so much in my first two years of business. I am so grateful. Without their help, and the way they do things, I don't know if I'd still be running my business."

She has a strong and heartfelt mandate, both in her personal life, and in her business. "To grow, and to help other women grow, too. I really just want to help people, that's all."

It's undeniable that, with her fiery spirit and tenacious commitment, she will continue to do just that.

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