



Respect Works Here

Community Champion

Senad Sijercic was born in Bosnia, but lived and worked as a lawyer in Serbia before immigrating to Canada in May 1994 with his wife and three-year old daughter. Escaping the civil unrest in his homeland meant leaving everything and starting over again for the young family. In speaking with Senad, there is no regret evident, just a sense of him being in the right place now, very content to be able to support people through his work as a Notary Public.

"It wasn't a good a situation over there so we decided to move. We applied at the Canadian Embassy and they accepted us," explains Senad. "Canada was the best solution somehow. We wanted to go, regardless of where. Canada is really an open country. They accept everyone and I really appreciate that."

Sponsored through the Peace Lutheran Church, the Sijercic family came directly to Vernon and never left.

"We had never heard of Vernon before. Everybody knows Vancouver and Victoria," says Senad. "We thought we would go there right away but somehow we liked Vernon and it was easy to organize life, in a smaller city."

"We started English classes right away, our daughter started Kindergarten soon after and life went on," he laughs.

In order to be a lawyer in Canada Senad would have had to start law school all over again. With limited English skills, and a whole new legal system, from European law to Common Law, it wasn't very realistic for the young family.

"You have to support the family," he says. "And I started working wherever I could."

"At first I took any job. I worked in construction and the first year it was very difficult," Senad says ruefully. "After that they gave me some easier jobs that allowed me to work and study at the same time. They were really supportive."

He had to apply to be allowed to study to be a Notary Public as at that time the number of Notaries allowed to practice in BC was restricted.

"They knew I practiced as a lawyer and that I could speak several languages and that I was willing to work hard," he notes proudly. "And based on that I was allowed to enter this Notary program. But it still took four years."

By 2001 Senad had completed his studies and a firm became available to purchase in Armstrong. Senad

“Canada was the best solution.”

- Senad Sijercic

hasn't looked back since and has been extremely busy running his practice. Although it is based in Armstrong, he has clients all over BC. His wife Anna also works with him, managing the office side of the business.

"I am happy with this business, I like to deal with people and don't have to go to court," he grins.

"I like to help people. I like to have the feeling that I have helped someone through my business. I like to go further than what is standard to help. And especially for someone who is an immigrant like me."

