



# JANIS MCKENZIE

Independent Director for GPC

## *Fun fact:*

I have been the Chair of a Ladies Euchre Club for 35 years. I am one of four original members.

## Why have you joined GPC?

I joined the organization when it was called the Canadian Society of Corporate Secretaries to enhance my knowledge of corporate secretarial functions and to join a network of like-minded individuals who I could call upon for their expertise on specific governance issues. I also found that GPC is a good source of information on the various suppliers who operate in the governance environment.

## Why do you think GPC is an important organization for any governance professional to belong to in Canada?

I strongly believe that governance professionals should belong to GPC as it is an essential resource centre on governance issues through various platforms - professional development events, the Education Program, the annual conference, newsletters and networking. For individuals new to working in a governance role, GPC provides a wealth of information on how they need to direct and manage their role. Participation in local GPC chapter events contributes to the significance of networking within the governance environment.

GPC also stays current with governance issues and presents events and discussions on key governance topics.

## How did you get into governance and your current role?

I worked in a treasury role for a large Canadian company and an opportunity came up for me to work in the Corporate Secretary's Department. This position provided me with the basics of the governance role in a large organization. I was then Secretary Treasurer for two smaller companies, responsible for all Corporate Secretarial tasks. Later, I worked for Sun Life Financial Inc. in the Corporate Secretary's Department which offered me with even greater exposure to the governance role. At the end of my tenure there, 75% of my time was spent on providing the corporate secretarial function to various Sun Life subsidiaries.

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## **What do you believe is a key topic right now in the governance industry?**

I think that racial diversity in organizations, whether it be in public, private, government and not-for-profit sectors, is a key governance topic moving forward. Diversity is now more than a gender issue.

## **What is the most fulfilling part about your role in governance? What do you love most about your job?**

I believe that if the governance function of an organization is not managed successfully, then the organization, as a whole, is not as effective and efficient as it should be. The governance role is too often underappreciated. I like the fact that the governance role is a combination of a need to be very detailed orientated and the ability to have very good

## **Where do you see, or would you like to see the role of governance in the next few years?**

I see the governance role becoming more important as it receives additional exposure in different areas. For organizations operating in a COVID -19 environment, there is an increased reliance on technology to provide on-line activities such as education sessions, conferences and annual meetings. Governance will help to establish better diversity within organizations. Social media is a key new arena for influence so it needs to be designed with governance in mind. Disclosure of more information has increased in the past decade and organizations need to govern the quality and relevance of the information. Good governance is entwined in all levels of organizational activities and operations.

## **What is the best career advice you have received?**

Double check/ triple check all your work before you distribute it.