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LEGAL POST

McCARTHY JOINS LAWYERS WITHOUT BORDERS

McCarthy Tétrault LLP has signed a three-year deal with the Quebec division of Lawyers Without Borders (LWBQ) to become Canada's first "partner without borders" — LWBQ's highest donor status. The partnership builds on McCarthy's tradition of giving free legal services to those who can't afford it.

"The principle of giving back to communities is a fundamental aspect of the identity and values of our firm," Marc-Andre Blanchard, managing partner of McCarthy Tétrault in Quebec, said in a statement. "Our partner without borders status will enable our lawyers to diversify their pro bono activities by working abroad and promoting respect for human rights internationally."

In an interview, Steeves Bujold, a Montreal-based partner who works closely with McCarthy's national pro bono committee, said he enjoys giving back to the community by doing charity work, because it keeps him grounded and reminds him of his roots.

"I come from a really simple

background," said Bujold. "I grew up in a small village in Gaspé and now I'm working in a big law firm in a skyscraper.

Bujold said the partnership with LWBQ brings McCarthy Tétrault high-profile international cases. "If we want to be the best firm in Canada, we need to be involved in the best cases."

LWBQ works voluntarily in such places as Colombia, Haiti and Afghanistan. Some of the many services LWBQ provides are legal help to prisoners sentenced to death and those held without trial.

"Our partnership with McCarthy Tétrault comes at a perfect time," Claire L'Heureux-Dubé, retired justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and chair of the LWBQ board, said in a statement announcing the deal. "The organization is planning to expand its activities in Canada, particularly in Toronto."

Created in 2002, LWBQ will celebrate five years of helping the world's neediest citizens at a benefit gala on Jan. 24 in Montreal. — Tyler Kekewich

