

## **Film Community Icon Helen Shaver to replace Mary Walsh as Keynote Speaker at the West Coast LEAF Equality Breakfast**

**Vancouver, March 12** - West Coast LEAF announces that Canadian actor and film community icon Helen Shaver will be speaking at the 22nd Annual West Coast LEAF Equality Breakfast on Friday, March 13th. Shaver graciously steps in as keynote speaker in place of comedian Mary Walsh. Walsh is ill and unable to travel.

Shaver will be commenting on the current status of women in Canada, including issues such as pay equality, gender roles and the balance of women in politics.

“We are thrilled that Helen Shaver has agreed to speak at our Equality Breakfast on short notice”, said Alison Brewin, Executive Director of West Coast LEAF. “Helen is a Canadian icon who is a successful and award-winning actress for three decades. I have been a fan just as long and am delighted she will be helping us celebrate International Women’s Day.”

Helen Shaver’s career spans over 30 years as an actor, director and producer. Some of her most widely recognized films include *In Praise of Older Women*, *Desert Hearts* and *We All Fall Down*. Her directing credits include: *Private Practice*, *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, *Judging Amy* and *The O.C.* Shaver is the winner of 2 Gemini awards for acting and a Daytime Emmy award for directing. She has a place on Canada’s Walk of fame between Jim Carrey and Diana Krall.

The West Coast LEAF Equality Breakfast takes place annually to celebrate International Women’s Day and the progress made in advancing women’s rights. Past speakers include 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner and Iranian human-rights lawyer Dr. Shirin Ebadi (2008) and counsel for *Roe v Wade*, Sarah Weddington (2007).

### **About West Coast LEAF**

The West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) formed when the equality guarantees of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* came into force. West Coast LEAF’s mission is to achieve equality by changing historic patterns of systemic discrimination against women throughout BC- based on equality rights litigation, law reform and public legal education.

**International Women’s Day (IWD)** is a major day of global celebration for the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future.

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