

Jennifer Flynn

Age: 38 | Executive Director of the Legal Education Society of Alberta, Director of the Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education of Alberta (CPLED)

It's hard to see where, for Jennifer Flynn, the line between education and work is drawn. The born-and-raised Edmontonian has focused much of her life in the realm of continuing education. She spent nine years at the University of Alberta, earning a Bachelor of Commerce (with distinction), Juris Doctor and a Master of Arts in Communications and Technology, before trying her hand as a lawyer for a private practice in July of 2000.

And while a career as a lawyer could have been the dream-come-true for some, Flynn's passion was in the realm of continuing education — something she discovered when leaving the practice in 2002 to become an instructor at the JR Shaw School of Business at NAIT. There, she was awarded the Instructional Excellence Award in 2005 — nominated by the students. “That was really something I had been looking for that I didn't get as much when I was practising law,” says Flynn. “The ability to do interesting work but to also have the opportunity to have a lasting impact. That's pretty compelling to me.”

The newfound passion for education sparked career changes for Flynn, who joined the Legal Education Society of Alberta in 2008, and became the first woman to hold the position of executive director earlier this year. The move comes after five years as the organization's managing director.

As LESA's executive director, Flynn is responsible for overseeing the organization, which manages 500 volunteer positions that make up the meat of the organization.

“I think it's important when you are in a leadership position in a volunteer-supported organization that you should know what volunteering is like,” says Flynn.

And with an excess of 200 hours a year volunteering for various continuing legal education associations, such as the Association of Continuing Legal Education Directors, the International Association for Continuing Legal Education and Law Society of Alberta's Continuing Competence Committee, amongst others, it would be hard to argue her passion for donating her time.

“Volunteerism falls into my idea of life-long learning,” says Flynn. “I see it as a way to learn, expand your skill-set, get diverse perspectives and try things out that you can't do in your regular day job. So I find that it is a huge help with the work that I do.” —Cory Haller

Why She's Top 40:

She dedicates her work and volunteer time to ensuring that Alberta articling students and lawyers receive the support they require for their continuing education.

What do you like most about Edmonton?

“The university. Physically, I love it — the architecture and the buildings and being able to walk through and see how things have changed through that lens. We are very fortunate here to have such an intersection of really bright minds and talent in so many different areas.”

How does this Top 40 couple, as parents to boys aged 10 and seven, keep it together?

- **Keep Fit:** Early in their careers, the couple took aikido classes together — both earning black belts in the martial art.
- **No outsourcing:** Taking cues from their work lives, the Flynns plan their schedules and sync their Outlook calendars to ensure that they optimize the time they can spend with their family. This way, they ensure that even when one parent is travelling, the other is at home with the kids.





Aaryn Flynn

Age: 39 | Studio General Manager and Vice President of BioWare, a Division of Electronic Arts

Eleven years ago, a high-school student asked Aaryn Flynn, then a programmer at BioWare, how to break into the gaming industry. Flynn's answer was simple, if not clichéd. But it was the tried-and-true method that he had used to get there:

- 1) Finish high school and get good grades.
- 2) Take Comp-Sci at the University of Alberta and get good grades.
- 3) If programming is what you're passionate about — apply.

Five years later, the student did exactly that. Snatched up from the U of A upon graduation, he now works with Flynn, who is currently the general manager and vice president of the game studio that has two locations in Canada (Edmonton and Montreal) and one in the United States (Austin, Tex.).

Flynn is no stranger to young hopefuls in the gaming industry. They make up a portion of his staff of more than 400 at BioWare — an award-winning studio that has produced titles

such as *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, *Dragon Age* and the *Mass Effect* trilogy. And when Flynn meets someone who dreams of a job there, he feels a sense of pride in his work. After all, he's had a hand in almost every game developed there since 2000.

"It's funny, when my mom first was transferred out here from Oakville, (Ont.) I was 16, and I was thought my life was over. It wasn't, of course." A year later, Flynn met his future wife, Jennifer. He then spent eight years at the U of A, earning degrees in both genetics and computing science, only to be nabbed

by BioWare immediately following graduation. The next 13 years saw Flynn move from a position as a programmer to a lead programmer before being appointed director of technology in 2007. By 2009, Flynn had moved from a director of operations role into the general manager position.

He sits on the Department of Computing Science Advisory Board in an effort to influence and prepare students for the changing industry, and, as GM of BioWare, he raises the profile of Edmonton as a destination city for gaming industry professionals.

"I would guess that about 25 per cent of the people here aren't from Canada," says Flynn. "We see our employees settle in Edmonton and become part of the community. It's really cool. The same thing happens to them that happened to me. You come for whatever reason, but it doesn't take long before you love the city. It infects you and you're a part of it." —C.H.

Why He's Top 40:

He raises Edmonton's profile as a destination city for game developers while providing industry support and direction for university students.

What do you like most about Edmonton?

"The festivals. With the Fringe and the Street Performers Festival, Edmonton has this vibrant arts community that thrives and it's a really cool thing to let into your life."

• **Take a (mini) break:** When work and family take up the majority of their time, vacations can be hard to come by. The solution? Forty-eight-hour adventures. The couple will take 48 hours every so often to pack up and jet off to a far-away destination such as London, England to see the sights or Denver to catch a football game.