

# Meet Brandon Lee

*Introduction by David Woodward*

I would like to welcome the new Consul General of Canada in Seattle, Brandon Lee.

Brandon arrived in Seattle in the fall moving from his prior diplomatic post in San Francisco where he was based for two years as Consul General for California and Hawaii. Apparently it was time for a hardship post so he was assigned to the frigid Northwest! But then Brandon has taken the unconventional path to diplomacy throughout his career.



Brandon's family is originally from Korea and he was born in Toronto, so he developed multilingual and global competence early in life. He speaks Korean, French, Italian, and Spanish. Early on, Brandon was also an accomplished musician playing acoustic and electric guitar and once opening for BB King with a group. He also was a top-notch amateur baseball player who could throw a baseball in the low 90s and got close to playing for the Toronto Blue Jays. Frankly, I think the Mariners could use you now, Brandon.

But in the mid-1990s, Brandon really excelled as a tech entrepreneur in the IT sector, starting several companies and becoming proficient in the field of digital innovation and change management. His specialty was the development of electronic banking systems. Earning a degree from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, in commerce, strategy and economics, Brandon did the next unconventional thing: he backpacked from Brazil to Mexico over an 18-month period to celebrate the arrival of the new millennium. He also became the North American Business Development Manager – Telecommunications and Federal Government for AMS Systems Management Canada from 1999 to 2003.

It was at that point that duty called and the Department of Foreign Affairs (now called Global Affairs Canada) sought Brandon out for a career in public service. From 2004 to 2009 he served as the Deputy Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in Ottawa. In 2009 Brandon became Director of the department and the first Director of Innovation for the ministry where he led a comprehensive conversion to digital platforms.

In 2011 Brandon commenced a new itinerant phase of his career moving to Geneva on loan to the WTO where he served for two years as Senior Special Advisor on tech innovation. Following that successful stint he was asked to work in Geneva with the International Committee of the Red Cross for two more years to 2014 on a massive digital overhaul. About to go back to the private sector, Brandon received the call of duty once again to serve Canada as its ambassador to the Silicon Valley and he could not resist. He continues in Seattle as Canada's senior digital strategist for Global Affairs Canada.

Along the way in this fascinating journey, Brandon has also served as director of Club Yoga, a non-profit dedicated to children's yoga. Brandon's wife, Giovanna Mingarelli, is a tech entrepreneur in her own right and was recently voted one of Canada's 100 most influential women. Seattle sounds like the perfect place for Brandon and Giovanna and their two pugs!