



## Connecting Women Lawyers



### Remarks from the Chair

By Rose Keith, QC

Summer is upon us marking the close of another program year for the Women Lawyers Forum. Just like everyone, the WLF has felt the impact of the pandemic and experienced a year like no other. Despite the challenges we managed to stay connected with our members and continued to offer a full suite of programming. This was due to our executive and committee volunteers who embraced the challenges this year presented, remained flexible, and were innovative and creative in their approaches to make sure that despite the distances between us, we found ways to continue to support and enhance the stature of women in our profession. I am so grateful to you all. Thank you.



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The WLF is made up of and supports a broad spectrum of women in various stages of their careers. We believe different perspectives provide great value to our forum and welcome additional members and encourage people to get involved through volunteering. The ongoing support of WLF was evidenced by the overwhelming response to our call for volunteers in the fall; we were so pleased to welcome a number of new faces to our group. The vitality of the WLF was again demonstrated when our call for nominations to our executive resulted in an unprecedented number of individuals being nominated. Ultimately, the success of the WLF depends on ongoing interest and willingness to volunteer time. The tremendous interest expressed by women in BC to continue the work of the WLF assures us all that our section has many good years ahead of it.

One of the biggest hurdles we faced this year was how to continue with our mandate at a time when we all had to stay apart. We quickly made the transition to virtual programming which had an unanticipated benefit; not only were we able to continue at full capacity, we were able to reach many women in outlying areas who wouldn't have been able to attend in-person events. Going forward, we will be looking for ways to continue to expand accessibility so that members throughout the province are able to participate in our programs. Our volunteers found ways to make our programs fresh and engaging despite the Zoom fatigue that we all felt, including having authors moderate book clubs, offering a coaching program to keep us all on track and sending goodies to enjoy during programs. A big thank you to the staff at the CBA, and in particular Sianne Petrisor, for all of their help throughout this past year. WLF wishes everyone a safe, healthy and fun summer and we look forward to seeing everyone again in the fall!

## WLF Newsletter Summer 2021 Edition

### Editors

Grace Cleveland, Leah Seneviratne

### Editorial Board

Rose Keith, Daria Batkin, and J. Cherisse Friesen



## "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" in the workplace - how do we make it happen?

By Arshdeep Sandhu

The Canadian Lawyer's Women in Law conference was held virtually this year in February. Although the settings were different, it was clear that the women lawyers who attended were just as eager to connect and learn from one another. Many injustices of inclusion and equity were once again brought to light in 2020. Nikki Gershbain, the Chief Inclusion Officer of McCarthy Tétrault, gave a compelling talk on how law firms can navigate working towards greater inclusion, diversity and equity.

Nikki explained that although the world has evolved, women, especially women who are members of the Black, Indigenous and People of Colour ("BIPOC") community, continue to face barriers to advancement once they are able to secure a job. Examples of these barriers include:

- Access to networks
- Stereotypes and assumptions
- Discretion and talent processes
- Fewer role models in leadership positions

So how do we make sure that we are setting up women who are members of the BIPOC community for success? Nikki set out four main conditions for change and inclusion which included: a comprehensive strategy, using objective as well as subjective data, providing leadership training, and resources to execute the strategy.

Diversity, Inclusion and Equity training must be met with the firm or organization taking it on from the leadership positions at the top. However, it's easy for someone from a large firm with larger resources to have the capacity to take on a "Diversity and Inclusion Officer." What happens when you're working for a small to mid-size firm, and you're and the only lawyer of colour?

Too often, women in the BIPOC community are made to feel thankful that they have a job at all and that a firm "took a chance" on them. However, moving forward, that's not going to be enough in creating lasting diversity and equity. We cannot continue to merely throw someone a life vest, but leave them in the water. The trend towards providing real and lasting changes means that those in leadership positions must make lasting change a priority within the firm. Will firms make the investment? I can't wait to see if they do.

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## WLF Hosts Virtual Roundtable on Pay Equity

By Grace Cleveland

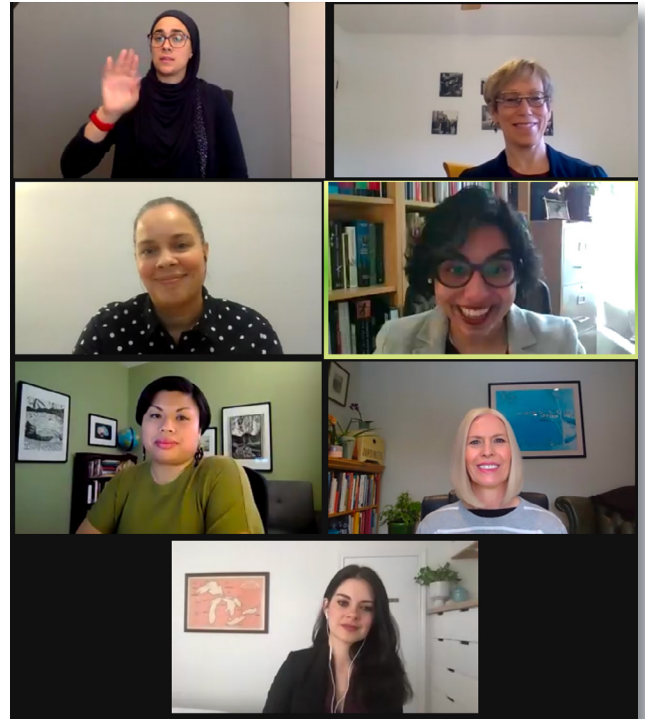
On April 21, 2021 the CBA WLF hosted its much-anticipated Roundtable on Pay Equity in the Legal Profession, a two-part virtual event that included a webinar followed by focus group sessions. The Roundtable was part of an ongoing national research initiative designed to gather data about Canadian lawyers' experiences and potential solutions to the gender wage gap, and this Roundtable did not disappoint!

The webinar portion of the event featured high-profile panelists in a discussion facilitated by journalist Robyn Doolittle of the Globe & Mail. Christina Blacklaws (Principal of Blacklaws Consulting and Past President of the Law Society of England and Wales) provided an overview of the work being done overseas to combat pay inequity with legislation. Destiny Peery (Principal Consultant, The Red Bee Group; and Principal Investigator, American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Legal Profession) spoke of the investigative work being done by advocacy groups to identify and quantify the problem of pay inequity in the USA. Danielle Bisnar (Partner, Cavalluzzo LLP) discussed her experience as a labour and equality rights lawyer in Ontario and how that has informed her intersectional approach to tackling unequal pay. Karen Jensen (Canada's federal Pay Equity Commissioner) overviewed the importance of implementing the soon to be in force Pay Equity Act.

The conversation began with an overview of some of the current issues that result in women being paid less than men, starting with the broader societal perception of women as caregivers, and how this can limit the opportunities available to them. Doolittle provided an anecdote from an interview she had with one male partner at a large firm who told her that when choosing an associate to bring onto a big case, he will choose a man over a woman to avoid the risk that she could become pregnant and disrupt case preparations.

The panelists agreed that one's work can suffer when files are assigned based on personal relationships and you are unable or unwilling to go for drinks after a 12-hour day, or go golfing on a weekend with colleagues and clients. Similarly, women lawyers often get assigned to take on more non-billable work than their male counterparts.

A lack of transparency is another barrier to pay equity. One panelist added that many of us are conditioned to keep quiet about what we earn, and some employment contracts strictly prohibit income information being shared laterally. These factors make it difficult to know just what we're dealing with in terms of pay inequity in Canada.





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Discussions then turned to potential solutions. At the firm level, it is crucial to support a culture shift where men are also encouraged to take parental leave. Firms should also consider incentivizing, recognizing, and compensating people for the non-billable work they do to mentor junior lawyers, and contribute to retention by building a workplace where women can see themselves practising long term. Firm leadership needs to learn that diversity is good for business – in many cases, this is what clients want to see.

Lawyers can contribute as individuals by using our privilege to engage in collective action. We can work within our bar associations and law societies to demand disclosure as a first step. We can advocate for ourselves by getting informed about the legal protections available. However, as one panelist noted, we still must be brave because right now the burden is on our shoulders. Pay equity legislation may help here by shifting the responsibility to the employers rather than employees.

After the webinar portion concluded on a positive and hopeful note, over 70 delegates from across Canada were divided into small focus groups to discuss their personal experiences with pay inequity based on gender. Questions were based on topics such as whether transparency mattered to them, what relationship they have seen between parental leave and compensation, and what they think workplaces and individuals can do to improve pay equity. These sessions were followed by an individual survey. The anonymous responses from the sessions and the survey will form part of the CBA WLF report on pay equity in the legal profession. Stay tuned for more details as this important work continues!

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## Spring Outreach Event Hosted By Forte Law

By Sonia Athwal

On Thursday May 13, 2021, a great group gathered for the virtual CBABC WLF Spring Outreach event hosted by Sara Forte and the Forte Law team. This event did not feature a formal program; rather, it was designed to mimic an in-person networking event with the help of an innovative and immersive virtual forum called Kumospace.

The event was exactly as advertised: way more fun than the average online event! Three virtual rooms were set up for attendees to wander in and out of at their leisure, allowing folks to join multiple conversations over the course of the evening. By bringing your personalized icon closer to the group, the conversation became louder - just as it would at an in-person event! Discussions ranged from practice areas to current events, to simply catching up with old friends and making new connections.

After a year of online events, virtual networking during the pandemic has left some of us feeling disconnected. This was not the case with the Spring Outreach event! Thank you to Forte Law for finding a unique way to bring us together while still keeping everyone safe.





## The “New Normal” of Dressing for Work: Empowerment through Presentation

By Emma Abdjalieva

On April 14, 2021, nearly 70 participants attended the WLF online event “Empowerment through Presentation: Dressing with more Intention”, moderated by Paula Price, with a panel of speakers that included Angela Bespflug, Emma May and Michelle Addison.

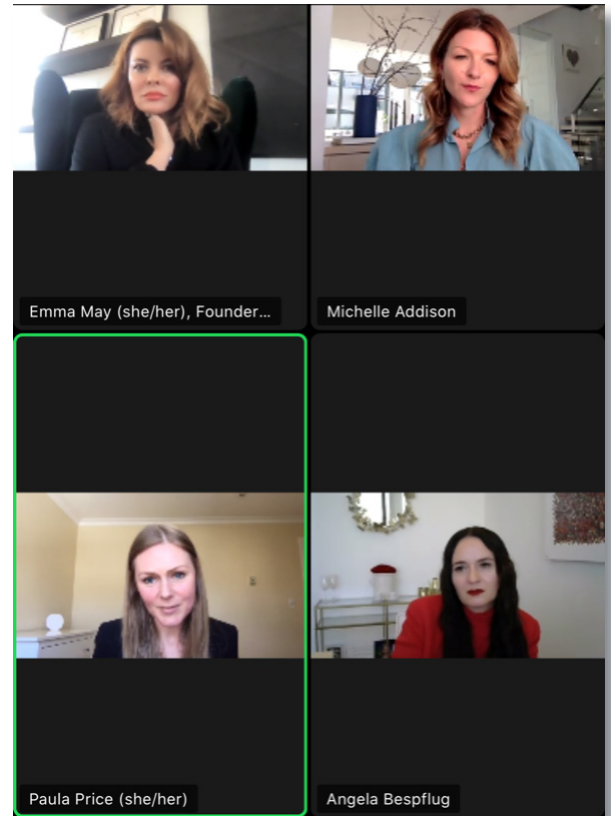
While Ms. Price moderated the discussion, almost every question put to the panel came from the attendees and registrants of the event. Discussion included topics such as reconciling expectations in the legal profession with personal expectations of how you, as a woman (including women of colour and trans women) want to express yourself as a professional. The panelists spoke at length about dressing in a way that brings your real and authentic self to the table no matter what job you go to in the morning. You must remember that your authentic self is the part of you that you should not compromise and this will be the part of you that leads you to success.

Registrants also inquired about cost barriers to dressing for work and where to look for professional pieces that do not cost a lot of money. Some helpful tips included looking at consignment stores, investing in a high quality but versatile pant or skirt, and even upgrading outfits by simply adding unique jewelry or accessories.

Also discussed were tips on getting ready for work in the midst of a stressful week, or when you are juggling family responsibilities and a busy work schedule. Panelists advised that when creating a style for work, you should ask questions such as what messages you want to communicate about yourself and to whom – a client, a co-worker, a judge. Remember to also ask yourself what you want to draw attention to about yourself in how you dress, speak or write.

The panel discussed how they as women in law had dressed in a more masculine way in order to fit in with the male partners, and how with age and experience they eventually understood that being yourself is the most important aspect of success. You have to stay true to who you are in the way that you express yourself, whether you are drafting arguments, advocating in court, or presenting yourself in meetings and firm events.

The Education Committee wants to express an enormous thank you to our three panelists and moderator for taking part in this excellent and pertinent discussion, especially in the wake of global conversations about female empowerment, self-expression, and discrimination.





## Feeling Like a Professional Fraud? There's Help.

By Kathleen Pinno

This year I met with Shari Pearlman, JD, LCMS, Lawyer Social Worker with the Lawyers Assistance Program of British Columbia ("LAP") to discuss the "impostor syndrome."

### What's the Impostor Syndrome?

Shari defines impostor syndrome as "when a person feels insecure ... with their designation or title." Some avoid using the term "syndrome" because it is not a pathology, but rather a feeling or experience. While it may be exacerbated by an underlying mental health condition, Shari emphasized that "rather than pathologize when you're feeling bad ... if you feel like an impostor, it is a good time to seek help." Often these feelings arise because your strengths are not being recognized by yourself or others.

### Who does this Impact?

In the early days of recognition, women disclosed 'impostor' experiences more often, though men are also prone to insecurities. Lawyers, who are often gifted individuals, are susceptible when inevitably faced with the reality of being unable to know everything, particularly young lawyers.

### Why?

Internal contributors include perfectionistic tendencies, low self-worth, lack of expertise, lack of self-compassion, and giftedness. External contributors, such as micro-aggressions towards minorities or a failure of others to affirm one's unique abilities, can also play a role.

### What Next?

Self-doubt can cause depression, feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, and failure to take risks. It can also contribute to stunted career growth. However, there are some positives: when you feel stretched, you can leverage those feelings to seek help and approach tasks with a curious and humble "beginner's mind." Shari reminded me that "when we need help, we seek help." Help may come from a career services office, a mentor, peers, a professional counsellor, or a religious figure.

Our self-treatment is important:

1. Lead with curiosity – Consider why you feel self-doubt and focus on your strengths.
2. Lead with self-compassion – Talk to yourself with the same grace you would show a friend. Offset negative thoughts with positive ones. See [selfcompassion.org](https://selfcompassion.org) for details.
3. Go outside yourself – Actively help another person, animal, or plant. Create art.
4. Take care of yourself – Brainstorm ways to nourish and nurture different dimensions of yourself.

Remember to help others, also. We should normalize our challenges by talking about them, de-stigmatize seeking help, and intentionally give compliments.

If you are struggling with self-doubt or with other personal or professional issues, the LAP is available. For more information about their free confidential services, visit: [lapbc.com](https://lapbc.com). Call 1-604-685-2171 at any time (24/7) to speak with an on-call counsellor who has experience practicing law. Thank you Shari!



## Women Lawyer Spotlight: Rebeka Breder

By Kyla Lee

Rebeka Breder is a pioneer in the legal industry. If you do not already know her, you certainly know of her.

Although not the first lawyer to work in the field of animal law, Rebeka is the first lawyer in Western Canada to have an exclusive practice in animal law. This was no accident. Rebeka went to law school with the intention of being a specialist in the field. She founded the Animal Law section of the Canadian Bar Association, of which she is now chair. She is widely considered a leading expert in animal law both in Canada and internationally.

Rebeka's path to animal law began in general litigation at Boughton Litigation, where she focused on animal law issues as her career progressed. By the end of her ten-year stint at Boughton, Rebeka was working exclusively on animal law files.

As a woman in a niche practice area, Rebeka faces the same challenges that many women in the legal profession face. She often feels as though she is not taken as seriously as her male counterparts. This can be exacerbated in her practice, as animal justice and animal rights cases can often be seen as frivolous or silly. Rebeka can tell you they are anything but, and she has appeared at all levels of court in Canada as counsel for animals, animal companions, and animal charities.



Rebeka has challenged legislation dealing with animal protection, transportation, and wildlife wellbeing. She prioritizes taking cases that develop the law as it pertains to animal rights and animal welfare, and has changed the law in BC more than once with respect to dangerous dogs. Recently, Rebeka was featured on the cover of the Georgia Straight, because of her ongoing advocacy for the rights of pets in condominiums. Her contributions to the area of animal law were recognized nationally when she was named one of the Top 25 Most Influential Lawyers in Canada, 2019.

You may think that someone as driven, successful, and intelligent (she speaks five languages!) as Rebeka would be intimidating and unapproachable, but this is not the case. In addition to being a skilled litigator, Rebeka is one of the kindest and warmest people in the bar. Her genuine compassion and care for all living things is evident.





## The Maternity Leave “Checklist”

By Kara Hill

Preparing to take maternity or parental leave as a lawyer can be daunting, especially if it is your first time. However, the basic paperwork to be completed is quite straightforward. Here is a checklist of the issues and forms to consider.

### 1. Practicing Status

You can become a non-practicing member of the Law Society (“LSBC”) by undertaking not to practice law while you are on leave and paying a \$70 fee when you switch to non-practicing status, another \$70 return-to-practice fee, and a prorated annual non-practicing membership fee of \$325. Under this option, there is no minimum leave length required, and your CPD requirements are effectively paused while you are not practicing. This option might make sense if you expect to be off for at least several months and you pay your own LSBC fees.

You can remain a non-practicing member even if you take a lengthier leave, such as 18 months. If you remain out of practice for more than three years, though, you may need to requalify before returning.

LSBC does not offer the option of reduced membership fees for practicing members who take parental leave without changing their practice status. However, LSBC does offer a 50% discount on the annual indemnity fee to lawyers who practice less than 25 hours per week. This may be something to consider for those who still expect to work some hours rather than fully step away from their practice.

### 2. CPD Requirements

If you are going to remain a practicing member but will be off for at least 60 days, you can consider applying for a reduction of your CPD hours. You must write to the LSBC requesting a prorated reduction based on the length of your leave. This option might make sense if you expect to be off for the majority of a calendar year and do not want to stress about CPD hours.

### 3. CBA Membership Fee Credit

If you are responsible for paying your own CBA membership fees, consider applying to the CBA for a maximum credit of 12 months towards your membership fees under its Parental Leave Benefit Program.

### 4. Employment Insurance

If you will be applying for EI maternity benefits through Service Canada, apply anytime between your last day of work and up until four weeks after this date. If you are also applying for short-term disability benefits, you will likely need to complete your benefits provider’s short term disability form and provide a physician’s statement from your doctor.



## Stay Connected!

BC WLF membership is open to all CBA members.

For membership information call the CBABC at 604.687.3404, toll free in BC at 1.888.687.3404, or visit: [cbabc.org/sections/enroll](https://cbabc.org/sections/enroll) for a Section enrolment form.

We hope you will join the Forum!

## Get Social!

Follow us on:

Twitter: [twitter.com/CBA\\_WLF](https://twitter.com/CBA_WLF)

Instagram: [instagram.com/cba\\_wlf](https://www.instagram.com/cba_wlf)

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/showcase/cba-wlf](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/cba-wlf) for all things WLF.

## Write Us

Are you interested in writing an article for the WLF BC Newsletter or do you have any comments or feedback? If so, please contact the BC WLF Marketing and Communications Committee Co-Chair: [Leah Seneviratne](mailto:Leah.Seneviratne@cbawomenlawyers.org).

## CBA National WLF Newsletter

CBA National WLF Newsletter - The Common Room is available at [cba.org/Sections/Women-Lawyers/Articles](https://cba.org/Sections/Women-Lawyers/Articles)

The CBA National WLF is seeking article for its newsletters. If you would like to contribute, please contact: [cbawomenlawyers@cba.org](mailto:cbawomenlawyers@cba.org).

## International Women's Day: Choose to Challenge

By Grace Cleveland

The CBABC WLF marked International Women's Day 2021 with a unique and engaging virtual event featuring the Honourable Madam Justices Susan A. Griffin and Carla L. Forth.

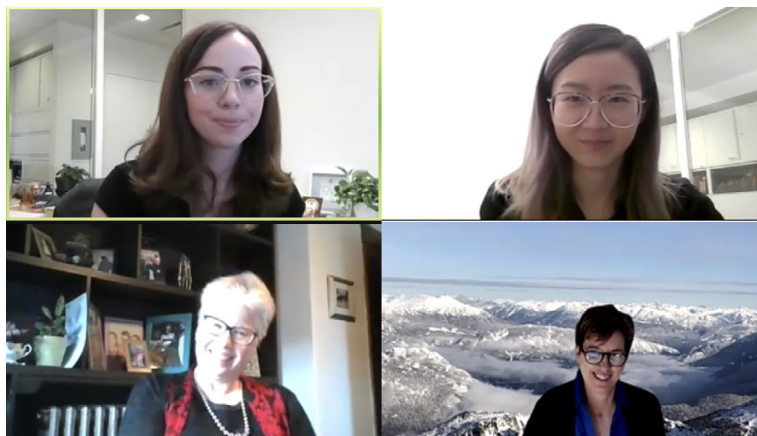
After an introduction from Bronwen Black and Nicole Chang of the WLF Events Committee, the night began with a question and answer session where attendees posed questions to the panelists on a myriad of issues faced by women in law.

In addition to providing thoughtful answers on topics ranging from balancing parenting responsibilities with the demands of life in law, to dealing with unequal treatment from colleagues, clients, and opposing counsel, the Justices kept the conversation positive and delivered practical advice on navigating these and other challenges.

Throughout the panel presentation, attendees were polled on various matters, and the results were seen and unpacked in real time. The results of the polls confirmed that unconscious biases and gender-based discrimination still exist and yield negative effects on the lives and practices of women in law.

Nevertheless, the panelists and attendees agreed and affirmed a general sense of hopefulness that comes from sharing experiences with other women lawyers, whether in the form of mentoring relationships or simply being able to connect and identify with one another.

Thanks to our amazing panelists, the Honourable Madam Justices Forth and Griffin, as well as the Events Committee, for another inspiring International Women's Day!





## The Bystander Effect: Calling Out Sexual Harassment in the Legal Profession

By Katelynn Denny

As an employment lawyer, many of my clients are calling out sexual harassment and sex discrimination in the workplace, including everything from offensive jokes and comments about appearance, to more blatant advances and sexual assault. We often find employees put up with it for years before speaking to someone. The problem is that workplace culture can discourage, and even prevent, people from coming forward. There is a fear of negative career repercussions and an expectation that “problems” will be swept under the rug.

Our legal profession is not immune to sexual harassment. Many law firms have a traditional hierarchy that creates an intimidating power imbalance. Further, in an environment where lawyers are trying to meet billable targets and compete for partnership, it can feel like there is no room to bring forward complaints about sexual harassment.

Change needs to happen from the top, with partners and firms setting expectations for workplace culture and creating a safe space for victims to come forward. As lawyers we all have a unique responsibility to be advocates and uphold the law. This means standing up for our colleagues when we witness harassment. As bystanders, we are often in a less vulnerable position to start a dialogue about sexual harassment than victims.

Bystander training has emerged as a powerful tool to combat sexual harassment. As bystanders, we can learn and practice ways to safely intervene when we see harassment and discrimination taking place. Can we say something when we overhear an offensive joke in the lunchroom? Can we do something when we see an email about how a co-worker is dressed? This type of training shifts the focus away from “what should the victim do?” and shows us there are steps we can all take to foster a safe, respectful workplace.

With many of us still working remotely because of COVID-19, shedding light on workplace harassment is more important than ever. Discrimination is not confined to office hallways, but often exists online in zoom meetings or chat strings. Consider talking to your firm about bystander training and respectful workplace practices. Another option is to reach out to the Law Society Ombudsperson for advice. Most importantly, let’s keep the conversation going and consider how we can each be an active bystander. By taking a “see something, say something” approach, we move away from a culture of silence to one that no longer tolerates sexual harassment in the legal profession.





## Junior Women Lawyers Event

By Leah L. Seneviratne

On February 11, 2021, the WLF held its annual Junior Women Lawyers Networking Event. This event typically takes place at a pub where junior lawyers have the opportunity to network over cocktails in an informal setting. Of course, this year looked a bit different with the event taking place over Zoom and formatted as “virtual speed networking.”

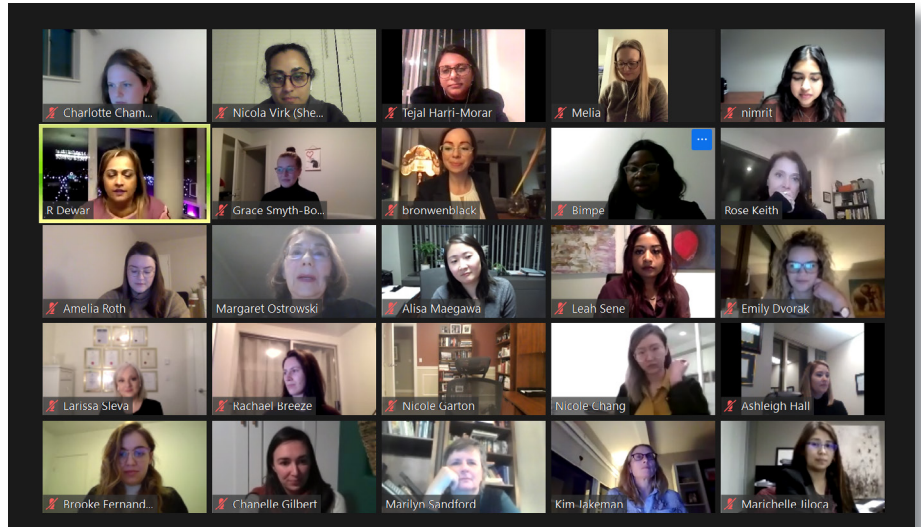
Despite the event proceeding virtually, there were over 50 attendees, and the Events Committee managed to still bring a casual and social ambiance to this event while fostering casual and frank discussions.

At the start of the event, Rose Keith, Q.C., WLF chair, took some time to say a few words and introduce the diverse set of senior lawyers that had volunteered as panelists. The trailblazing panelists included: Jennifer Chow, Q.C., Rose Keith, Q.C., Nicole Garton, Margaret Ostrowski, Q.C., Kim Jakeman, Raj Dewar, and Marilyn Sandford.

Over the next hour, the junior lawyers were sorted into small groups of 3-4 people who then had the opportunity to speak with the panelists on a closer level. The breakout rooms encouraged open discussions about all things relating to women and the practice of law. The dialogue in each breakout room was unique, driven by the questions of the junior lawyers and the experiences of the panelist. Topics ranged from work life balance, maternity leave, career changes, sexism in the workplace, burnout and transitioning to a solo practice. Each panelist offered a unique perspective to the questions and offered sage advice and tips.

At the end of the event, everyone joined back in the main room for some final words from Rose Keith. The WLF would like to give a hearty thank you to all the panelists.

“Up and Coming” junior to intermediate women lawyers are also about to get more recognition from the CBA and Women Lawyers Forum, in the form of a new WLF award. This award is intended to celebrate and promote trailblazing women lawyers who are at ten years of call and under. The WLF will notify CBA members once the nomination process begins.







## Senior Women Lawyers Dinner

By Rose Keith, QC

On Thursday April 8th, 2021, an online version of the Senior Women Lawyers dinner occurred. The evening was fun, inspirational, educational and it was great to see so many familiar faces and a few new ones. The advantage of the online platform was that members from outside of the lower mainland were able to also attend.

Our speaker for the dinner was Lisa Lapointe, Chief Coroner for British Columbia. Ms. Lapointe was appointed Chief Coroner in February 2011. In this role, she oversees the independent investigations of approximately 10,000 deaths reported to the Coroner's Service annually, including all children's deaths, and deaths reviewed at inquest and by Death Review Panels. Ms. Lapointe has had a fascinating career, including serving as an Assistant Deputy Warden and Assistant Deputy Director of the Civil Forfeiture Office of BC, which led to an interesting and engaging discussion.



Participants at the Dinner were treated to delicious charcuterie from Dip & Sip. Many thanks to Margaret Ostrowski, QC for organizing the evening.

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## Allard Law Women's Caucus Update

By Suzie Kimball

The Allard Law Women's Caucus is a student-run group committed to empowering women law students and advancing human rights and gender equality within the legal community. Our mission is three-fold. Firstly, we strive to create a sense of community and build a supportive network of feminists within the Peter A. Allard School of Law and beyond. Secondly, we aim to raise awareness of gender-based inequality and historically marginalized experiences within the legal profession, and to address these barriers through empowerment-focused workshops and events. Finally, we engage in activism and support organizations beyond the legal community which are working to promote gender equality among marginalized groups more generally.

This past year, some of our initiatives included a professional attire clothing drive with support from downtown Vancouver law firms in benefit of Dress for Success, collecting menstrual products for homeless individuals for the Time of the Month Initiative (TMI), as well as a virtual panel in collaboration with [Life in Law](#) exploring the pandemic's impact on women lawyers. The Women's Caucus also hosts the annual Women in Law Dinner to celebrate and connect feminist lawyers and law students. The Women's Caucus looks forward to another year of events and initiatives that promote gender equality in the legal profession. Please feel free to contact us at [ubclaw.wc@gmail.com](mailto:ubclaw.wc@gmail.com) if you have any questions.





## WLF Mentorship Orientation

By Nicola Virk

The WLF's Mentorship program is back in full swing. On March 3, 2021, mentors and mentees across British Columbia joined together on Zoom to kick off another great year of mentoring.

Paula Price, esteemed executive coach and founder of Uplevel Lawyer Coaching, moderated a panel discussion where we got the chance to hear from Kirsten Hume Scrimshaw, founder of Ally Workplace Law and a past WLF mentor, as well as Jayde Wood, Intellectual Property Lawyer at Oyen Wiggs Green & Mutala LLP and past WLF mentee. Over 30 participants attended this session packed with useful tools to help members get the most out of their mentoring relationships.

One of the consistent themes touched on by all three panelists was confidentiality, trust, and openness. These factors are critical to fostering open and honest communication between mentors and mentees.



Kirsten has experience as both a mentor and mentee. She talked about the importance of confidentiality in the relationship and the benefit of out-of-office mentors which allow mentees to feel more comfortable talking about hardships and difficulties they are presently experiencing. Kirsten encouraged mentors to be open and honest about their mistakes and failures, as this can help mentees realize that even senior lawyers have experienced similar adversities and doubts.

Paula discussed building trust as a continuous process made up of small acts throughout the relationship, such as responding to e-mails, showing up to scheduled meetings on time, actively listening during conversations, and asking powerful questions to show engagement.

As an experienced mentee, Jayde encouraged mentees to be open to learning. She noted that as a junior lawyer your goals and aspirations change over time, so it is important to be open to all the diverse learning opportunities provided by the mentoring relationship.



The session ended with a brief question and answer period where Paula, Kirsten and Jayde stayed past the hour to answer questions from participants and provide extra tips. Although this year's mentoring kickoff event looked a little different than it has in the past, it was a wonderful session that provided helpful takeaways for this year's mentors and mentees.