

November 15, 2023 Bencher Election – County of Vancouver

Candidate biographies and statements

The candidates were invited to submit biographical information and an election statement. The views expressed are those of the candidates and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Law Society.

Candidates are listed in order of their appearance on the ballot, as determined by drawing of lots, pursuant to Rule 1-28.

Candidate information for District 1 – County of Vancouver

- COOK, Christina J.
- DELANEY, Tim
- HIRA, Ravi, KC
- WATTS, Roger S.
- STRUTHERS, James
- KAZIMIRSKI, Marc
- CHAMBERLAIN, Tanya
- D'SA, Cheryl
- WESTELL, Kevin
- CHARLTON, Nikki
- YEUNG, Gaynor C.
- CHOW, Jennifer, KC
- TURNER, John
- BHARMAL, Aleem, KC



COOK, Christina J.

Called to the Bar: 2010

BC First Nations Justice Council

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

My name is Christina J. Cook, I am a current Bencher, elected in a by-election in July 2023 and I humbly ask for your vote in this 2023 general election.

I am a litigator, an avid volunteer, and a 13-year call. I am First Nations, specifically I am a proud member of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation.

I work for the BC First Nations Justice Council, but I previously have had the pleasure of working as in-house counsel for a national insurer, and for plaintiffs in civil litigation matters, regulatory matters, and doing some corporate and solicitor's work.

I am the Founder of the CBABC Aboriginal Lawyers Forum ('ALF'), the first forum of its kind in Canada. ALF works to address issues facing Indigenous lawyers and law students.

I am a past volunteer with the CBABC Judicial Advisory Committee, Women Lawyers Forum, Young Lawyers, and Insurance Law Section. I am also the past chair of the National Canadian Defence Lawyers Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

I was also the former President of the Kamloops Bar Association.

I have presented at CLEBC Conferences, UBC Law, and TRU Law, and recently I engaged with the Federation of Law Societies on a National Code of Conduct.

ELECTION STATEMENT

The Law Society is currently undergoing massive changes as the Province prepares the legislation for the single legal regulator. The governance of our profession and makeup of the legal regulator is going to change as a single governor is created to oversee lawyers, notaries, and paralegals. However, the legislation has not yet been tabled and is set to be tabled in Spring 2024. Further once it is enacted there will be a transition period between

the LSBC and the new regulator. In the meantime, the LSBC continues its work and its governance of lawyers, and article students. I believe I have an important perspective to add to the Benchers table. I have strong community ties with young lawyers, women lawyers, Indigenous lawyers, insurance defence lawyers, civil litigators and among others. In this time of change we need to ensure that all of these voices are included in the governance of our profession.

In addition to the governance structure, our profession is seeing ever increasing reporting requirements being imposed on lawyers. Lawyers' roles in our communities are evolving, as is the way we do business and practice law. There are technological changes, demographic changes, a shift to increasingly collaborative practice, and issues with access to justice. We need diverse and collaborative Benchers that can work to address these issues for the betterment of the profession and the community at large. And to further ensure that all lawyers are able to make a living wage within the practice of law.

I am committed to supporting the work of the LSBC Mental Health Task Force, as we need to ensure that our profession supports a balanced and healthy practice of law and does not harm our professionals.

As having just been elected as a Benchers in the July 2023 by-election, I am still becoming familiar with this position. In the short months that I have attended Benchers meetings and committee meetings, I have undertaken to provide my unique perspective to the discussions and decisions. I ask for the opportunity to continue, and I humbly ask for your vote for Benchers (Vancouver County).

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DELANEY, Tim

Called to the Bar: 1989

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Tim Delaney was called to the Bar in 1989. He joined Lindsay Kenney LLP in 1990. His practice is in general civil litigation.

He has served as a Managing Partner of Lindsay Kenney.

Before becoming a Bencher last year, he served in a variety of law related volunteer positions including:

- TLABC Executive Committee (2016-2020);
- CBABC Provincial Council (2007-2013);
- President and Member Vancouver Bar Association (1999-2004);
- President and Member Law Courts Inn Society (2006-2015);
- Chair and Member the CBABC Legislation and Law Reform Committee (2000-2005);
- CBABC Audit Committee (2010-2012);
- CBABC Advisory Committee to the Judicial Council (2007-2013);
- Chair, Law Week Planning Committee (1992-1994).

He has been a guest lecturer to CLEBC. He volunteers to the Access Pro Bono legal clinic. He has also volunteered his time for many non-law related societies including serving as a director for the I'm a HIPpy Society (society dedicated to hip health in children); Act II Child and Family Services (society operating programs and a safe house for battered women and their children). He also coached minor hockey with the Vancouver Thunderbirds Minor Hockey Association and flag football with the Westside Warriors Football.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year as a Bencher. It has been both challenging and rewarding work. There is important work ahead and it is my hope to continue to make a contribution.

As we all know, the Provincial government plans to significantly change the regulation of

the legal profession. It is important that we lobby and advocate to ensure this is done in a manner that protects the public and our members.

The independence of the Bar cannot be compromised by these legislative changes. If the government is going to allow more non-lawyers to provide legal services, it is critical this is done in a manner that ensures appropriate oversight. I also believe it is critical that lawyers continue to be the primary group overseeing lawyers on issues of competence and ethics.

In addition to the work that needs to be done regarding regulation of the legal profession, I am also seeking re-election as a Bencher because I am passionate about the importance of mentoring young lawyers. I have been fortunate to have had excellent mentors in my career and I have mentored many others. I have served as a principal for many articulated students over the years. In my role as a Bencher this past year I have enjoyed meeting with many articulated students. On many occasions over the past year, I have assisted members of our profession navigate ethical and practice matters.

In the past year I have been involved in reviewing complaints against lawyers and in discipline proceedings. I enjoy this work and try to approach it with a fair and open mind. I believe it is critical that the Benchers work to continue to improve professional standards. I am also passionate about access to justice and I want to contribute in finding new and innovative ways to improve access to justice in our system.

It has been a privilege to serve for the last year and I ask for your consideration in re-election as a Bencher for Vancouver County.

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HIRA, Ravi, KC

Called to the Bar: 1982

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I have practiced law for over 41 years, primarily as counsel. During that time, I proudly enjoyed many roles, from Crown counsel to Special Prosecutor, criminal defence lawyer to commercial litigator, and mediator to advocate for professionals in diverse fields. I have engaged in numerous public inquiries, represented clients before administrative tribunals, and appeared in all levels of court including the Supreme Court of Canada.

My involvement in professional organizations has been a cornerstone of my dedication to this profession. I have served six elected terms, 18 years, on the CBA National and Provincial Council. I have also served as a Commissioner at the Securities Commission, a director of the British Columbia Law Institute and of the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Justice Policy, and a member of the UBC Senate. I have written and presented many papers at legal conferences. I have co-authored an annual book on British Columbia criminal procedure.

My journey through the Bar has been long and fulfilling. With over 41 years of practice, my passion for the profession remains as strong as ever. It is this passion and respect for the law that drives me to seek a new avenue for contribution.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I was called to the Bar on July 13, 1982. At that time, terms like diversity and work-life balance were foreign to our profession, and the landscape was vastly different. With fewer than 6000 practicing lawyers and the Law Society's modest presence on Hornby Street, our ethical guide was the National CBA Code of Professional Conduct. Since that time, the legal profession has undergone substantial transformation.

Today, our Bar stands as a shining example of progress. We champion diversity, work-life balance, emphasize rigorous practice education, recognize the need for greater sensitivity to an Indigenous past and wrongs done, and collegiality, to name but a few significant

changes for the better. In my view, these changes must continue. The Bar is becoming more representative of the vibrant tapestry of British Columbia and all of Canada, and must continue to do so.

However, in our pursuit of progress, we must never lose sight of the fundamental pillar of our profession: independence. This independence is not only the bedrock of our democracy but also a vital safeguard against government encroachments. Despite constitutional guarantees, legislation limiting the role of lawyers and removing individual rights is becoming more commonplace in British Columbia. While the CBA and Trial Lawyers Association of British Columbia endeavour to defend against these encroachments upon our profession, in my opinion, Benchers must also participate in this defence.

If elected, I would encourage fellow Benchers and the Law Society to more actively defend the independence of the Bar. The winds of progressive change must continue. To this end, the regulation of the Profession by the Law Society should focus on assisting young lawyers and sole practitioners in improving their practice standards. Together, we can ensure that the legal profession not only adapts but thrives in this ever-evolving landscape.

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WATTS, Roger S.

Called to the Bar: 1999

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Roger Watts is a partner at Lindsay LLP, and has practiced civil litigation in Vancouver for 24 years. His practice focuses on disputes involving vehicle and transportation claims. He has appeared at all levels of British Columbia courts, the Federal Court of Canada and the Yukon Supreme Court.

Mr. Watts is an active contributor to the legal community. He has served as Chair of the CBABC Automobile Insurance Working Group, and as a member of the CBABC Advisory Committee to the BC Judicial Council. He is a Past Director of Canadian Defence Lawyers, and is a Past President of the Canadian Transport Lawyers' Association. Mr. Watts also served as Chair of the CBABC Maritime Law Section, Legislative Chair of the Marine Insurance Association of BC, and an executive Member-at-Large of the Trial Lawyers' Association of BC. He regularly contributes to legal education, authoring papers and speaking at seminars for a number of industry organizations.

Outside the office, Mr. Watts serves on the Board of Directors of the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre. He is also a longtime participant in The Lawyer Show, an annual fundraising production for Carousel Theatre and Vancouver's Touchstone Theatre.

ELECTION STATEMENT

The Law Society must continue to have a strong, clear voice in matters affecting our members. Throughout my nearly 25 years of litigation practice, I have been an active contributor to the legal community, having served as Chair of the CBABC Automobile Insurance Working Group, and as a member of the CBABC Advisory Committee to the BC Judicial Council.

Current issues to which I would offer my knowledge and experience at the Benchers table include ensuring that the creation of a single legal regulator in BC proceeds in a way that both protects the public and recognizes the importance of an independent legal profession.

This is a vitally important issue, as the independence of the Bar must be maintained as administrative infrastructure is streamlined. As well, the need for us to provide access to justice and effective, affordable legal services has never been clearer. And through it all, it remains vitally important to support the physical and mental well-being of our members, by ensuring that the right resources are available to all.

Another of my priorities as a Bencher will be to help build better bridges between the profession and the public at large. My work as a Director of the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre and Carousel Theatre for Young People has not only allowed me to support important community institutions, but has also shown me that such experiences are opportunities for lawyers to integrate themselves in their communities, put a human face to our profession, and foster public trust in the work that lawyers do. I would seek to bring the same engagement to LSBC outreach initiatives.

Mentorship of our younger lawyers is also important to me, and to our profession. Throughout my career, I have been regularly involved with mentoring students and young lawyers, helping them deal with practice issues, ethical questions and challenges. I would look forward to carrying on that crucial role as a Bencher.

The Law Society's work remains central to our continued function as a trusted, independent profession. With that in mind, I hope you will consider lending me your support for Bencher.

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STRUTHERS, James

Called to the Bar: 2018

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

James Struthers is the Founder and Managing Lawyer of macushlaw, one of the first benefit company law firms in Canada. Founded in 2020, macushlaw is innovating by: (a) embedding technology and automations, (b) maintaining low relative overhead, (c) formally offering tiered rates, (d) guarding bonuses behind community contribution targets, and (e) offering more sustainable targets. macushlaw has enumerated public interest purposes in its articles and annually reports the firm's financial and impact performance using the B Impact Assessment and its own KPIs.

James maintains a general corporate, commercial and real estate practice for non-profits, charities, impact enterprises and small and medium sized enterprises.

James is a supervising lawyer with the Everyone Legal Clinic, a frequent non-profit director, co-founded the bGuiled Debates, an annual charitable comedic debate, co-founded a growing online community of small firm and solo practitioners called the BC Small Firm or Solo Practitioner Society (BCSOS), and frequent dog foster dad.

James and his wife Raquel Brizzi, a corporate and real estate paralegal that founded her own paralegal services business CORE Paralegals, split their time between Vancouver and Kaslo, B.C.

James studied at UBC Law and has worked at national and midsized firms in Vancouver before founding macushlaw.

ELECTION STATEMENT

Today, in my view, our industry faces three key umbrella issues:

- 1 Mental Health.

The CBA's recent report confirmed what many of us knew observationally. Our colleagues are struggling, and propagating the conditions that have amplified those struggles.

The LSBC, led by Brook Greenberg, K.C.'s efforts, has made leaps forward over the past few years in acknowledging our mental health crisis and mitigating it. This is necessary, promising and meaningful work that we in the B.C. bar are fortunate to benefit from.

2 Access to Justice.

We continue to struggle as an industry with identifying the underlying issues creating barriers to access to justice, and identifying and implementing solutions.

We continue to experience high levels of attrition from the industry, and maintain an unsustainable regulatory burden on solo practitioners and small firms, losing and overburdening those persons most capable at assisting with solving individual justice issues, which only exacerbates them.

Lawyers have few motivators and many barriers to providing low and pro bono services.

The LSBC's last non COVID related report on Access to Justice was published in 2021 and related to the narrow issue of non-adversarial family law proceedings. Prior to this, the most recent report was on Legal Aid, published in 2017. The last pro bono related report was published in 2002.

3 Innovation.

The legal profession is, and in many ways for good reason, not want for tradition. We are struggling however as an industry to find ways that honour our past and our pillars while preparing for the future and adapting to today. Where innovation is being explored, market inequities have arisen.

Despite the meteoric rise in technological adoption and innovation, the LSBC's last technology related committee or task force report was published in 2012.

I have a demonstrated track record of volunteerism, board governance, technological understanding, change management, and leadership which I feel a sense of duty to use in the pursuit of solving these issues.

With my varied and applicable experience, genuine interest in service to others, and as a

solicitor and relatively early call, I believe I would compliment the existing board well.

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KAZIMIRSKI, Marc

Called to the Bar: 2001

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Marc obtained his juris doctorate from Schulich School of Law (Dalhousie) in 2000. In 2007, Marc founded KazLaw Injury Lawyers and worked as a dedicated trial lawyer and advocate for injured individuals in British Columbia. KazLaw has some of the largest personal injury awards in the province and precedent setting decisions in cases dealing with addiction, sexual abuse, and loss of home-making capacity. He was the President of Trial Lawyers Association of British Columbia in 2012 and a Governor of the American Association for Justice in 2015. Marc has taught the “Advanced Topics in Tort Law – Personal Injury” course at Allard School of Law since 2012 and is on the editorial board of the CLEBC Motor Vehicle Handbook. Marc was previously on the Board of the Vancouver Bar Association, a member of the Advocates Society, and proud supporter of the Lawyer’s Assistance Program of BC. Outside of law, Marc is an avid skier and won the VBA ski race (twice). Marc was on the Canadian National Cycling Team, represented Canada at the World Championships, and is involved in many cycling safety initiatives. Marc is married to fellow lawyer, Michelle Ostrow, and they have two children (Sophie and Owen).

ELECTION STATEMENT

Please consider supporting my candidacy as Bencher of the Law Society of BC.

I started KazLaw Injury Lawyers in 2007 as a sole practitioner and I am keenly aware of the challenges facing small firms. Since that time, KazLaw has grown to 18 lawyers and I am committed to creating an inclusive and diverse law firm, providing flexibility for lawyers and staff, and emphasizing the importance of mental health in a very demanding profession. The entirety of my legal practice is focused on advocacy for people who might otherwise be marginalized by the justice system. I have litigated some of the most challenging cases that deal with addiction, psychological disorders, sexual abuse, chronic pain and traumatic brain injury. The core concern in these cases is how to achieve justice when the adversarial process may aggravate the vulnerability of an injured individual. We

must do better to balance these interests and ensure access to justice for all individuals. The LSBC has a crucial role for establishing the highest standards of professionalism and ensuring that the public remains confident in our self-regulation.

There are three things that I will pursue as a Bencher of the Law Society of BC. First, as the practice of law continues to evolve rapidly, it is imperative that we adapt our rules and process to facilitate access to our courts. I was on the COVID advisory committee that made recommendations for the re-opening of BC courts and seek to continue the process of technological development to benefit all users of our court services. Second, we need to streamline the process of LSBC regulatory compliance. I am the principal of a busy law firm and have direct experience with the challenges of our regulatory process (which is cumbersome at best). Finally, the Law Society of BC has made some important improvements regarding mental health, and it is crucially important that we build upon these initiatives to ensure that lawyers can speak openly about their struggles and access resources that promote long-term health and well-being.

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CHAMBERLAIN, Tanya

Called to the Bar: 1995

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Tanya is a family law lawyer who was called to the Bar in British Columbia in 1995. In 2021 she was elected as a Bencher of the Law Society of British Columbia for the County of Vancouver. As a Bencher, Tanya sat on the Access to Justice, Discipline, and Practice Standards Committees. She is a Collaborative Lawyer, Family Law Mediator and Arbitrator, Parenting Coordinator and prepares Hear the Child Reports.

Tanya is a member of the Health and Justice Alliance Steering Committee, a collaboration between lawyers and doctors working to reduce the harm British Columbians experience when going through relationship break down. She is a Board Member of the British Columbia Collaborative Roster Society and a co-chair of the Pro Bono Collaborative Committee. Tanya is a Past President of BC Sailing.

Tanya's family law practice is focussed on consensual dispute resolution because she believes that such processes are practical, cost effective, are in the children's best interests and reflect the values of the Family Law Act.

Born and raised in Vancouver, Tanya is the mother of two adult children. She loves skiing, sailing and as much time as possible with her family, friends and many dogs.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I was humbled and proud to be elected as a Bencher of the Law Society for the County of Vancouver in 2021. Since my election, it has been my privilege to serve on the Discipline, Practice Standards and Access to Justice Committees. I take my duties as a Bencher seriously and am committed to the work.

I will continue to speak out about the problems of bullying, harassment, and discrimination in the legal profession. This is not a problem unique to lawyers; however, lawyers can be leaders in society by acknowledging this pervasive problem. We should take real steps to

address the harm caused, by creating fair and equitable processes for resolution. The public needs to be able to rely on lawyers to provide safe spaces when they provide legal services. I hope to continue to promote and advocate for greater wellness for lawyers and to help reduce the stigma of asking for help. We cannot help our clients effectively if we are not well.

If re-elected, I will continue to advocate for and promote the inclusion of more women, Indigenous people, minorities and others facing barriers in the legal profession. The legal profession must reflect the diversity of British Columbia if we are to serve the citizens of this Province properly. I continue to educate myself about the effects of the colonization of Indigenous people in Canada. Learning the truth of what our legal, political and child welfare systems have done to Indigenous people is the first small step towards reconciliation.

I continue to advocate for greater access to justice by identifying the barriers people face in accessing practical, timely and cost-effective solutions for legal problems. I support technological advances in court systems that promote greater access for lawyers and litigants, particularly in rural areas. I support greater funding for court services and legal aid, which has been chronically underfunded for my entire career. I advocate strongly for an independent Bar, because it is essential to the functioning of a free and democratic society, and therefore in the public interest.

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D'SA, Cheryl

Called to the Bar: 2008

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

A first generation Canadian, born and raised in Vancouver, I attended law school at UBC and was called in 2008. I summered, articulated and practiced at a mid-sized firm before joining a plaintiff only firm. In 2013 I joined my partner to start our own firm, Narwal Litigation LLP, where I remain today as the Managing Partner. The firm is devoted to criminal defence, professional regulation, securities litigation and personal injury. I am also a mediator.

A Benchler since May 2020, I am the Chair of the EDI Committee and a member of the Mental Health Task Force and Credentials Committee. I am the Benchler representative on Justicia and one of two Benchlers appointed to the Board of CLEBC.

I was the first visible minority female president of the Vancouver Bar Association. For several years, I was Chair of the CBABC Solo & Small Firm Section and have held appointments to CBABC Committees.

I received the CBABC WLF Debra Van Ginkel, QC Mentoring Award (2023). Business in Vancouver named me a Top Forty Under 40 (2019) and I received the Canadian Lawyer Magazine Excellence Award in the Female Trailblazer of the Year category for the 2021 Canadian Law Awards.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I am a female racialized lawyer with a young child and a small firm owner. The LSBC must regulate in the public interest, and I am a voice for many groups that need continued representation at the table while this work is carried out. This is particularly important as we prepare for the shift to a single-legal regulator.

I am the only incumbent female elected benchler with a child under the age of 8. I have current and firsthand knowledge about the issues facing women in law and am an active

voice for the retention of women in law. As indicated in the July Bencher meeting the EDI and Credentials Committees have been considering the issue of parental leave and return to practice. I hope to continue to bring my perspective to this work.

I am active at the Bencher table. At the June Bencher meeting, a practice review pilot project for 2-5 year calls in solo/ small firm environments only, was presented to the Benchers. I spoke against the project as presented for multiple reasons, one being the random selection (narrowed based on risk factors) proposed - I was concerned it could allow for bias and I believe in transparency and fairness in the regulatory process.

I am the only BC Bencher representative on the Competency Development Task Force and have devoted many hours to it. Sponsored by the Law Societies of the four western provinces, the project is to develop and validate a Competency Profile that sets out the competencies needed to begin legal practice in these provinces. As a mentor and principal to students, I have a keen interest in ensuring lawyers begin their careers understanding their obligations.

Additionally, I actively speak on improving mental health in the profession.

I would be very grateful to be re-elected and be afforded an opportunity to continue working hard to ensure we have a strong, healthy profession that reflects the diversity of British Columbians, an independent bar, an accessible justice system, and that we continue moving forward on truth & reconciliation, to best protect and serve the public.

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WESTELL, Kevin

Called to the Bar: 2009

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

It continues to be my honour to serve as Bencher for Vancouver County. I have served on the Access to Justice Advisory, Ethics, and Discipline Committees as well as the Trust Review Task Force. I have also acted as the LSBC representative to the CBABC Provincial Council.

As a proud Vancouverite and founding principal at Pender Litigation, I practice criminal, regulatory, and administrative law. Apart from my defence work in private practice, I act occasionally as ad hoc Crown Counsel, amicus curiae, and as counsel for witnesses. I have acted at all levels of court in BC and at the Supreme Court of Canada.

My volunteer experience includes instructing on trial advocacy and ethics within many forums including UBC's McEachern Course in Trial Advocacy and the VBA Inns of Court Program. I have also served the profession as Chair of the Advocates Club, the CBA National Criminal Justice Section, the TLABC Criminal Committee. I was recently appointed to the VBA Childcare Initiative Subcommittee.

I continue to seek opportunities to broaden my perspective. Outside of law, I have volunteered on the board for both the Strathcona Community Centre and the Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC.

ELECTION STATEMENT

Over the past three years it has been my pleasure to represent Vancouver County as Bencher. I once again seek re-election and hope to continue that important work on behalf of the bar and in the public interest.

My favourite part of being a Bencher continues to be receiving calls from lawyers and students seeking advice on difficult (and often time-sensitive) ethical problems. I consider it a privilege to be asked to help colleagues in need and each call presents an opportunity to

both learn and problem-solve.

If re-elected I will continue to champion technological and systemic innovations that improve and simplify access to justice. Out of necessity, the COVID-19 pandemic has ushered into existence a new era of engagement with technology and remote advocacy. This evolution must continue but, at the same time, our profession must ensure that ‘virtual’ practice does more than simply increase convenience for lawyers. It must always serve and enhance the public’s interest in expanding meaningful access to justice.

The same goes for Artificial Intelligence. As the profession faces up to the reality of an increased reliance by lawyers on AI, the regulator must ensure that this new, and sometimes misunderstood mode of technology does not trample on the privacy rights of our clients. We must also respect our clients’ fair expectation that the ultimate legal opinions and guidance they receive are the products of the expertise of an actual thinking and feeling lawyer, rather than an algorithm. If re-elected I will continue to prioritize vigilance in that regard.

If re-elected I will also remain vigilant in my response to the government’s expected introduction of a new single legal regulator model for BC with a differently constituted board of directors. My priority has always been the public’s interest in a truly independent bar, and I will continue to be a champion for that essential cause as we confront the future.

I can think of no greater professional honour than the opportunity to continue serving the public and our bar as a Bencher.

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CHARLTON, Nikki

Called to the Bar: 2004

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Nikki Charlton has spent her legal career at Farris LLP. She was called to the bar in 2004 and became a partner in 2015. Nikki practices in the challenging field of family law, with a dynamic practice offering every process option (mediation, collaborative law, arbitration, litigation), to best serve her client's interests. She also serves as a neutral to resolve family law disputes. Nikki is an accredited Parenting Coordinator, Family Law Mediator, and Child Interviewer.

Nikki obtained her B.A. with distinction at the University of Victoria and her law degree at UBC. She has co-chaired the CLEBC Biennial Family Law Conference since 2017, and has written papers and presented at various conferences. She served for six years on the board of the British Columbia Collaborative Practice Roster Society, and during her tenure Nikki supported the development of the Pro Bono Collaborative Family Law Project, a voluntary and confidential program for unrepresented parties going through separation.

Before becoming a lawyer, Nikki worked as a respite and support worker, including with youth at risk and children with disabilities. She has participated in numerous charitable fundraising activities and has been on the board of the North Shore Disability Resource Association.

ELECTION STATEMENT

We continue to be in a period of profound change—with its nature and extent still to be determined—to governance models and regulation of the legal profession. With the Provincial government's proposed changes to regulation of legal services in British Columbia, we as lawyers must balance service to the public with ensuring that our independence is preserved. Service to the public is foundational; beyond even the Law Society's mandate, it is part of the oath we have all taken.

Having practiced law for nearly 20 years, I can reflect upon and appreciate the various

stages of development and growth a lawyer must endure. It is not easy. As a young lawyer I at times questioned myself, felt like an imposter, as many others do. Women continue to leave the practice of law within the first 5 years, often because they lack necessary mentorship and support. That is an issue that we, as a profession, can remedy.

No matter your personal circumstances, being a lawyer is stressful. We all have coping mechanisms, some healthy, some not. It is imperative that we support each other and address mental health and substance misuse within our profession with compassion and sensitivity.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion are often invoked and rarely acted upon. Being raised in a military family and moving across North America and Europe every one to three years allowed me the privilege of living in various communities and getting to know people from vastly different backgrounds with varying interests, and viewpoints. Professionally, I have had the chance to work with those who are sadly often overlooked, such as children with disabilities and youth at risk. We all come to the bar with our own unique story and experience. Ignoring that will make our successes diminished—or even illusory.

My life experience has given me resilience and purpose. That is precisely what is needed to meet the challenges and opportunities the next months and years will bring for the profession and our regulator. I would be honoured to serve as Bencher in this critical time.

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YEUNG, Gaynor C.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gaynor was first elected as a Bencher in 2021 and is currently the Vice Chair of the EDI committee and a member of the Practice Standards committee. Gaynor is a litigator, mediator, and partner at Whitelaw Twining. Since being called to the bar in 1996, she has practiced insurance law, litigating a broad array of matters but primarily focusing on personal injury and professional negligence claims. She has been recognized by the Best Lawyers in Canada™ as a leading litigator in both Insurance Law and Personal Injury Litigation since 2020.

Throughout Gaynor's career, she has been an active volunteer in the legal community. In 2018, the Vancouver Bar Association recognized Gaynor with the Peter S. Hyndman Mentorship award for her work with students and junior practitioners. She continues to mentor our next generation of lawyers through the CBA Women Lawyers' Forum, the Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers, and the Peter A. Allard School of Law. Gaynor is a keen lecturer on dispute resolution skills and strategies, just in the last year providing programming through the VBA, FACL, and the TLABC.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I believe that the public interest is served by a legal community which is well supported, diverse, and governed by an independent regulator. The public deserves access to justice and representation by legal professionals who meet the highest standards of integrity, professionalism, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

To that end, I intend to:

- Continue working with the government to develop a framework for a single regulator which prioritizes access to justice, education and support for legal professionals, and reflects the makeup of legal professionals in our province;
- Continue championing initiatives which address access to justice issues, support

mental wellness amongst our community, and/or further the best principles of equity, diversity and inclusion;

- Continue lending the technical skills, which I have garnered from my experience litigating a broad range of practice areas, to lawyers in need of assistance or advice with practice and/or ethical issues;
- Continue mentoring articling students and junior associates who have requested, or whose firms have requested, my time.

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CHOW, Jennifer, KC

Called to the Bar: 1990

Department of Justice Canada

Email: jennifer.chow@justice.gc.ca

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Jennifer Chow KC is Senior Counsel at the Department of Justice, focussing on constitutional, administrative, Indigenous and commercial litigation.

Her volunteer work has included:

- Member, Executive Committee
- Vice-Chair, Practice Standards Committee
- Member, Access to Justice Advisory Committee
- Former member, Complainants' Review Committee
- Former Chair and Vice-Chair, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee
- Former member, Governance Committee
- Former member, Ethics Committee
- Former member, Rule of Law and Lawyer Independence Advisory Committee
- Moderator, Rule of Law Lecture Series: Social Justice and the Rule of Law and Privacy,

Technology and the Rule of Law

- Former member, Judging Panel, Rule of Law high school essay contests
- Adjudicator, Law Society of BC Tribunal, since 2012
- Chair, various Disciplinary Panel Hearings
- Chair, various Conduct Reviews
- Former member, Tribunal Recruitment Working Group

Other:

- First visible minority president, CBABC, 2015-16
- Served six years on Executive Committee, CBABC
- Member, FACLBC, CBABC, Vancouver Bar Association
- Member, Trauma Informed Practice Project Steering Committee
- Inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Award, Law Society of BC
- Queen's Counsel, 2016
- Community Service Award, CBABC
- Regular contributor to continuing legal education and mentorship programs

ELECTION STATEMENT

I seek re-election for a fourth and final term as an elected bencher for Vancouver County. Over the past six years, I have served on most LSBC committees, recently as a member of executive committee this year. I bring six years' experience as an elected bencher; experience as a past Canadian Bar Association British Columbia Branch President; leadership in equality, diversity and inclusion issues; and a continuing desire to give back to the legal profession.

Vision: I have been outspoken about the independence of the bar, access to justice, the public interest and diversity issues. The public interest is served when lawyers maintain a majority on a board governing the legal profession.

Key Issues:

1. **Single Legal Regulator.** The provincial government intends to introduce legislation on this issue next Spring. We will need to carefully review the proposed legislation and its transitional provisions. I support taking positions and the necessary steps to ensure a strong independent bar and access to justice.

My past presidency (2015-16) at the Canadian Bar Association BC Branch was a year focussed almost exclusively on ensuring a strong independent BC Branch. I gained invaluable wisdom and experience in successfully advocating for a strong BC Branch instead of a centralized organization.

2. **Access to Justice.** Access to justice means access by people in remote, rural and urban communities to affordable legal advice and to our justice system, including the courts, in person and online. I will continue to promote access to justice as well as pro bono initiatives and the LSBC's innovation sandbox.

3. **Equality and Diversity Issues.** One of the very first goals I advanced was the voluntary self-identification questions on the LSBC's annual practice declarations. The gathered data suggests more work needs to be done to ensure barriers are removed for Indigenous, persons with disabilities, visible minorities and 2SLGBTQI+ groups. I will continue to speak out against racism, such as UBC's National Forum on Anti-Asian Racism and support anti-racial awareness initiatives.

4. **Mental Health Issues.** I support initiatives that provide assistance to lawyers still affected by Covid-19 including practice fee adjustments and mental health

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TURNER, John

Called to the Bar: 1988

John B. Turner

Email: jbturner@shaw.ca

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I have practiced criminal law for the past 35 years in British Columbia. I have appeared at every level of court and in most jurisdictions in the Province. I have been involved in every kind of case from lengthy extradition cases, large and lengthy gang cases, first degree murders, wire tap conspiracies and theft under matters plus pretty much everything in between. I have been a provincial prosecutor, a federal prosecuting agent, senior counsel with Legal Aid BC including as circuit counsel on the Central Coast, helping largely indigenous communities. For the past twenty years I have been in private practice as a sole practitioner. I was an elected member of Provincial Council of the CBA British Columbia from 1996 through 1999 and a current member of CDAS. I was a founding member and board member of A.L.L and continue to be a member of its governance committee. I have been involved in a number of teaching engagements including at the RCMP staff college in Chilliwack and PLTC. I have also been an invitee and contributor to various committees with Justice Canada dealing with legislation and policy planning.

ELECTION STATEMENT

As a regulator the primary concern of The Law Society is the supervision of our profession in its interaction with the public as it provides legal services to them. In enforcing standards of conduct on lawyers there is a place to deal with issues that not only affect our justice system but have a profound impact on individual members as they deliver services. I have the ability and long experience to not only be an effective regulator but more importantly to be involved with the issues that are most important to our members as they try to make a living in a very stressful environment. I have had the opportunity to work in government and in the private sector. I have worked in a large firm as an associate and for many years as a sole practitioner. I continue to work on occasion as an ad hoc prosecutor all over the Province. This has given me a great opportunity to see the practice of law in a number of different settings and a wide variety of places. I believe this has given me valuable insight which I can bring to the task of being a bencher at the table. I have always had a strong interest in the well being of our great profession particularly as we move

forward in a rapidly changing and uncertain world. If you want someone who is very experienced and has a broad understanding of the salient issues that we all face, I am your steady hand.

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BHARMAL, Aleem, KC

Called to the Bar: 1995

Community Legal Assistance Society

Email: abharmal@clasbc.net

Website: www.clasbc.net/about-clas/our-people/aleem-bharmal/

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I am a well-experienced human rights lawyer with the Community Legal Assistance Society, a not-for-profit legal organization advancing dignity, equality, and justice, where I have been practicing for over twenty years and was Executive Director for twelve. Prior to that, I was an employment lawyer at a large national firm in Toronto.

I served as President of the Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch in 2022-23 and have chaired many CBABC Sections and Committees, including the Social Justice and Human Rights Sections, and the Policy & Advocacy and Equality Committees. I started with the CBABC in the areas of EDI and access to justice, two of my great passions.

I am a longstanding law student mentor and have presented extensively on human rights, access to justice, and legal ethical issues. I was involved with other groups and stakeholders in the launch of the Islamophobia Legal Assistance Hotline.

I was lead counsel on a number of successful, high-profile discrimination cases, including one involving Indo-Canadian veterinarians challenging their regulator and another involving an Indigenous mother taking on the child welfare system.

In 2016, I was awarded the CBABC President's Medal in recognition of my legal contributions and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2019.

ELECTION STATEMENT

As a Bencher, I will vigorously advocate to protect the independence of the legal profession as well as the preservation of the rule of law in service of the public interest. And I will defend against unwarranted attacks that lead to the erosion of the practice of law and the public's access to justice.

I believe it is important to rebuild people's faith in our legal and judicial systems and most firmly respond to the BC Government's move to a single regulator of lawyers, notaries, and paralegals. I believe it is vital to the independence of the profession that lawyers be regulated by lawyers.

I have a proven track record in strongly advocating this principled approach and if litigation becomes necessary to preserve it, I will not hesitate to press for that at the Bencher table. These are concerns I championed as CBABC President, and they are concerns I will continue to prioritize in my service to you as a Bencher working in the public interest.

As a South Asian lawyer, growing up in Canada, I have been a lifelong advocate in the discourse promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in the legal profession. I am further committed to bolstering the public's access to justice.

These are important aspects of maintaining confidence in our profession and the justice system. These have always been great passions of mine and I have a longstanding history of achievement in both these areas, as well as in the area of Truth & Reconciliation, through both my extensive professional and volunteer legal work.

As a well-experienced human rights litigator working in the public interest legal sector and as a steadfast champion of important and timely social justice issues, I view the opportunity to serve you as your Bencher to be an absolute honour and privilege. I humbly seek your support.

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