

## **November 15, 2023 Bencher Election – County of Westminster**

### **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 4 – County of Westminster**

- SANDHU, Gurminder
- MALIK, Jaspreet Singh
- CARTA, Chris
- SPRAGGS, Tom
- KANG, Narindar Singh, KC



## **SANDHU, Gurminder**

Called to the Bar: 2000

Hamilton Duncan

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Website: [www.hamiltonduncan.com/](http://www.hamiltonduncan.com/)

### **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

A first generation Canadian, I was born and raised in the Lower Mainland, and was the first member of my family to attend university. I studied history and political science before graduating from UBC Law School in 1999. I currently work at Hamilton Duncan where I practice general litigation.

Over the course of my career, I have volunteered with various legal organizations, serving in the following roles:

- Volunteer, UBC LSLAP; Salvation Army Legal Clinic; Amici Curiae
- Volunteer, PLTC Moot Court; Chambers Practice; PLTC Litigation Editor
- Elected Representative, CBA Provincial Council
- Executive, CBA Research Section
- Member, CBA Automobile Committee; CBA BarTalk Committee
- Volunteer, CBA Practice Panel
- Mentor, TRU Law School; UBC Law School
- Secretary/Executive, BC South Asian Bar Association
- Member, Provincial Judicial Committee
- Member, Federal Judicial Committee
- Bencher, LSBC

- Member, LSBC Tribunal; LSBC Complaints Review Committee; LSBC Equality + Diversity Committee; LSBC Credentials Committee

When I'm not working, I enjoy spending time with my family, playing basketball (badly) with friends and going for easy hikes with the kids.

## **ELECTION STATEMENT**

The opportunity to work with Westminster County lawyers and fellow Benchers over the past two years has been both rewarding and humbling. I have been energized by the exuberance of newly called lawyers, but also deeply concerned about hardships experienced by colleagues.

Over the past two years, I have advocated for enhanced support and education so we can better understand the nuances of the regulatory process, avoid trust accounting infractions and better appreciate ethical pitfalls. In this regard, I have attended Bar events, conversed with some of you and provided guidance whenever possible. If re-elected, I hope to continue doing this work individually, but also engaging with fellow Benchers to further streamline the regulatory process so we can focus on the practice of law.

The governance structure of the legal profession is at a crossroads. I believe that lawyer independence is a hallmark of the profession. I will work with fellow Benchers to ensure that lawyer independence is preserved under the new legal regulator. As lawyers represent the vast majority of legal professionals, I will also advocate for elected lawyers to be the majority voice under the new regulatory regime.

If re-elected, I will also continue to work toward the following policies:

- advocating reduced Law Society fees;
- supporting practical and simplified trust reporting rules;
- improving information exchange with auditors and the trust accounting department;
- supporting pro bono work for CPD credit;
- promoting mental health wellness; and
- supporting access to justice policies for persons of limited means.

I have done my best to support, advocate and listen to you. I believe that being accessible

and trying to understand and resolve questions or concerns is one of the most important roles played by Benchers. I have answered your call and will continue to do so if re-elected. With your support, I will continue to take a reasoned and pragmatic approach on the above issues and other issues of importance to the profession.

I also look forward to hearing from you. Please reach out should you have any issues that you wish to address.

Thank-you, Gurminder

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## **MALIK, Jaspreet Singh**

Called to the Bar: 2001

South Fraser Law Group

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

I graduated from UBC Law in 2000 and was called to the BC Bar in 2001. Since that time I have conducted hundreds of trials and countless chambers applications. I have appeared at all levels of Court from administrative tribunals to the Supreme Court of Canada. I have run my own firm (with and without partners) since I was called to the bar.

I have edited the PLTC materials, been a mentor to many younger lawyers, and been a principal to over 10 articling students.

I have coached my children in football, baseball, ice hockey and ball hockey and volunteered with both multiple minor sports associations. I have served on various not-for-profit boards since 1994 while I was completing my undergrad at UBC.

I am proud to say I have been married to my incredible wife Sundeep since 2001 (I got married during my articles!). We have three children: sons, Sahib 19 and Mohkam, 18, and daughter, Harjus, 12. We also have an overactive king shepherd named Prem.

When I get a free moment, I like to play hockey (badly), ski (slowly), ride a motorcycle (precisely) or drive my Porsche Boxster (quickly).

## **ELECTION STATEMENT**

I seek election with three principles in mind:

1. A strong and vibrant legal profession is in the public interest;
2. Professional Conduct should be supportive before adversarial; and
3. Diversity at the bench table improves the legal profession.

**Strong and Vibrant Profession is in the Public Interest**

It is my core belief that a strong and vibrant profession is in the public interest. Any regulations which help to create a strong and vibrant profession will certainly serve the

public interest. Framing the benchers role with this view, the Law Society can become a pillar of support to the profession.

#### Professional Conduct

Most lawyers have had the experience of a complaint at some point in their careers. Instead of feeling anxiety, the reaction should be this is a learning experience where lawyers will be supported by the Law Society's professional conduct department. Lawyers and the public interest would be much better served when lawyers feel supported and safe in their professional life so they have the ability to be creative, courageous and innovative for their clients.

#### Diversity

As a visible minority who runs a boutique litigation firm, I am certainly a minority in the profession. Early in my career (2001-02) I was asked to leave the Barristers Lounge in Vancouver by an older non-racialized lawyer who assumed I was an interpreter because of my appearance. Since being called in 2001, we have many more racialized lawyers in the profession. However, there remain very few racialized judges or benchers. As someone who is a highly visible minority, with my turban and untrimmed beard, I see almost no one who looks like me in leadership positions (Madam Justice Shergill is the only turbaned judge in Canada). There has never been a turbaned bencher in Canada.

As a bencher, I will bring a unique perspective to the bencher table. I will be able to advocate for change that builds a strong and vibrant profession while also being in the public interest. I ask for your vote so we can make legal history together!

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**CARTA, Chris**

Called to the Bar: 2012

Clear Legal Law Corporation

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Website: [www.clearlaw.ca/](http://www.clearlaw.ca/)

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

Chris has practiced in Surrey primarily in family law, personal injury, and estates since being called to the bar in 2012.

**ELECTION STATEMENT**

I strongly believe that our profession is facing many challenges and changes in the decades to come. The Law Society should be focused on preparing for these challenges and changes and how they will affect the public interest. Rising inequity, government actions, an overloaded judiciary, and a host of other factors are reducing the public's ability to pursue their legal remedies and seek justice.

Lawyers are the public's last line of defence against government and other actors who wield far more power than your average citizen. The Law Society can best fulfill its mandate of protecting the public interest in the administration of justice by pushing to ensure that lawyers retain their independence from government both in the pursuit of their profession and in their pursuit of a living.

As a benchler, I will press to protect our independence, our self-regulation, and our ability to maintain a strong bar that stands up to government overreach, stands up for the underprivileged and stands with the under-represented.

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## **SPRAGGS, Tom**

Called to the Bar: 2003

Spraggs Law

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Website: [www.tomspraggs.com](http://www.tomspraggs.com)

### **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

Having the honour and privilege of serving as a Bencher for the last four years, Tom seeks re-election to continue the efforts to support the Law Society to fulfil its public interest mandate in our changing and challenging times.

Tom strives to implement innovation and modernization of governance structures to meet current and future challenges of the profession. Tom is an active community member, serving as a former director at Douglas College and the past Chair of the British Columbia Law Institute. A resolute supporter of the rule of law, Tom maintains a passion for governance, law and technology and is recognized for innovation in the legal technology community.

Tom maintains an unwavering commitment to the necessity of a lawyer-led self-governing profession and believes that effective governance must include fairness towards lawyers and transparency of processes at the Law Society as part of the public interest mandate.

### **ELECTION STATEMENT**

I seek re-election to continue working towards increased fairness, innovation and governance reform at the Law Society and support for improved and enhanced access to justice.

It is my continuing honour to serve as one of your Benchers for Westminster County over the last four years, and I would consider it a privilege if elected to serve for a third term.

Having served on the Ethics Committee, Credentials Committee, Lawyer Development Task Force, Practice Standards Committee, Unauthorized Practice Committee, Complainants' Review Committee and the Indigenous Engagement in Regulatory Matters Task Force, I seek the opportunity to further the mandate of the Law Society.

To effectively fulfill the public interest mandate of the Law Society, an understanding of



the pressures facing the legal industry is invaluable at the Benchers table. Understanding the challenges and realities that practicing lawyers and the operational realities law firms face is particularly helpful as the Law Society navigates the interpretation and application of rules governing the profession.

Progress has been made at the Law Society, yet much more remains to be accomplished. The data-driven approach to policy is an example of how technology intersects with practice to better serve members and the public interest. An effective and fair Law Society supports a strong, competent, and collegial legal community. A Law Society that is effective and fair is in the public interest.

There are continued opportunities to enable and support significant reforms in the Law Society, including the following:

- a. Indigenous Engagement in Regulatory Matters Task Force Implementation
- b. Lawyer Development Task Force Competency Framework and Articling Reforms
- c. Continued development of the Alternative Discipline Process and Wellness Awareness
- d. Revisiting outdated and onerous trust accounting practices
- e. Review of processes relating to vexatious and frivolous complaints

I am asking for your trust so we can fulfill the public interest mandate as an effective self-governing legal services provider.

If you would like more information or would like to speak with me, please visit [www.tomspraggs.com](http://www.tomspraggs.com), call me directly on my cell (604-202-2911) and/or email me at [thomas.spraggs@spraggsllaw.com](mailto:thomas.spraggs@spraggsllaw.com)

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**KANG, Narindar Singh, KC**

Called to the Bar: 1991

Kang & Company

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**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

-Semester Professor in Climate Change & Human Rights, Faculty of Law, Bond University.

-Designed and implemented a course offered annually about:

- rights of vulnerable groups (children, women, disabled persons, indigenous persons) most affected by the climate crisis;
- climate crisis refugees;
- global inequalities and climate justice;
- intergenerational climate justice; and
- climate colonialism.

- LSBC Member since 1991; served clients from 65 countries in immigration and refugee advocacy.

-Appointed QC in 2015; Accredited Family Law Mediator.

-JD (University of California); MS (Stanford School of Earth Sciences).

-Quasi-Judicial Experience by Order-in-Council appointment to Immigration Appeal Division (IAD), a Court of Record, of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (2002-2007).

- As final appellate decision-maker at IAD, adjudicated approximately 1100 appeals. Interpreted Canadian domestic law (including the IRPA, the Citizenship Act, and the CCC), and international law.

-Along with IAD colleagues, received the Head of the Public Service Award for 2003 for designing and implementing an ADR program.

-Appointed by B.C. Premier in 2011 to the Immigration Task Force.

-Invited to speak to Parliamentary Committee respecting Bill C-24.

-Appointed (1990s) by LSBC to Systemic Bias Subcommittee, Multiculturalism Committee.

-Elected to Canadian Bar Association - Executive Provincial Council by lawyer colleagues (2000-2002).

## **ELECTION STATEMENT**

I, Narindar Singh Kang KC, wish to contribute as a volunteer Benchers after 32 years of practice by:

-drawing upon my 32 years of legal experience (including my quasi-judicial experience from 2002 to 2007) in immigration and refugee advocacy, to give voice to those who historically and presently have been marginalized and silenced;

-to advocate for more LSBC institutional focus upon the existential threat of the climate crisis and its direct deleterious impacts, with a focus on proactive rather than reactive policy;

-to continue to bend the arc of history towards a more inclusive form of access to justice, and to the administration of justice, by the LSBC in governance of its members;

-drawing upon my experience serving upon the Systemic Bias Subcommittee of the LSBC in the 1990s, to advocate for a long-overdue move away from the sedate pace of attaining equity and equality, not only in the larger society, but also at the LSBC itself. (We can do better);

-to support Members in what is to many a very stressful profession in a more holistic and sensitive way;

-to assess the present structure of the 25 elected Benchers (with 13 elected from the County of Vancouver and 3 from the County of Westminster) and inform LSBC Members whether there is, as one lawyer colleague put it, inadvertent gerrymandering. After all, more and more lawyers live and practice south of the Fraser River in the Lower Mainland and perhaps we ought to examine if our governing structure reflects that trend;

-to bring a humanitarian and compassionate focus to those lawyers who need peer-to-peer support, whatever their struggles may be;

-in sum, to enhance cultural sensitivity in a LSBC that is to be commended for its evolution in inclusivity to date, while still challenged to do more; and thus

-I thank you in advance for your serious consideration. For further information please review my biographical information. I can also be reached by email (narindar@kanglawyers.com) and/or by phone 604-572-8871.

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