



2020 Bencher By-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

- LEE, Kyla
- HAFIZI, Bahar
- WAHID, Jasmeet K.
- WINDER, Steve M.
- VEYLAN, Saravan J.
- MANDANICI, Sandra
- DUMBRELL, Lisa
- LUITINGH, Hermann
- ARBOGAST, Thomas
- ROBERTS, William L.
- WESTELL, Kevin
- ZEGREAN, Ivona-Elena
- KONDOPULOS, James D.
- CLOUGH, Emily L.
- STEPHENS, K. Michael



LEE, KYLA

Called to the Bar: 2012

Acumen Law Corporation

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Kyla Lee's practice focuses on defence of driving-related offences, and alcohol-related driving prohibitions.

Kyla is actively involved in her community. She is a member of the TLABC Criminal Law Committee, the Editorial Board for *The Verdict*, and a former member of the Executive Committee. Kyla represents the CBA on the Criminal Law Section executive, and formerly served on The Advocate's Society Criminal Law Practice Group. She is involved with TAS's *R. v. Chouhan* task force, assisting with decision-making on intervention at the SCC. Kyla is the CLE Co-Chair and on the Board of Directors for the DUI Defence Lawyers Association. She also serves as a National Ambassador to the Universal Women's Network.

In 2019, Kyla was recognized as one of the Top 25 Most Influential Lawyers in Canada. She was awarded the Universal Women's Network Indigenous Leader Award. Kyla was named the recipient of the DUIDLA BadAss award in 2019. In 2020, Kyla was named a regional finalist in the RBC Women Entrepreneur Awards.

Kyla hosts popular YouTube series *Cases That Should Have Gone to the Supreme Court of Canada, But Didn't!* and *Can You Fail It* and the Driving Law podcast.

Kyla is a proud Métis woman.

ELECTION STATEMENT

2020 has been a year of upheaval. Every norm that we have known seems to be turned on its head. Some of the systemic change we are seeing is excellent. We have been forced to embrace technology as part of the legal profession, to consider new ways of doing old things, and to adapt to respond to situations that change as rapidly as we adjust.

This change is building momentum. I want to capitalize on that momentum to make greater systemic change for the legal profession. If elected, I would spearhead initiatives with the Law Society to ensure greater representation of BIPOC lawyers in the legal community. I would introduce amendments to the *Code* that require special consideration in practice standards and discipline to issues arising out of systemic discrimination.

I would encourage greater use of technology at the Law Society to streamline applications, processing of documents, and decisions on discipline and professional conduct.

The Law Society's mandate includes bringing a voice to issues affecting the justice system and delivery of legal services. I would introduce initiatives to help lawyers who are struggling financially to adopt new technology, by advocating for the creation of a fund to assist with necessary purchases.

The regulatory framework in place disproportionately affects small and solo practitioners. The cost of having to navigate a confusing regulatory framework is borne by clients, preventing small and solo practitioners from being able to provide affordable services. This in turn, negatively affects access to justice. I would advocate to reduce the burden on small firms and solo practitioners so that they can more easily deliver services to the clients who need them.

Family law poses huge access to justice barriers. If elected, I would advocate to use Law Society resources to push for a unified family court.

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HAFIZI, BAHAR

Called to the Bar: 2001

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I am the Managing Partner at BH Legal. I have been practising for just under 20 years as a corporate commercial solicitor, specializing in banking (financial services) and real estate matters. My practice is primarily transactional and I act for financial institutions and corporate entities on various financings and real estate and commercial matters.

I have worked in a number of diverse legal contexts: I articulated and became a partner in the national firm setting, following this I practised as a partner at a mid-size corporate law firm, and finally, two years ago, I established my own firm. With these experiences I have come to understand the challenges and sensitivities that each legal setting encounters.

The national firm was invaluable in building-out my expertise on transactional and legal matters. It was in this context that I learned to manage large and complex financings spanning multiple jurisdictions. I was fortunate to receive extensive mentorship and established life-long friendships. My time at a mid-size firm provided insight into the management and administration of a law firm and laid the ground work for launching my firm. As a sole-practitioner I have the privilege of being a small business owner. Each of these experiences have been instrumental in making me the lawyer that I am, and will in turn inform my work as a Bencher, if elected.

I have always believed in service and have sat on various boards, including 4 years on the board of the Association of Women in Finance, as president and vice-president. I was the recipient of Lexpert's Zenith Award for my pro bono work and served two years on the board of the West Vancouver Community Centre Society and four years on Parent Council for Collingwood School.

ELECTION STATEMENT

As a candidate in the 2020 Benchers by-election in the County of Vancouver, I am running because I have loved practicing law for the last 20 years, and believe I can make an important contribution to the legal profession through service as a Law Society Benchers.

I anticipate that my background as a solicitor with a banking (financial services) and real estate practice will prove useful in managing the ever-increasing constraints imposed on our profession by various regulators. Furthermore, I believe that my experience as a solicitor will complement the breadth and knowledge of the existing Benchers.

My platform emphasizes diversity in, and sustainability of, our profession. I am a first generation Canadian raising a young family and my areas of interest for the betterment of our profession include technology, diversity within the profession and fostering a collegial legal community:

- 1) *Technology*: Digital innovation continues at an accelerated pace and we cannot ignore its impact on our profession. While critical to continued success in the legal sector, technology can present significant business and operational risk. Sophisticated cyber attacks and cyber frauds undermine the profession and the Law Society should continue to formulate ways to help practitioners manage and mitigate the risks. There also exists potential ethical issues related to the use of technology, including security, marketing, and providing services electronically for which the Law Society should provide resources and best practices for stakeholders;
- 2) *Diversity within the profession*: Covid-19 has demonstrated that a great deal of the structural changes that women and people with caring responsibilities have been asking for are possible, productive, viable and efficient. The pandemic has been the catalyst for a mindset shift. The Law Society should continue the momentum by encouraging flexible and remote work arrangements by leveraging technology, which will in turn allow for greater diversity within the legal profession; and
- 3) *Fostering a collegial legal community*: Working for many years in national firms I benefited from both formal and informal mentorships and had ready-built support systems in the firms. This is not the case for many practitioners, in particular sole practitioners who need to work to build a network. The Law Society serves the public by ensuring that lawyers are well supported in the work they do for their clients, and through various initiatives the Law Society

can foster collegiality within the legal community in order to create networks who encourage camaraderie and collaboration.

I am running to serve the Law Society and the profession and offer my experience and skills to be utilized as needed, I hope I have your support.

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WAHID, JASMEET K.

Called to the Bar: 2006

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I grew up in BC, completed my B.A. at UBC and LL.B. at University of Calgary (2005). I was called to the Bar in BC in 2006. I am a partner at Kahn Zack Ehrlich Lithwick, LLP, a full-service law firm. I practice exclusively in the area of family law. I have been fortunate to be counsel on unique, notable cases and to advocate at all levels of our courts.

In 2019, I was qualified as a family law mediator and also successfully completed the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School Executive Education course.

Currently, I am a re-elected executive member of the CBA. I have regularly presented/co-chaired conferences for CLEBC and the CBA, including:

- 12th Biennial Family Law Conference, 2019
- Family Law Provincial Court Practice Conference, 2019
- Hot Topics in Family Law Part II: Good Lawyering for Bad Parenting, 2018
- Hot Topics in Family Law: Navigating the Financial Landscape, 2018
- Family Law Provincial Court Practice, 2017
- Intersection of Family and Immigration Law, 2018
- Adoption Law: The Basics and Then Some, 2017
- FMEP and MCFD: Beyond the Acronyms, 2016

In February 2020, I presented at York University, Osgoode Professional Development re. Fertility 2020: Critical and Emerging Issues.

ELECTION STATEMENT

Why vote for me?

We're living through a period of great transformation and unprecedented change which presents new challenges and offers new opportunities for the profession.

Those issues currently include the impact of technology, the financial impact and practice implications of Covid-19, and virtual legal practice on our legal profession and the public. Of pressing importance for me is the ability of the public to access justice. These matters require considerable thought and pragmatic flexibility, as demanded by our present times.

My 15 years of private practice, majority spent at a mid-sized firm outside of the downtown core, equips me with unique experiences and perspectives which adds to the fulsome discussions required at the Benchers' table. As a Bencher, I will help us navigate forward in a manner that is responsive to our modern times and reflects modern leadership. I am committed to investing my time and energy fulfilling the several roles required by a Bencher, and contributing to our profession and community.

As a firm partner, I am aware of the realities confronting us, including the financial viability of our practice as lawyers. My complex family law practice, with a very diverse client base (ranging from assisted reproductive technology, adoptions, parenting and division of property), equips me with the skill sets of both barrister and solicitor and provides me with insight into the difficulties confronted by the public in accessing justice.

The perspective of a family lawyer working with diverse communities and operating in an environment where many litigants are self-represented brings an important perspective to the discussions at the Benchers' table. Unless all parts of the profession are represented, the concerns of all parts of the public cannot be represented in Bencher discussions.

My voice and presence belong at the Benchers' table. This will serve us well.

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WINDER, STEVE M.

Called to the Bar: 1996

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

After completing my law degree at the University of Ottawa, I worked as a law clerk for six justices at the B.C. Supreme Court.

I am a partner at BLG in its Disputes Group and manage Vancouver’s specialized litigation department. I practice labour and employment law. Much of my work is for employers, but some of the most meaningful cases I have taken on involved representing employees.

I am a frequent contributor to CLE and have co-authored the employment law chapter in CLE’s Annual Review of Practice for the past 20 years. I regularly serve as a guest judge at PLTC for its advocacy program.

My charitable work includes supporting literacy projects, including CODE (where I served as a director and climbed Mount Kilimanjaro to raise funds for the organization), and BLG’s “Reads to Kids” program (which promotes literacy in less privileged schools by reading to students and helping build their libraries).

I love to travel – currently limited to beautiful B.C. – and to spend time with my family. If there is a “silver lining” to today’s world, it is the additional time spent with my two daughters and my wife, who is also a lawyer, working from home.

ELECTION STATEMENT

COVID-19 has transformed our lives, personally and professionally.

For me, this has been a time of self-reflection about what is truly important, which has influenced my decision to put my name forward in this election. I am fortunate and privileged to be a lawyer and wish to contribute further to the profession.

For the profession, this is a time of upheaval and uncertainty, but also one of opportunity to embrace new and streamlined ways of practising law, including through increased use of technology. I believe the Law Society should continue to support the adoption of technology in all aspects of the legal profession, especially in litigation matters, in order to reduce costs and enhance access to justice.

I am committed to working on initiatives that support lawyers and articled students, which I consider critical to the goal of protecting the public interest. My employment law experience provides me with a unique perspective on issues facing the profession (many of which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 environment), including managing mental health, ensuring fair working conditions for articled students, and promoting diversity and inclusion. I have also had the benefit of seeing the profession through the lens of my wife, who is Persian, which is a perspective far different from my own. I believe this perspective and my experience as an employment lawyer will allow me to contribute meaningfully to the profession and the public as a Bencher.

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VEYLAN, SARAVAN J.

Called to the Bar: 2010

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Saravan (Sarvi) Veylan is a partner with MLT Aikins LLP and practices in their Vancouver office. He was called to the bar in British Columbia in 2010, Alberta in 2015, and Yukon in 2017, and is a graduate of the University of New Brunswick. Prior to attending law school, Sarvi obtained a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Alberta. Sarvi has a solicitor’s practice, focusing on commercial real estate and corporate commercial matters.

Sarvi has prioritized service to the profession throughout his career, serving on the executive of the Vancouver Bar Association, as co-chair of the CBABC Real Property – Vancouver subsection, on the executive of the CBA national real property subsection, and as a member of the CBABC Professional Issues subcommittee.

In his spare time, Sarvi is actively involved in federal and provincial politics and is an avid skier and homebrewer.

ELECTION STATEMENT

It would be a great honour to serve the profession and the public interest as a Benchler. As a solicitor, I will bring an under-represented perspective to our profession’s governing body. In particular, I am interested in working on the Law Society’s positions in the following areas:

1. Access to Legal Services

As a career-long Access Pro Bono volunteer, I think that further enhancing access to legal services is vital to our profession’s role in society and I applaud the Law Society’s ongoing work in this area. As the pandemic has laid bare, we can and should do more to ensure the regulation of our profession meets the public’s expectations, including through technological solutions, while safeguarding the quality of those services.

2. Truth and Reconciliation

Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is a serious and solemn obligation of our country and the legal profession. Inter-cultural competence among members of the bar is a key component to moving forward on reconciliation and I look forward to upcoming continuing professional development programs. In addition, the profession must continually look for ways to improve inclusiveness for Indigenous peoples.

3. Anti-Money Laundering

The Law Society has recently tightened the regulatory environment, seeking to ensure that lawyers avoid being unwitting participants in money laundering. With the Cullen

Commission ongoing, anti-money laundering remains a live issue in our profession.

Having practical transaction experience and having worked with the CBA on these matters, I am eager to find sensible solutions to anti-money laundering, balancing the pressure that the profession is under with the need to serve our clients through an independent bar.

Thank you for your consideration.

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MANDANICI, SANDRA

Called to the Bar: 1987 Quebec, 1993 British Columbia

Sandra Mandanici, Barrister and Solicitor

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I am a francophone of both French and Italian descent born and raised in Montreal, Quebec. I am completely fluent and practice in both official languages.

I completed my civil law degree at the University of Montreal and my common law credentials at McGill University. I was called to the Quebec Bar in 1987 and I appeared before Quebec courts at all levels.

I moved to BC and was called to the Bar of BC in 1993. My legal career in British Columbia started at the Westminster Community Legal Services. Latterly, I became a sole practitioner in Vancouver with a strong criminal law practice at all levels of court. This has taught me the challenges and needs of a small business. I have extensive experience dealing with indigenous population as well as vulnerable population struggling with mental health and addictions issues.

ELECTION STATEMENT

During my 33 years at the bar, I have been actively involved in the legal community and I have been a strong supporter of access to justice and equality in the profession. From 2017-2019, I served as an elected officer on the CBABC Executive Committee and I am serving my third term as Provincial Council member. This has given me a platform to advance a number of issues close to my heart. I believe that my most significant achievement was my contribution in creating the Association of Legal Aid Lawyers of British Columbia. A.L.L. was created to respond to a legal aid funding crisis by working with government to address the crisis particularly with respect to poor and indigenous communities. In British Columbia, the funding crisis had not been addressed in any meaningful way by governments for the past twenty-six years. Last fall, the B.C. government reached an agreement with A.L.L. to provide stable access to justice for low-income people. In 2019, I was recognized by the CBABC for being instrumental in the

creation of A.L.L.

For the past few years, I have been volunteering with Access Pro Bono and the Association of Francophone Lawyers in BC (AJEFBCB). I currently serve as a board member of this association. I also contribute by appearing on a regular basis on CBC French television and radio as a commentator on legal issues.

Over the years, I have been committed to legal education by being a speaker for lawyers and students at different institutions including the University of British Columbia, the Justice Education Society, the PLTC and the Downtown Community Court. I also work as a mentor with CDAS to many young women lawyers interested in the practice of criminal law.

In my free time, I enjoy working out, cooking and spending time with my husband and our four children. I understand the challenges in dealing with a full time career and a busy family life.

Since I was called to the bar in 1987, I have worked to improve the law and our legal profession by volunteering my time to different pro bono organizations. After spending 33 years at the Bar, I feel that it is time for me to submit my candidacy for Bencher. I believe that I have the experience, the commitment and the time required for this position but most of all, I am a good listener and I get things done. I also believe that I would be an important addition to the current panel of Benchers as it currently does not include any criminal lawyers representing Vancouver County.

Thank you for considering my candidacy. I can be reached at
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DUMBRELL, LISA

Called to the Bar: 1998

Public Prosecution Service of Canada

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I graduated from the University of Victoria Faculty of Law in 1997. I summered and articulated with Campney & Murphy before joining as a litigation associate in 1998, where I worked with many experienced counsel in civil and commercial litigation. In May of 1999, I joined the Public Prosecution Service of Canada (then the Federal Prosecution Service of the Department of Justice). Since February 2015, I have been the federal Crown for the North Shore, Sechelt and Pemberton areas. I also appear in Indigenous Peoples Court in North Vancouver.

I am a member of the PPSC Vancouver Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and I have served on the PPSC Gender Equity Committee. I am a member of the Vancouver Criminal Subsection of the CBA and a member of the International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law and the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice. I have also recently joined the CBABC's Women Lawyer's Forum and I look forward to being involved in their mentoring initiatives. I have volunteered with the Canadian Cancer Society, the Harvest, and have chopped and carried hundreds of Christmas trees for Aunt Leah's Society's annual fundraiser for the past 10 years. If you bought a tree from me and it was crooked when you got home, I apologize.

ELECTION STATEMENT

1. Experience and Trust

As a mum to two daughters and two step-daughters, I understand the often elusive search for balance between our professional and personal lives. I feel that most counsel struggle with this, and I often felt that I was failing at both. Now, having been called for 22 years, am starting to see that I haven't done too badly after all. Wisdom is partly gained through experience, and I feel that my experience would be helpful for someone calling me with an ethical issue, particularly in the criminal law area. Having made those calls myself, I

know how important it is to have someone who is approachable, who will listen, and who will give helpful guidance.

Those who know me professionally know that I am fair and I take a reasonable approach to finding common ground on files, despite working in a highly adversarial environment. I also tend to get things done. Respect, trust and good judgment have guided my career and I feel that these are the qualities that are essential for a bencher to possess.

2. Financial and Mentoring Support for New Lawyers and New Pathways to Licensing

Even prior to the pandemic, new counsel entered our profession without the financial security it once provided. Many find themselves struggling to be mentored and needing to learn the business of law. I recall the stresses of those first years of “not knowing what I didn't know”.

As a bencher, I would advocate for more mentoring and financial support for new counsel. Graduated practicing and insurance fees for counsel under 5 years of call would be something that could ease the disproportionate financial burden on new lawyers.

Further, the articling experience needs to be re-examined in light of the reality that firms are not able to support as many students as they once did. The problems of unpaid and minimally supervised articles is likely to continue, despite recent consideration of employment standards. Alternative pathways to articles, regulated by the Law Society, need to be examined and now is clearly the time to do that.

3. Greater Access to Legal Aid and Updating Courtroom Technology

I would encourage the Law Society to continue to advocate for greater access to Legal Aid services for clients in both the criminal and family law areas. On a daily basis I see what a false economy it is to have people forced to represent themselves in the courts. Greater accessibility to Legal Aid is critical and ensures access to justice for many people.

Similarly, the pandemic has forced some long-overdue modernization on the courts. The Law Society should advocate for more funding to continue those upgrades where it has worked well. We must also ensure that all court participants are equally able to access the technology. Financial barriers should not further exacerbate the disparity between parties which would undermine the benefits of having improved access to justice through technology.

4. Flexibility in Practice Models

Our profession is facing some unprecedented pressures. Crown and defence are having to adapt quickly, and those in civil, family, and corporate practice are having to make difficult financial decisions and to restructure existing business models of practice. Further, new areas of study and legal advocacy don't all fit within the traditional practice model. Public scrutiny and economic pressures on all practice areas to do more for less money, which was keenly felt before the current pandemic, is increasingly pressing.

The public is best protected by ensuring it is served by competent lawyers, which is accomplished by supporting counsel in all areas of their work, even in non-traditional areas. Now is the time for further examining what providing "legal services" means, and ensuring that we apply that standard in a way that ensures core legal services are provided by counsel, while also removing barriers to allow others to provide limited assistance. The Law Society can best ensure that standards continue to be met, but it should not stand in the way of allowing people who otherwise cannot access legal services from having that critical assistance.

5. Streamlined Audit and Trust Accounting

Finally, while I have practiced mainly as a government lawyer, I am aware of the stresses of trust fund accounting and audit requirements on my colleagues in private practice. I would encourage the Law Society to streamline these requirements wherever possible, paying particular attention to the disproportionate costs and impacts on smaller firms and sole practitioners, while maintaining high standards and accountability for all practitioners.

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LUITINGH, HERMANN

Called to the Bar: 2004

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I was born in South Africa in 1969. Both my parents were teachers and my father was a local government councillor and deputy mayor. I came to Canada in 2001 and was called to the Manitoba bar and worked with senior counsel at the Court of Queen's Bench in Winnipeg. In 2002 my daughter Marie was born. Marie is currently enrolled at the University of British Columbia for a degree in medicine. My son Thomas is currently finishing secondary schooling. In 2004 I moved to Vancouver's lower mainland and worked at Watson Goepel LLP, predominantly in the field of insurance defence litigation. After that I practiced in Port Moody for own account until 2015 as a general practitioner serving the Tri-Cities area. In 2015 I became an associate at Davison Law Group in Vancouver dealing with a wide range of practice areas. In January of 2020 I started practicing for own account out of the historic Marine Building at West Hastings. I currently the chair the board of the British Canadian Business Association, I have also been involved with Saint John Ambulance as a member of the SJA Vancouver community outreach committee.

ELECTION STATEMENT

The reason why I am putting my name forward for bencher is that I feel that I want to give back to the Society that have been part of my life for so long. I am well conversant serving on boards and assisting with administration and I am not new to the aspects of governing. In addition, I find myself well conversant with rules, protocols, codes of conduct and procedure associated with the administration of panels and boards. I am the Past Chair for the Administrative Law Section of the CBABC and in addition I have helped hundreds of corporations run their board meetings and continue to advise several corporations. I have sat on various boards as well as a government valuation board and as an assessor to judges in South Africa. I understand that benchers can expect their duties to consume approximately 7 to 8 hours per week, most of which has to do with preparation for, and attendance of, bencher meetings, committees, or hearing panels. I am

confident that I will be able to schedule my availability accordingly for these purposes and will make myself available for the arduous tasks that are sometimes placed before the benchers. Being a litigator, I am no stranger to hearings and thus any hearing panels that I will be part of I can say I will be able to confidently execute.

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ARBOGAST, THOMAS

Called to the Bar: 1996

Thomas Arbogast, Barrister

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

My practice is primarily focused on complex criminal appellate and trial matters with an emphasis on white collar, technology and administrative law. I was fortunate to commence my career in the mid-90's under the tutelage of some of the leading criminal appeal and trial lawyers in BC, and also worked closely (and still do) with the Legal Aid Appeals department. I have appeared at all levels of Court throughout Canada.

I switched my focus for a spell, becoming a Vice President and General Counsel for British Telecom out of London-UK and the US and authored a chapter in a leading technology manual entitled "Agile Contracts", but I yearned to return to the collegiality of interaction in Vancouver and the challenge of an advocacy based practice, returning about a decade ago.

I am involved with a number of organizations in a mentoring and teaching capacity. I work closely with the UBC Innocence Project and am presently guiding a major appellate case developed through the Project. I am a founding member of the Criminal Defence Advocacy Society (CDAS), which presently represents approximately 300+ criminal practitioners in BC and I represented CDAS at the BCSC and BCCA as an intervener in the case that struck down solitary confinement provisions (*BCCLA v. Canada*). I am an appellate advocacy instructor as part of the MacEachern Trial Advocacy program via UBC Law School. I also frequently lecture on criminal law and technology related topics at UBC, through CLE type seminars and other education related organisations.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I act as a mentor to many young lawyers and believe that all lawyers - no matter the practice stripe, have a duty to consciously engage as mentors as they transition into being senior practitioners.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I believe that I have a fairly unique background, arising from my varied experience, and that I can add a positive and constructive approach to the evolving practice of law in BC. I see myself as serving as a critical voice and link between solo and small firm practitioners and the Law Society; a dialogue that I believe deserves much more attention.

Mentoring

I believe the Law Society has an obligation to develop a more robust and effective approach to mentoring and I would aim to focus a fair amount of effort in this regard. I aim to try to develop a more incentive-based framework so that senior lawyers can possibly engage more readily in this area in a more specific and structured context.

Diversity

Arising from my Chinese-Jamaican heritage, I understand that the Law Society needs to develop a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to dealing with its increasingly diverse membership.

Small Firms and Solo Practitioners

The Law Society deals with the wide swath of practitioners that comprise the practice of law in BC, from large law firms to small and solo firms. As stated above, I believe that there needs to be more engagement with the needs of small firms and solo practitioners.

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ROBERTS, WILLIAM L.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Will Roberts has been practicing law in Vancouver since 1999, first with Campney & Murphy then with Lawson Lundell LLP, and has also recently been called to the Alberta bar. After completing his articles, Will spent a year as a judicial law clerk to the British Columbia Supreme Court. Will's practice is primarily focused on insolvency and restructuring issues, but he also acts for regulatory bodies in relation to appellate issues and disciplinary panels.

In addition to his practice, Will has for many years been the chair of the firm's Pro Bono Committee and a member of the firm's Conflicts and Ethics Committee. Will has also acted as a mentor and principal to students and associates.

In his community, Will has served on the board of his children's school from, and has provided his services to various local North Shore organizations. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, he is hopelessly devoted to his recreational league soccer team.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I have been practicing law for some 20 years now. Including my time in law school, that's about half of my life spent in this profession. And I have enjoyed my practice and my involvement in the legal community immensely. With my three sons now in university, I am at a point in my life when I have more time to contribute to the legal community and, hopefully, enough experience and perspective to make those contributions meaningful.

I practice in the areas of insolvency and restructuring. Generally speaking, insolvency proceedings are about striving to find a resolution that balances multiple competing interests. My role in those proceedings is often to help find commercial and practical

solutions, and I believe that skill set will allow me to positively contribute to the role of Bencher of the Law Society.

I have been a member of my firm's Conflicts and Ethics Committee for many years. In that role I spend a significant amount of time grappling with difficult issues relating to conflicts of interest and related ethical questions. On a larger scale, the Law Society has an important role to play in these types of issues, and they may become more pronounced as the profession adapts to the growing needs of the public, the technological evolution of the practice and the stresses and pressures these changes can bring to bear on lawyers in their practice and personal lives.

I feel very strongly about the need to promote diversity in our profession, and in particular in how we can do a better job of attracting and retaining lawyers who more closely represent the make-up of our communities. As well, my experience with my firm's pro bono committee has highlighted the importance of making legal services more readily available to members of the public and I would like to be part of the conversation about how we, as a profession, work to enable better access to those services.

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WESTELL, KEVIN

Called to the Bar: 2009

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I am a proud Vancouverite and founding partner at Pender Litigation where I practice criminal, regulatory and administrative law. In addition to my work in criminal defence, I also act as *ad hoc* Crown Counsel, *amicus curiae*, and as counsel for vulnerable witnesses. My experience includes matters that cover the full spectrum of seriousness and technical difficulty at all levels of court in British Columbia.

My volunteer experience includes instructing trial advocacy skills, ethics and criminal law topics to students and lawyers. I do so within many forums including UBC's McEachern Course in Trial Advocacy, the CLEBC Trial Advocacy Skills Workshop, the Osgoode Hall Intensive Trial Advocacy Workshop, the Provincial Crown Counsel Conference and PLTC.

I have also served in leadership roles within local professional associations. I have acted as president of the Advocates Club, Chair of the CBABC Vancouver Criminal Subsection, Chair of the TLABC Criminal Committee and as Vancouver's Regional Representative for the Criminal Defence Advocacy Society.

I believe in life-long learning and continue to seek out opportunities to broaden my perspective and improve myself as a lawyer and ally to those who have not been given the same opportunities that I have enjoyed. To that end, I have proudly participated in both anti-oppression and trans-competent legal training.

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

Since coming up short by only a narrow margin in the last by-election, I have worked hard to increase my knowledge and understanding of the issues that matter to BC lawyers and to the public we serve. The Vancouver criminal bar remains unrepresented at the Bench

table and I seek to change that. I am ready to contribute boldly to Law Society initiatives that require the unique voice and experience of a criminal litigator.

Access to Justice

The public cannot be protected without an adequately funded legal aid bar. Our justice system is rendered unfair when our tireless criminal, family and immigration lawyers are not resourced sufficiently to provide vulnerable citizens (the ones that need our help the most) with the quality of legal service that they deserve. As Bencher I will work to ensure that our Law Society remains focused on improving legal aid.

Covid-19, Technology & the Future

The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the stark need for modernization in our courts and practice capabilities. If elected, I will champion technological and systemic innovations so that we move forward and don't regress to our unacceptable pre-COVID state. The Law Society must lead on this front and as Bencher I will ensure that it does.

Mental Health Support for Students and Lawyers

This job is not easy. Conflict and personal strife are the natural and unfortunate by-products of our adversarial system. They take their toll on all of us. Many among us grapple with additional mental health challenges as well. An integral part of protecting the public is ensuring that robust mental health support is available for our lawyers and articling students. As your Bencher I will prioritize lawyer mental health and wellness.

I can think of no greater professional honor than the opportunity to serve the public and our bar as a Bencher.

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ZEGREAN, IVONA-ELENA

Called to the Bar: 2019

Robert-Fleming Lawyers

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Originally from Romania, I came to Vancouver in 2014, following my graduation from King's College London, to pursue my dream of becoming a lawyer in Canada. After completing a Master of Laws at UBC and articling with Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, I was licensed to practice in 2019.

While at UBC, I worked as a Graduate Teaching and Research Assistant and completed a comparative research project in Mexico, funded by a Mitacs Globalink Research Award. In my mandate as the President of the UBC Graduate Law Students' Society for 2015-2016, I developed and implemented a strategic plan for increasing the profile of the organization across the student population and fostering the engagement of its members.

Having lived in five different countries, I've had the benefit of hearing first hand from lawyers at different levels of seniority in England, Spain, Canada, Mexico and Romania about the challenges they are facing. Not surprisingly, the message was similar: a desire for more flexibility, inclusion, and mentorship and a concern about the inability to maintain a satisfactory work-life balance.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I am running for election as Bencher of the Law Society of British Columbia because I want to take action on my belief that it is in the public interest to redesign the practice of law in a way that honours lawyers' wellbeing. I am aware that this cannot be achieved in a one-year mandate, but I hope to have the opportunity to plant the seed.

Increasing numbers of lawyers feel dissatisfied, burnt out or depleted within their first years of practice. We cannot expect to see significant improvement in lawyers' mental wellbeing while the realities of practice remain the same. Teaching lawyers to establish

boundaries and ask for help when everything becomes too much is not enough. The conversation about reducing the stigma associated with mental health must continue, but I think that the nature of practice itself must change if the profession is to retain talented lawyers who are effectively putting the interests of their clients first.

The Law Society of BC has the opportunity to build on the work of the Mental Health Task Force and leverage those lessons in setting the stage for conversations about the redesign of the practice of law into one that honours lawyers' wellbeing. Change is already happening as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of remote working and increased use of technology. We can, as a profession and through the work of the Futures Task Force, continue the momentum by finding ways to incorporate these changes in a safe and cohesive way that provides long-term flexibility for lawyers and excellent service for clients.

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KONDOPULOS, JAMES D.

Called to the Bar: 2004

Roper Greyell LLP – Employment and Labour Lawyers

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

James D. Kondopulos is a founding member and partner* of Roper Greyell LLP, a leading Vancouver-based employment and labour law boutique.

In 2013, James was named one of Canada’s leading lawyers under 40 by Lexpert. He is a ranked lawyer with Chambers and is repeatedly recognized as a top employment and labour law practitioner by Lexpert, Who’s Who Legal and Best Lawyers.

James is active with the Canadian Bar Association (CBA). He has served two terms as the Chair of the CBABC Employment Law Section and as an Executive Member of the CBA National Labour and Employment Law Section. He frequently presents for the Continuing Legal Education Society of BC (CLEBC) and helps plan its annual Employment Law Conference. In 2021, he will be a Co-Chair of the conference. James is a member of the Canadian Association of Counsel to Employers (CACE) and volunteers on its Advocacy Committee. He is also a Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR) and belongs to the editorial board for the LexisNexis Labour Notes newsletter.

James spends his free time outside work with his wife and three children. He has served as a board member of the children’s charity, Make-A-Wish BC & Yukon.

*Law corporation

ELECTION STATEMENT

I have worked tirelessly throughout my professional career to advance the interests of those I serve – be it in the context of the lawyer-client relationship or on volunteer boards or in other volunteer capacities inside and outside the legal community.

I now seek the opportunity to serve in the governance of the legal profession in British Columbia and look to you for support in my candidacy for Bencher.

I am dedicated to excellence and apply myself to everything I do with enthusiasm, energy, conscientiousness and civility. With your support, I intend to bring all of that to bear at Bencher meetings, on hearing panels, committees and task forces, and in working groups.

I share the view that the Law Society's mandate to protect the public interest in the administration of justice is best served by leaders who come from diverse backgrounds and experience. As an immigrant to Canada, a person of Greek descent and the father of three young children, I am well positioned in this respect. I bring lived experience and a unique perspective to the practice of law and the challenges in trying to strike a proper and healthy balance between life on and off the job.

If you have any question at all about me and how I intend to contribute positively to the governance of the profession, please do not hesitate to contact me at (604) 806-3865 or jkondopulos@ropergreyell.com.

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CLOUGH, EMILY L.

Called to the Bar: 2009

Clark Wilson LLP

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Emily Clough is a partner at Clark Wilson LLP. She works in all aspects of estates, trusts and incapacity matters, as both a solicitor and a litigator. Emily prepares estate, trust and incapacity planning documents. She assists with the administration of estates and probate. Emily has been lead litigation counsel on cases at all levels of Court regarding estates, variations of wills, trustee duties, power of attorney duties and removal, and elder abuse. She has acted as counsel in cases that have set new precedents in British Columbia, including on wills variation and the incapacity to marry. Her cases have received national coverage by the Globe & Mail and the CBC. In 2019, Emily was recognized as a nominee for the YWCA Women of Distinction Award.

Emily is the elected Chair of the British Columbia Law Institute and the Canadian Centre for Elder Law, independent law reform agencies carrying out scholarly research, writing and analysis. Emily is the President of Health Justice, a human rights-focused non-profit organization working to improve BC laws and policies of coercive health care, particularly under the *Mental Health Act*. Emily is a member-at-large of the CBA National Elder Law Subsection.

ELECTION STATEMENT

It is critical that our membership have the tools necessary to address the needs and realities of our modern society, particularly with our aging population. We can anticipate an increase in mental health and mental incapacity issues. As a Bencher, I would work to uphold the public interest mandate of the Law Society and support our members in this changing legal landscape. Notably:

1. **Support for Mental Health and Wellness:** As lawyers, we must cope with significant stressors. It is important to support our members in addressing mental health and capacity issues sensitively and constructively. We must be aware of how to identify and respond to issues of mental health and diminished capacity in

- our clients. I will support lawyers in dealing with their own issues, as well as in dealing with a client's potential incapacity issues, looking to the Code, the common law and the Charter.
2. **Access to Justice:** Access to justice continues to be an issue for the bar and for the public we serve. I have worked to incorporate pro bono services as part of a traditional private practice, volunteering for Access Pro Bono, acting for clients subject to *Mental Health Act* or *Adult Guardianship Act* detentions on a pro bono or low bono basis, and chairing the pro bono program at Clark Wilson. As a Bencher, I would support policies that increase opportunities for pro bono involvement, and which allow the profession to leverage innovation and technology to allow for more accessible and affordable legal services.
 3. **Mentorship, Diversity and Collegiality:** Practicing law is a privilege. Our bar should represent all of society. Many women in law leave the practice after only five years. Through support for mentorship, diversity and collegiality, the profession can be stronger and better equipped to serve the public interest.

I would be honoured to serve as a Bencher for Vancouver in this by-election.

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STEPHENS, K. MICHAEL

Called to the Bar: 1998

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Michael is a barrister practicing administrative law and commercial litigation at Hunter Litigation Chambers in Vancouver. He received a B.Comm. from Queen's University, has law degrees from Dalhousie University (LL.B.) and Harvard University (LL.M.), and was called to the bar in 1998. Prior to being called, Michael was a law clerk to Mr. Justice Gonthier of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Michael is a member of the Ethics Committee of the Law Society of British Columbia, and was a member of the Law Society's Working Group to develop Model Anton Piller and Mareva Injunction Orders. He has volunteered in other organizations in the legal community: He is past chair of the CBABC Administrative Law Section, and is a member of the Executive of the CBABC Civil Litigation (Vancouver) Section. He is a long-time instructor at the UBC Advanced Trial Advocacy Course, has been an instructor of the CLEBC Winning Advocacy Skills Workshop, and is a contributor to CLEBC publications on evidence and administrative law. Michael has presented at conferences for CLEBC, the CBA, the Canadian Institute, and IIROC. Michael is a mentor to associates and students at his firm, and has volunteered for the Vancouver Thunderbirds Minor Hockey Association.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I am a barrister practicing with the Vancouver boutique Hunter Litigation Chambers. My approach to litigation is principled, practical and measured. I have also been an owner operator of our firm for more than 13 years, and appreciate the economic and practical challenges facing lawyers who dedicate themselves to providing legal services to businesses and people in the community. Our firm prides itself on the contribution our lawyers make to the profession through pro bono service, teaching, and writing, and by taking on leadership roles in the profession, including at the Law Society. The COVID pandemic has challenged the legal profession: it has changed the way lawyers practice,

where they practice, and how they meet with clients and advocate before courts and tribunals. The Law Society faces a burden and concomitant challenge to adapt its policies, as necessary and as the public interest demands, to support firms and lawyers who are striving to do their best for their clients. The pandemic has illustrated the importance of having a Law Society that is responsive to the needs of lawyers; it must regulate, but at the same time must also help find workable solutions to problems lawyers face in delivering legal services — from the ethical to technological. Lawyers need practical support from the Law Society to meet the challenges of the current practice environment. If elected Benchler, I will advocate for the administration of the affairs of the Law Society in a manner that supports lawyers and law firms. I will advocate for a regulatory role for the Society that is principled, practical and measured to uphold and protect the public interest in the administration of justice in British Columbia.

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