

2021 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 No. 1 – County of Vancouver

- CHAMBERLAIN, Tanya
- LEE, Kyla
- CHIU, Douglas
- ARAM, Nazanin
- YEUNG, Gaynor C.
- PORRITT, Julian R.



CHAMBERLAIN, Tanya

Called to the Bar: 1995

Tanya Chamberlain Law Corporation

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Tanya Chamberlain was born and raised in Vancouver, B.C. Her formative years as a lawyer involved criminal defence litigation, but she subsequently moved into family law as her preferred area of practice. She received her BA in History from UBC in 1991 and her LLB from the University of Saskatchewan in 1994. Tanya is now a respected family law lawyer and Collaborative lawyer, and is accredited by the Law Society as a family law Mediator, Arbitrator, and Parenting Coordinator. In addition, she is qualified to prepare “Hear the Child” Reports. Tanya’s practice is primarily focused on out of court settlements but she also has significant experience with family law litigation and high conflict files. Tanya is a member of the B.C. Parenting Coordination Society, the International Association of Collaborative Lawyers, the B.C. Collaborative Roster Society and Collaborative Divorce Vancouver. Tanya and her husband, Ian Donaldson Q.C. have raised two adult sons together. Her family have all been involved extensively in the sailing community in Vancouver, and Tanya is currently the President of B.C. Sailing. Tanya enjoys spending time with family, friends and her beloved dogs.

ELECTION STATEMENT

If I have the good fortune to be elected by my peers to the position of Bencher of the Law Society, I will try to create and encourage a culture of civility, respect, and professionalism at the Bencher table and in our profession generally. The Law Society is mandated to protect the public and I will work to ensure that is done with kindness and courtesy. I would like all lawyers who need support in our profession to be able to receive it. I will focus my efforts as a Bencher on these issues, as well as continue to support the Benchers’ present efforts relating to access to justice, inclusivity, and diversity.

As a woman, it has been disappointing to see that so many of my able female colleagues have continued to experience pay inequity, discrimination, harassment and even bullying in their employment. As a result, I will seek to address the systemic problems that adversely affect women in our profession. Women continue to leave our profession in unacceptably large numbers. I want to ensure that all lawyers are able to have satisfying professional and personal lives, without having to choose between a career and a family.

I also want to promote technological advancements, which can assist dispute resolution processes and ease the burden on courts, and the stress and cost to litigants. In addition, I plan to encourage modernization of the court registries and Rules of Court to make e-filing more efficient, to eliminate the need to file paper materials, and to improve the system for setting dates for trials and hearings, all of which will assist in the goal of increasing access to justice. It would be my great honour to serve the profession and the public as a Bencher.

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LEE, Kyla

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

It's my seventh time running to be Bencher, so that should say something about my willingness to keep fighting for a cause. Despite my defeats, I've kept my sense of humour.

I am passionate about the law. My practice focuses on defence of driving-related offences. I am Métis and proud of my heritage.

I am a member of the TLABC Board of Governors, and serve on the Criminal Law and PAC Committees, and the Editorial Board for *The Verdict*. I represent the CBA on the Criminal Law Section executive. I am on the Board of Directors for the BCCLA. Internationally, I am the CLE Co-Chair and on the Board of Directors for the DUIDLA. I am a National Ambassador to the Universal Women's Network.

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

During the pandemic, I wrote two textbooks published by LexisNexis, *Cross-Examination: The Pinpoint Method*, and *Immediate Roadside Prohibitions in Western Canada*.

ELECTION STATEMENT

The pandemic demonstrated LSBC's need to improve digitization and technology. I will mandate more technology at LSBC to streamline applications, processing, and decisions on discipline and professional conduct.

LSBC's mandate includes bringing a voice to issues affecting justice and delivery of legal services. I will introduce initiatives to help lawyers facing financial difficulty by creating a fund to assist with staffing, technology, and overhead for a set period. This will allow lawyers to deliver services to more people, without being limited by financial barriers.

The regulatory framework in place disproportionately affects small and solo practitioners. These lawyers are underrepresented at the Benchers table. The trust accounting rules must be simplified to make them easier to understand and reflect the increasingly digital way that we conduct business.

Systemic discrimination continues to be an issue that affects the legal profession. As Benchers, I will advocate for changes to the *Code* that would require any Discipline and Credentials Committee members to receive cultural sensitivity training, and ensure the *Code* reflects the need to consider systemic discrimination when determining a fit sanction.

With this in mind, I will also work with LSBC to create more alternative measures for lawyers facing first-time or unique discipline issues.

I will advocate for the LSBC Directory to allow lawyers to indicate their preferred pronouns. Similarly, I will advocate to allow lawyers from diverse communities to use alternative characters in order to list their traditional names, with pronunciation guides.

I will work with LSBC to create more fee categories, recognizing the different types of risk that practice areas present and that high fees serve as barriers to entering and remaining in the profession.

Online marketing continues to be under-regulated, with confusing and vague regulations. Change is necessary to clarify the appropriate standards for lawyers in online activities.

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CHIU, Douglas

Called to the Bar: 2005

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I was born and raised in Vancouver and called to the bar in 2005. Since then, I have worked in private practice at Hammerco Lawyers LLP. My preferred area is civil litigation, specifically Plaintiff's insurance law.

Within the legal community, I have volunteered for the Canadian Bar Association, the Trial Lawyers Association of British Columbia, and the Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers. I have written papers and given presentations on topics related to my practice area and mentoring junior lawyers. Most recently, I was appointed by the Law Society of British Columbia to be a Non-Bencher Member on our Credentials and Discipline Committee Hearings.

As a Chinese-Canadian, I have devoted my volunteer time to engage with my community. I frequently appear on Chinese media, including radio, television, and print, as a guest host and commentator. I speak on various topics, including important law developments, notable cases, and field questions from the public. Moreover, I have also volunteered and chaired several community events for a variety of non-profit organizations.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I am excited to run for Bencher as I am at a place in my career where I can give back to our community and can straddle different interests. I recognize the traditions of our practice, but I am keenly aware of new issues that the Law Society and lawyers are facing. I have had the privilege of being educated in Canada, yet I can empathize with those who want to see more diversity and inclusivity in our public-facing institutions.

One of the many issues that I am passionate about is public education. I believe an essential component of the Law Society is to provide knowledge and resources. It is vital

that the public understands what the law is, how they are protected and how we can help. I want to increase awareness in basic tenets of family law, estate law, residential tenancy rights, criminal and tort law.

I can do this by contributing to what the Law Society has done in working with non-profit organizations.

Community building is something that I have been passionate about for the last 16 years, and I hope to collaborate with organizations that help those who are marginalized, racialized, or affected by mental health issues. I will help by facilitating workshops and public forums to eliminate barriers and create greater knowledge.

I also believe that mentorship is an essential component of our profession. Having worked alongside and opposite numerous talented lawyers, I feel it is vital to pass on our knowledge to our younger colleagues in an accessible and approachable way. If elected, I will build upon available resources to assist our younger colleagues, whether it be in legal education, ethics or support in general.

Thank you for your time, and it would be an absolute privilege and honour to serve as your Bencher.

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ARAM, Nazanin

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I was born and raised in Iran. After completing a Bachelor of Civil Law at Tehran University, I immigrated to Canada in 2000 and obtained an LLB from UBC in 2004. My entry into the legal profession was not easy. In fact I almost did not become a lawyer. I was called to the BC bar in 2013. Between graduation and call, I worked for 6 years as a legal assistant and paralegal in intellectual property law. After being called, I started my career at Silversides Merrick & McLean in Prince Rupert. Working in a small community meant that I did many different things, from taking the last will of a dying man in the hospital to personally serving a federal arrest warrant on a foreign ship, and more ordinary work in between. After 3 years, I moved to the practice of insurance defence, first at Carfra Lawton in Victoria and then at Harris & Brun in Vancouver, a practice I continue to be involved in. After a short stint in commercial litigation, I incorporated my own firm in late 2020. Now I work as a sole practitioner from my home office, practicing family law and civil litigation including personal injury defence.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I have been fortunate to learn from a few outstanding lawyers and be involved in different practices. My varied experiences have been very helpful to my development as a lawyer and an individual.

If elected as a bencher, I intend to be guided by two objectives that are in my view of utmost importance: protection of the public and maintaining the legal profession's independence. The privileges we enjoy as a profession including self-governance depend on the profession maintaining its integrity and regulating the practice of law effectively. I think more needs to be done to entrench and enforce professional standards, in the discipline context but more importantly in legal education and training and continuing professional development. Further, the Law Society should fulfill its public-interest mandate in a way that earns the public's confidence in the Law Society and the legal

profession. I think the Law Society's public engagement and accessibility could be improved.

The Law Society plays a role in shaping the future of the profession, and there are indeed many questions about the future of our profession. I believe these decisions must be made carefully, in line with the Law Society's mandate and with a view to the long-term future of the profession and the justice system. I think we should aim for diversity of viewpoints not merely demographic diversity.

I am interested in participating in the discussions that will effectively form the future of our profession and its regulation, partly for my own learning benefit but also, hopefully, for the benefit of the profession. I do not claim to know exactly what needs to be done about every issue, but I believe in approaching these issues with critical and principled thinking taking into account the diverse, often divergent, views within the public and the profession.

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YEUNG, Gaynor C.

Called to the Bar: 1996

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gaynor is a litigator 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 defended and advanced cases at all levels of court in British Columbia. Recently, Gaynor expanded her practice to include mediation. She is currently recognized by the Best Lawyers in Canada as a leading litigator in both Insurance Law and Personal Injury Litigation.

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 (as well as guest lecturing at the university and at VBA programming). She has recently completed her second term as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Judicial Council. Gaynor is a volunteer for the Lawyers' Assistance Program and Access Pro Bono.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I believe that our profession is enriched by a supportive and diverse legal community. To me, that means that its members demand from one another the highest standards of integrity, professionalism, equity, diversity, and inclusion. It means that we engage with one another to reach those standards in a compassionate manner, and that we continue to do the work to have diverse representation in our profession.

To that end, I intend to:

- Expand on the positive steps already taken by the Benchers to destigmatize mental health challenges. I will amplify the importance of mental wellness in multiple aspects of our profession. For instance, acknowledging the impact of mental health issues when working with lawyers to meet practice standards and in disciplinary hearings; reducing stressors on our members by supporting alternate, modernized working arrangements (the viability of which has been proven during the pandemic); alleviating the pressures of accessing limited articling positions through the consideration of alternatives to traditional articling experiences; and supporting the continued education of practitioners and legal employers on not only destigmatizing, but prioritizing, mental wellness.
- Identify issues that impact achieving equity, diversity, and inclusion in legal workplaces, particularly in leadership roles, and seeking solutions to those issues. For instance, supporting lawyers and legal employers, who seek to be allies for change, through the provision of educational resources including continuing professional development programming.
- Lend the technical skills, which I have garnered from my experience litigating a broad range of practice areas, to lawyers in need of assistance meeting practice standards. I commit to working with practitioners in a kind and understanding manner.

If elected, I will work to enable our members to practice in a safe, supportive, and richly diverse community.

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PORRITT, Julian R.

Called to the Bar: 1984

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

I have been a real estate and corporate-commercial solicitor for 37 years. I have managed our law firm for over 20 years. I have been the responsible solicitor for our high volume Trust Account for over 20 years. In short, I am very experienced and knowledgeable in the real world challenges of solicitors' practices.

ELECTION STATEMENT

Over the last 10 years, I have been observing an increasing distancing of the Law Society from solicitors' practices. Demands, expectations and requirements have increasingly come into conflict with the real world of solicitors' practices. I think I share with other solicitors an increasing frustration.

I believe the frustration that we solicitors feel is rooted in the fact that there are ZERO solicitors serving as Benchers and ZERO practicing solicitors within the staff of the Law Society. The Law Society simply does not have experience nor a true in-depth knowledge of the nuances of solicitors' practices. It is unreasonable to expect the Law Society to be in tune with the real world of solicitors if there is a void in knowledge. It is true that the solicitors' world is very different from other areas of practice.

I am running for Bencher because I do not wish to simply complain about a problem. I wish to be part of the solution. I have a tremendous amount of real world practical experience. I am not political. I can bring a fresh breeze to the Benchers and the Law Society. I know most of the experienced solicitors and do hope to tap into their expertise if elected as a Bencher. I do think that we solicitors have a responsibility to step forward and become vested in providing the Law Society with our knowledge and experience.

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