

2023 SPEAKERS

Elder Jan Kahehti:io Longboat, Turtle Clan of the Mohawk Nation



Jan Kahehti:io Longboat, Turtle Clan of the Mohawk Nation, is an Elder, educator, writer, herbalist, cultural advocate, and visionary, having dedicated her life to the dissemination and learning of Indigenous language and culture. Longboat ran a ten-year program called Idawadadi, which won the Aboriginal Healing Foundation's best practices award and an outgrowth project entitled Dotah's House to assist Indigenous women survivors to heal from the abuse of Residential Schools while strengthening their communities through cultural knowledge. Frequently called on as a counselor, committee and board member, Kahehti:io has served on the Centre for Indian Scholars and Association of American Indian Physicians, Chiefswood National Historic Societies Board, Six Nations Elders Council, Kanatsiohare:ke Mohawk Community, the Children's Aid Society of Brant, among others.

Longboat continues to serve as a board member at the St. Michael's Hospital Well Living House project in Toronto as well as the on the Elders' councils at the University of Toronto, Enahtig Healing Lodge and Learning Centre, and the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto.

Jan Longboat is currently an Elder Advisor to the Ministry of Justice: Indigenous Peoples' Court in Brantford. She taught at Mohawk College, McMaster University, and the University of Toronto and has worked with several Indigenous health centres including Wabano, Desdwadadesnye, and SOHAK. Kahehti:io received her degree as a Natural Health Practitioner from the Canadian College of Natural Medicine and received a degree in counseling from Laurentian University. She continues to live, teach, write, and garden on the Six Nations of the Grand River, where she was born and raised.

Justice Catrina Braid, Superior Court of Justice, Kitchener



Justice Braid graduated in 1994 with both a B.A. in psychology from Brock University and an LL.B. from Osgoode Hall Law School. She started her legal career at a litigation firm in Waterloo where she had a varied practice including criminal defence work, family law, civil litigation and standing agent work for the Federal Crown. In 2000, Justice Braid took a permanent position as a drug prosecutor. She worked as a Federal Crown in Toronto and Kitchener. Justice Braid was appointed to the Superior Court of Justice in 2014. She presides in family, civil and criminal matters in Kitchener, Ontario.

Jennifer Bolduc, Senior Counsel



Jennifer began her career in Thunder Bay, Ontario with a full-service law firm but ultimately returned to Southern Ontario and commenced work in the Waterloo Region in 2014. After working for two local firms where she developed a stellar relationship with her fellow lawyers and the courts, Jennifer joined Musson Morneau LLP in September 2022 as Senior Counsel. Her practice is solely in the area of family law including being a panel lawyer for the Office of the Children's Lawyer. In addition to being the current Chair of the Family Lawyers of Waterloo Region, Jennifer is a member of The Advocates' Society, the Family Lawyers Association, Collaborative Divorce of Waterloo Region, the Waterloo Region Law Association, the Ontario Bar Association, and the Canadian Bar Association.

Jennifer currently sits as a Trustee with the Waterloo Region Law Association and sits on numerous WRLA committees including the Continuing Development Committee, The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, the Golf Committee, and is the Chair of the Unified Family Court Bench and Bar Committee. She also sits as a representative on the Courthouse Child Protection Committee and the Courthouse Community Resource and Liaison Committee which works to bring together stakeholders around the Region to identify and improve family law and associated services. Jennifer has been an active volunteer in the Ontario Justice Education Network's Waterloo Braiding Diversity

program which aims to connect marginalized and/or racialized young women (cis and trans) in high school with women working in the legal sector. Jennifer is currently Chairing the development of Braiding Diversity 2.0, a program geared towards post-secondary students.

Jennifer grew up in Southwestern Ontario before obtaining her B.A. in English Literature from Kentucky State University on a full fastball scholarship in 2006 (summa cum laude), graduating from the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law in 2009, and was Called to the Bar in 2010.

In her spare time, Jennifer enjoys playing hockey and fastball as well as attempting to keep up with her dogs on their walks.

Mara Clarke, Family Lawyer



Mara Clark started her legal career in the areas of securities and corporate law, upon being called to the Bar. In 2008 she returned to her social justice/public legal education roots when she joined the outreach team of Ontario Justice Education Network. In her role as Director of Outreach, Mara was responsible for managing the team that taught vulnerable youth about the law. In this role, Mara designed family law public legal education programs for some of Ontario's most vulnerable mothers. Through this challenging work, Mara found her passion: family law.

Mara's settlement focused, culturally sensitive approach to family law practice prioritizes her client's interests and the parties' relationship. This helps establish the "new normal" that will guide their interactions moving forward. At times, the assistance of the court is required to settle matters. In those cases Mara offers zealous advocacy, paired with a no-nonsense but reasonable, client focused approach.

A proud product of Ontario's social welfare system, raised by her mother in a busy household with 5 siblings, Mara understands socio-economical challenges first hand. Mara is a resolution focused, zealous family lawyer who works efficiently to guide her clients through the family court system.



Rebecca Currie, Kitchener Probation and Parole

Rebecca holds a Bachelor Degree in Social Development Studies and an Honours Degree in Social Work from the University of Waterloo. Rebecca commenced her employment as a Probation & Parole Officer in 1998 and has worked in Kitchener and briefly in Hamilton. Rebecca has also had the opportunity to complete developmental assignments as a Social Worker at the former Guelph Correctional Centre and as a Victim Witness Services Worker at the Victim Witness Assistance Program at Kitchener Court.

Rebecca has predominantly supervised specialized case loads such as Sex Offenders, Intensive Supervision/High Risk Offenders, Guns and Gangs, and Prolific Offenders. Her current duties include supervising offenders placed on conditions by the Court or the Ontario Parole Board, completing assessments, writing court reports, and liaising with various community resources as well as the police.

Rebecca has had the opportunity to participate in a number of committees including Aftercare, Forensic Mental Health, Employee Health and Productivity, and Guns and Gangs. Rebecca is an active union member of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) and sits on the executive of her local branch.



Ross Denny-Jiles, Superior Court Judicial Law Clerk

Ross graduated from Queen's University with a joint JD/MPA (Masters of Public Administration) in 2022. Upon graduation, he received the Dean's Key Award for best embodying the signature values of Queens Law: community, collegiality, professionalism, service, exemplary commitment and responsibility towards legal studies, and academic achievement. Originally a theatre major at the University of Southern California (USC), Ross transferred to Quest University Canada in Squamish, BC, where he completed a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences, studying the relationship between equality and democracy.

While at Queen's, Ross became the first Queen's Law student to ever serve two terms as President of the Law Students' Society (LSS). As President, Ross represented his classmates on the Queen's Law Faculty Board, the Law Students' Society of Ontario (LSSO), and the Queen's Society of Professional and Graduate Students (SGPS). He helped

successfully advocate for the de-naming of Sir John A. MacDonald Hall and established a multi-faith prayer room within the law school. Born and raised in Vancouver, BC, Ross loves hiking and long walks. He is an avid squash player and board game enthusiast—placing second in a “Settlers of Catan” national qualifying tournament in Vancouver in 2017.



Raffi Dergalstanian, Superior Court Judicial Law Clerk

Raffi received his J.D. from Western University in 2022. Prior to commencing his law degree, he graduated from the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Applied Science in chemical engineering.

Prior to law school, Raffi worked as a technical analyst at IBM and as a project manager at Polydex Pharmaceuticals. While studying at Western University, Raffi served as a criminal law caseworker at Community Legal Services. Raffi advocated and represented clients charged with summary offences and liaised with Crown counsel in order to achieve a fair resolution. Raffi also competed in 8 moots, including the 2021 Harold G. Fox Intellectual Property moot.

Raffi summered at Bereskin & Parr during both his 2020 and 2021 summers. During his tenure at Bereskin & Parr, Raffi focused primarily on patent prosecution and intellectual property litigation. Under the guidance of patent and litigation professionals, Raffi drafted patent applications, office action responses, legal memoranda, and articles related to privacy law.

During his second and third years of law school, Raffi worked as a research assistant to Professor Wade Wright. In this role, Raffi worked on Professor Peter Hogg’s and Professor Wade Wright’s Constitutional Law of Canada treatise. Raffi was responsible for drafting and editing new text to reflect changes in the law, as well as updating and revising footnotes to ensure compliance with the Canadian Guide to Uniform Legal Citation.

Raffi also served as a staff editor, and subsequently as a managing editor, for the Western Journal of Legal Studies. He was also the speaker of the Western Law Student Legal Society in his final year of law school.

Raffi plays flag football and ice hockey and enjoys playing billiards with his friends.



Jasmine Dong, Superior Court Judicial Law Clerk

Jasmine Dong is currently a judicial law clerk at the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. She received her J.D. from the University of Ottawa in 2022, and has a B.Sc.(Hons) and M.Sc. from McMaster University where she specialized in microbiology and immunology. Her interest in law began when she worked as a law clerk at a civil litigation firm in Hamilton. During law school, Jasmine continued volunteering at her local sexual assault centre, became involved with the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, and co-authored a book chapter with Professor Jane Bailey in "The Last Frontier: Digital Privacy and the Charter" on technology-facilitated gendered violence and abuse. Jasmine was a student at Borden Ladner Gervais LLP during her 1L and 2L summers where she gained a wide range of experience and a particular passion for family law. For fun, Jasmine loves being outside whether it's on a gruelling multi-day backpacking trip or just laying in a hammock for hours with a good book.



Alanna Fedak-Tarnapolsky, Crown Attorney for the Region of Waterloo

Alanna Fedak-Tarnapolsky began her career in law as a summer and articling student with the Crown Law Office - Criminal in Toronto. In July 2011, she joined the Peel Crown Attorney's Office as an Assistant Crown Attorney, where she specialized in serious firearms prosecutions as well as cases involving domestic and sexual abuse. In April 2022, Alanna became the Crown Attorney for the Region of Waterloo. In her spare time, Alanna volunteers with equine therapy programs, to share her passion for horses with children.



Cst. Tory Harshman, Waterloo Regional Police Service

My name is Tory Harshman and I have been a police officer with the Waterloo Regional Police Service for 2 years. I grew up in Owen Sound, ON and have 2 younger sisters. I played hockey growing up and continued to play at a collegial level at Robert Morris University, in Pittsburgh PA. I then transferred to Adrian College in Michigan where I continued to play and received a bachelors and masters degree in Criminal Justice. After graduating I immediately pursued my career in law enforcement as I have always known I wanted to be a police officer

since I was young. I am truly happy with the career choice I made and feel as though the most rewarding part of the job is coming home each day knowing I made a difference in the community.

Cst. Micaela James, Waterloo Regional Police Service



My name is Micaela James and I have been a Police Constable with the Waterloo Regional Police Service for the past three years. I work out of North Division which is near the Uptown Waterloo area. I became a Police Officer because I wanted to contribute to my community in a unique and meaningful way each day. Before policing I obtained an undergraduate degree at Western University double majoring in Criminology and Sociology.

Megan Martin, Law Student



Megan is a 1L at the University of Ottawa in the English common law program. She previously received her Bachelor of Arts in political science from Wilfrid Laurier University with a minor in Criminology and specializations in both Research and Legal Studies. Throughout her undergrad she was involved with numerous student organizations such as; the Association of Political Science Students, Lawyer-Ed, and International Students Overcoming War. She currently volunteers with John Howard Society as a Youth Justice Mediator and is an assistant editor for the Ottawa Law Review. She is interested in civil litigation and international law.

Thusha Mayuran, Senior Legal Counsel at Intact Insurance



Thusha Mayuran is an in-house defense lawyer at a large national insurance company. Thusha earned her law degree at the University of Windsor Ontario in 2011. Although today, she is a litigation lawyer tasked with arguing before judges, she arrived in Canada as a refugee 3 decades ago with knowledge of little to no English.

As a refugee herself, Thusha is very familiar with the plight of new arrivals in a strange, western country. Thusha's pivotal experience was the Co-op program she was fortunate enough to complete with Justice Catrina Braid at the Department of Justice when she was only 17 years old. This experience and watching the fearless litigation and

leadership exemplified by Justice Braid inspired Thusha to be a litigation lawyer. Today, she lives in Pickering with her husband and son.

Sheena Naidoo, Senior Counsel



Sheena has spent the last 10 years of her career litigating, negotiating and resolving family law matters in the Waterloo Region.

Recognizing the challenges of an adversarial Court system and shortcomings of traditionally aggressive negotiations, Sheena is now focusing on alternatives as better means to help clients and their families through the turmoil of separation. Regardless of the process, Sheena always welcomes the opportunity to engage in creative problem solving while supporting clients with reliable legal advice as they work to resolve their issues.

Sheena graduated from McMaster University in 2007, receiving her Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in Peace Studies and Philosophy and continued on to Queen's University, where she received her Juris Doctor in 2010. She articulated in Toronto at a boutique family law firm before being called to the Ontario Bar in 2011.

Jennifer Roggeman, Immigration Lawyer



Jennifer attended the University of Guelph where she obtained her B.A., (Psychology). Then Jennifer attended University of Victoria Law School, where she earned her law degree, graduating in 1998. As an immigrant herself, Jennifer understands her client's circumstances. When she arrived in Canada in grade 11, she didn't speak a word of English. Today, as an immigration lawyer, Jennifer has helped hundreds of immigrants start a new life in Canada. She lives in Kitchener, with her spouse and two children in their first year of college.

Valeria Ruoso, Sole Practitioner



Val graduated from York University in 1992 with an Honours Bachelor Degree where she did an Interdisciplinary Double Major in Political Science and Law and Society and graduated cumlaude. She then attended Osgoode Hall Law School obtaining her law degree in 1995 and was called to the bar in 1997. She articulated in Kitchener with criminal defence counsel, Thomas Brock. Upon her call to the bar she opened up her own practice where she has been practicing criminal defence and family law work for the past 25 years.

Val is also on the Legal Aid Duty Counsel Panel including the disciplinary panel for Grand Valley Women's Institution. She has done per diem work for the Children's Aid Society of Waterloo, has been on the Office of the Children's Lawyer panel since 2004 and has been a Dispute Resolution Officer ("DRO") for Case Conferences since October 2022. She is a licensing examination tutor for the Law Society of Ontario since May 2021 and is on the Board of Directors for Victim Services of Waterloo Region since August 2022.

In her spare time for the past few years, Val has been a trainer for the Cambridge Roadrunners Girls Hockey and the Brantford Ice Cats Girls Hockey teams and a manager for the Cambridge United Girls soccer teams. She lives in Cambridge with her husband and two children, neither of whom wish to become lawyers!

Armin Sethi, Assistant Crown Attorney, Waterloo Region



Armin did her B.A. Honours at York University, specializing in Criminology and International Development Studies, her J.D. at Windsor Law, and her LL.M. at Osgoode Hall Law School. She was called to the Bar in 2013, after articling at Crown Law Office - Criminal. She started at the Kitchener Crown Attorney's Office in 2013 and became the Acting Deputy Crown Attorney in August 2022. She specializes in mental health, youth, and therapeutic courts, and works on major prosecutions and warrants. Outside of law, she writes screenplays with her sister, is the editor in chief of a magazine, dances, and enjoys sports.

The Honourable Justice Maria N. Sirivar, Judge of the Ontario Court of Justice — Keynote speaker



Madam Justice Maria N. Sirivar is a judge of the Ontario Court of Justice who is currently assigned to the Toronto Family and Youth Court at 311 Jarvis Street, and has been there since her appointment in 2018.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Western University and an Honours Business Administration degree from the Richard Ivey School of Business. Justice Sirivar graduated from Osgoode Hall Law School (2006) and was admitted to the Ontario Bar in 2007.

Prior to her appointment, she ran her own practice (Sirivar Law) focused on family and employment law. Justice Sirivar was also an agent for the Office of the Children's Lawyer and duty counsel. Prior to starting her

own practice, Justice Sirivar was an associate at Faskens and Air Morse LLP. Justice Sirivar is bilingual and presides over French and English proceedings in Family and Youth Criminal court.

Shuchanna Swaby, Family Lawyer



Shuchanna Swaby was called to the Bar in 1998 and began practicing Family Law in Toronto.

From 2008 to 2017 Shuchanna worked with Legal Aid Ontario as a Family Law Duty Counsel Supervisor in Waterloo Region assisting unrepresented litigants successfully achieve their Family Law goals.

Since 2018 Shuchanna has returned to private practice where she practices exclusively Family Law and advocates for clients in their matrimonial matters. She has been trained in Collaborative Family Law.

She is an Agent with the Office of the Children's Lawyer, a member of the Waterloo Region Law Association and a member of the Family Lawyers of Waterloo Region.

She has been a Tutor with the Bar Admission Course. Shuchanna has a strong commitment to community service, having volunteered her time with many organizations over the last four decades. In 2021, Shuchanna was appointed to the Family Law Rules Committee.

She has participated in the Iron Girl Triathlon twice and is hoping to participate in future Triathlons.

Pia Williams, Waterloo Region Law Librarian



Pia Williams has over 20 years of experience as a librarian working in various libraries, including over ten years as a law librarian. Currently, Pia is the Library Manager and Executive Director of the Waterloo Region Law Association (WRLA). She received her Honours Bachelor of Arts in History and Politics from the University of Toronto, and her Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) from Western University.

Prior to joining the WRLA, Pia was a librarian at Mohawk College, a prospect researcher for St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, a technology and systems librarian and Laurier Liaison librarian for the Brantford Public Library, a law librarian for the Hamilton Law Association and a law librarian for Torys LLP. Pia has been the Library Manager and Executive Director of the WRLA since 2018.



Ann Marie Yantz, Licenced Paralegal, Kelly & Co.

Ann Marie Yantz is an experienced paralegal from Kitchener, Ontario, and the first paralegal in Ontario to be appointed to the executive of a law association. She joined the firm Kelly & Co. in September 1997 and received her law clerk diploma from the Institute of Law Clerks in 2000 and became licensed as a paralegal by the Law Society of Upper Canada in 2008. Ann Marie has provided per diem prosecution services for matters concerning the Provincial Offences Act for both Halton Region, the County of Perth and the Ministry of the Attorney General. Ann Marie is a member of the Prosecutors Association of Ontario and an associate member of the Institute of Law Clerks. In 2013, Ann Marie became the first elected paralegal board member of the Waterloo Region Law Association, where she was a trustee and treasurer until 2017. Ann Marie's community involvement includes being the President of Sunbeam Community and Development Services and formerly, the Secretary Treasurer of Thresholds Homes and Supports Inc.. Ann Marie was also a board member of Legal Aid Ontario and the Paralegal Advisory Committee at Conestoga College of Applied Arts & Technology.