New House Post for the Law School

BY CHRISTINA GRAY, LAW II

On March 20th, a group of about 70 faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends gathered in front of Allard Hall for a ceremonial affair to honour the newly raised First Nations Musqueam house post. Musqueam artist, Brent Sparrow Jr. was commissioned to carve this house post which depicts the human figure of Capilano. A number of representatives from the university, law school, and Musqueam Nation spoke about what this house post meant to each of them.

The ceremony started with the Dean of the Faculty of Law, Mary Anne Bobinski, thanking those that came to celebrate the house post. She also thanked those that helped get this project off the ground and continued with it throughout the years. The carving indeed represents the commitment and dedication of those who worked on it, but as the ceremony made evident, it symbolizes much more.

In speaking of the prominently placed house post, the Honourable Stephen Owen, UBC’s Vice-President, External, Legal and Community Relations, said that there is “no better symbol of strength of relationship.” Dean Bobinski also remarked that the post celebrates the Musqueam leader, Capilano. Although many people associate this name with the suspension bridge in North Vancouver, the Dean acknowledged that Capilano “is widely recognized for leading the [Musqueam] people in defending their territory, laws, and customs.” In many ways this can be correlated with the types of work that students, faculty, and the Musqueam continued on page 6

30 Years of the Charter: Is it ‘Just Words’?

Bradley Por, LAW III

This April, Canadians will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the patriation of Canada’s constitution from Britain, and the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter has come to assume a lofty position in law, politics, and in the public’s eyes. It has become the centrepiece of our legal order, and a default point of reference for making the claim that to be Canadian means to be free.

Three decades of Charter jurisprudence have produced a number of significant wins for rights-seeking claimants. This belies the pessimism of those who predicted it would prove to be a document with no muscle. Nevertheless, the nearly sacred view of the Charter in Canadian law tends to mask its limitations, so it is important to place it in context, and assess what social functions the Charter actually serves.

In 1997, UBC’s Faculty of Law professor, Joel Bakan, wrote a book entitled, Just Words: Constitutional Rights and Social Wrongs, which made the argument that the Charter, despite its just words, had done little to advance social justice in Canada. Prof. Bakan wrote, “The emancipatory and egalitarian potential of the Charter ultimately depends on the social and historical circumstances surrounding its use.” From this perspective, the Charter does little continued on page 7

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Our First Year at Allard Hall

BY MARTIN MCGREGOR, OUTGOING LSS PRESIDENT

As UBC Law's first year at Allard Hall draws to a close, I am struck by the amount of change, and of growth, that we have all experienced. We started September barely having access to classrooms, with no library, and with no access to any of the upper floors. Many of us will remember the old library wall crashing perilously close to our "front entrance." Since that first week we have made it our own. We've marked up the walls, we've kicked the infinitely-rattling metal panels, and much to the chagrin of the library staff, we've left crumbs all over the library carpets. We've even used the showers (I'll leave that to your imagination.)

We may complain about certain things that still need attention like no cell reception, urinals for giants and the lack of decent food or coffee within reach. But we know that the value of the building is not measured by its physical comforts. Faculty now roam the same halls, delighting us with donuts and conversations about tax. The staff are no longer segregated into the portables, and the research centers have their signs up all over so we now at least know the names of the centers and lounges, even if we have no idea what they research. And the students congregate on couches, sharing thoughts on anything other than what was covered in class. 1Ls even show up on Mondays to study. A true community is growing in Allard Hall.

The changes, and the growth, do not end with the building, or even with the UBC Law community. I can see changes in each person. Since September, the starry, eager eyes of the 1Ls have become glassy, tired, and yearning for the freedom of summer. Since September, the 2Ls have asserted their place in the law student community, shifting in while the 3Ls check-out – I mean, shift-out. And the eyes of the 3Ls have started to take on a bittersweet glow, as we begin already looking back with nostalgia on the days of law school, knowing that it’s going to be so much harder to skip a day of articling than it was to skip class.

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Exam stress, honour and coolness

BY DANIEL KENT, LAW II

Cherry blossoms signal the clarion call of surging hormones and the universe collapsing on its centre as the Toronto Maple Leafs’ playoff hopes wither like your chances of obtaining a paid summer position at a firm with decent hire-back rates. Also, I’m told, some of you will be attempting some tests or something. (B-curve, say ‘what what?’) Okay, I’m not that aloof. I appreciate the fact that this can be a trying fortnight for all you neër-do-poorlies out there. As for the slackers, slack-ass LSLAP-lifers, Emily “Slackster” MacKinnon and the constitutionally slack-jawed, April’s siren song of sun worship and midnight/midday toking croons delightful. You guys are cool and already have it figured out. Stop reading here.

Stress-management and dealing with pressure are likely parts of healthy and busy lives. Lamentably, law students in the main skew towards solicitous blowhardism and resolutely feel that the Earth will spin off its axis if one underperforms on a formal evaluation. [Ed note: Regrets to the Class of 2014, some of the most balanced and well-adjusted people, ever.] Of course expectations, unless one has East Asian/Jewish/Slavic/Persian and/or practising lawyer parents, are mostly self-imposed. There is no finer example than the Usain Bolt type of excellence that can be achieved with a laid-back, rudevai demeanour. Skankin’ baldheads: read this carefully and be inspired. And no, I will not hear any objections that Bolt is not actually Rastafarian. In fact, I and I may pepper the rest of this column with colourful, ital slang because it is an antidote to taking tings too seriously, dread.

Overstand this: Usain Bolt currently holds world records in the 100m, 200m, and as a member of the 4 x100m relay team. He has bested his own Olympic and world records at the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics and in subsequent meets. His most memorable performance came in the 100m final at the Olympics when he achieved a time of 9.69s. He lowered his time significantly at the 2009 World Championships in Berlin. This is old hat. Neither are the circumstances of his setting the record despite a “slow” reaction time, the drag his loose-fitting jersey MUST have created, the absence of a tailwind, his left shoelace being untied, his deceleration as he turned around to observe his lead over the other sprinters, and upon noticing this lead, opening his arms and pumping his chest with self-satisfaction and then actually slowing down to cross the finish line, having clearly already won the race, made news.

Perhaps less well-known are the facts that both of Bolt’s two pre-race meals that day consisted of chicken nuggets (he didn’t trust the food in the athletes’ village and is apparently of sound judgment, too) and that he felt prepared and rested going into the race. He didn’t know what the result would be but was jammmin’ because he worked hard in training and would try his best and that no matter what happened in the race, his life would carry on. Bolt’s unaffected exuberance is also well-attested. The fact that he takes such relish in his and his teammates’ success has been criticized by people like International Olympic Committee chief Jacques Rogge as excessive and disrespectful. That Rogge does not have a spacious conception of emotions like happiness and excitement is perhaps a topic for a future column. I will say nothing more except that some money has been made for the IOC and its sponsors precisely because Bolt has an awesome personality.

Exam performance is differentiated from sporting achievement, among other ways, by the probable outcome of pumping the chest before finishing writing/typing responses. In a word, such gesticulation, however reflexive, is unlikely to attract many supporters or endorsement deals. Celebrating beatin’ dem bad, however modestly, may be appropriate but The Legal Eye will invite you to consider a private venue and company that excludes law students who aren’t siblings or sexual partners. Even there, tread lightly. And if Babylon chants you down instead, well, Jah works in mysterious ways and nothing is determinative of any other ting. The unofficial Olympic motto is apropos: “The most important thing is not to win but to take part!” (To be entirely frank, I’m uncertain whether this motto actually applies to legal life – or the Olympics for that matter – but it is undeniably a gentle, humble prism through which to view the world. It may be a lie but it’s not the big lie.)

A desire to gain any edge over peers is part of an alpha dog mentality and correlates closely with securing material benefits in Babylon/The Fountainhead. This spirit has served the legal community well as we crush small people beneath our collective heel (or further the ends of justice depend – or further the ends of justice depending on one’s bent). Sorry, bad bwais and champions, but there is a line, sometimes bright, sometimes faint, between fair and foul. Caffeine, procuring excellent CANs, doing practice exams: fair; aksin’ obfuscating, clearly personal questions during exam reviews, aggressive seasonal Adderall dosing: foul. Though I have it on good authority that the university isn’t to check
The UBC Law Revue Review

The 2012 UBC Law Revue slimed and oozed its way across the Norm Theatre stage like a damn snail on March 19th and 20th. This obscene and offensive “variety show,” which is put on each year by the UBC law students least likely to find employment, was in especially bad taste this year. I feel that public shaming is the only appropriate response to such an insulting show.

The highlights of the show included an unimaginative opening “meta” scene. This skit consisted of the Revue “brain trust” shouting abhorrent “ideas” at each other that were presumably too colourful to make it into the show proper. It also included two of the students arguing over who had the better idea for a sexual assault sketch.

Also on the menu was the usual litany of misogyny, racism, and contempt for respected professors and judges. One of the skits mocked the venerable Lord Denning, who was singled out in a ridiculous Eminem rap sequence.

Another featured not one, but two pairs of exposed male buttocks. Gratuitous and unnecessary violence was also heavily featured. In one scene the actors were pelted with cricket balls, and the infamous zombie sketch featured two unspeakable and fatal beatings.

Not to be outdone, the always over-the-line Daniel Wood was in fine form himself. Whether he was brutally belittling a vulnerable female student’s resume or fantasizing about Professor Christie Ford as a Realdoll, Wood showed that he has learned nothing about sensitivity and equity in his three years at law school. In one sketch, which Wood surely wrote himself, it was insinuated that Associate Dean David Duff drugs his colleagues without their knowledge, but also that Professor Benjamin Goold is a cannibal. Even our beloved Legal Eye newspaper was referred to as more fit for use as a bib than as news.

The one genuinely good-spirited and pleasant sketch was about the delightful knitting club and their wholesome influence on the law school. Although even that sketch ended on a childish note with a juvenile penis joke.

Since the show, many students have confided in me, saying that they were sincerely offended and did not know where else to turn since both the present and future Law Student’s Society Ombudspersons were involved in the demoralizing production. The overwhelming consensus seems to be that 2012 has taken the Law Revue to a dark place. But apparently not dark enough, as the biggest complaint about this year’s Law Revue is that it was less offensive than last year’s show.

Students have asked: Where were the homophobic and racist slurs? Where was the singling out of specific students and Eastern European chain-smokers? Where was the frontal nudity?

The blame for this disaster must be laid squarely at the feet of show runners James Boxall and Molly Shamess. The message to next year’s Law Revue producers is clear: push the envelope.
Environmental Club Fieldtrip

BY KRISTEN SIVERTZ, LAW II

It goes without saying that, given the means and the opportunity, the decision to attend a conference ranks among the finest life choices that a person can make, regardless of whether you are a law student, lawyer, professor, or just a really big fan of Joss Whedon. With that fact in mind, and with funding provided by the Curtis Fund and the Centre for Law and the Environment, the Environmental Law Group was able to send a small contingent of members to the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (PIELC), which took place from March 1 to March 4 in Eugene, Oregon. For many of you, seeing the terms “environmental” and “public interest” together may conjure up images of drum circles, dreadlocks, and a whole lot of people using mason jars instead of Tupperware. And you would not be wrong. But those are only a few of the many amazing things that PIELC has to offer.

PIELC began in 1983 as a small gathering of legal professionals and law students at the University of Oregon, meeting to discuss environmental concerns affecting the Pacific Northwest and the legal strategies that could be used to address them. It has since become the world’s largest conference on the topic of public interest environmental law. The 29th annual conference consisted of 12 keynote presentations, 125 panel sessions, three meet-and-greet receptions, a three hour hike, and a bluegrass dance party. It was attended by over 3,000 lawyers, scientists, activists, students and concerned citizens from around the world and most notable of all, it was organized entirely by law students from the University of Oregon. As someone who thinks that organizing a single career panel is a major feat, even with the help of two other students and the Career Services Office, I have nothing but the utmost respect for the amount of planning and effort that U of O students put into organizing this conference every year.

Although for the most part it focuses on the environmental law tools and strategies available in the American legal system, UBC law students have a lot to gain from attending PIELC. It offers a fantastic opportunity to network with professionals and potential employers from private firms and non-governmental organizations operating in the US, Canada, and internationally. First and foremost, however, it offers a fantastic learning experience. The keynote presentations and panels address a wide range of environmental concerns, from the predominantly local, such as protection of critical wolf habitat and pedestrian transportation planning, to the international, such as climate change and marine pollution.

Many of the panels also provide insight into the legal aftermath of major environmental disasters that have since left the limelight of the media. Anyone remember the Deepwater Horizon spill that resulted in 4.9 million barrels of crude, not to mention some four million litres of dispersants, being injected into the Gulf of Mexico? Well, apparently, most of it is still down there wreaking untold havoc on the subsurface marine ecosystem and posing significant health concerns for local residents, wildlife, and even tourists. I was able to hear from two law professors and an eminent marine toxicologist about their work in the wake of both the Gulf of Mexico and the Exxon Valdez oil spills. Needless to say, the picture they painted was far from rosy. In fact, it was terrifying, which brings me to one of the few downsides of the PIELC experience. Though their work is fascinating and many of the strategies they have adopted appear to have the potential to effect real change, few if any of the panellists or keynote speakers were able to end their presentations on an unmitigated high note. After a full day of back-to-back presentations on oil spills, rising sea levels, mass extinction of species, water contamination, and the chemical castration of African clawed frogs and other amphibians caused by a commonly-used herbicide, it is hard not to come away feeling a little depressed about the difficult road ahead. The magnitude and scope of the environmental crises we face are overwhelming, and it seems that every hard-won step forward is swiftly followed by ten steps back. Nevertheless, the experience strengthened our resolve to do what we can to advance the cause of environmental sanity. Even if you are sceptical of the severity of environmental harms and believe that the world could do with a few less African clawed frogs, the fact that there is a patch of garbage roughly twice the size of Texas floating in the middle of the Pacific Ocean must give even the most stalwart anti-“tree hugger” pause for thought. By attending the conference, we were able to draw inspiration from the tireless work of thousands of individuals willing to dedicate their knowledge and training, sacrifice their wealth and, at times, even put their liberty at risk to promote a sustainable future for humanity. Though victories may be few and far between, the reams of scientific evidence available clearly show that giving up is not an option.
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work on its own to disrupt entrenched power structures or status quo social norms that perpetuate social wrongs. In 2012, Prof. Bakan’s critique of the Charter remains highly relevant. On the other hand, some strong and progressive Charter decisions have come down from the Supreme Court of Canada in recent years. The unanimous decision to uphold the right of InSite to continue providing needle exchange services in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver (Canada (AG) v. PHS Community Services Society, 2011 SCC 44) is an example. In PHS, the court cited Charter section 7 as one of the grounds for upholding InSite’s right to provide needle exchange services in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. This was seen as a major victory for some of the most marginalized people in Canadian society.

However, while PHS left the door open at least a crack for similar facilities to be legally established in Canada, the court was still fairly careful to limit the scope of its decision to the InSite location. Its effect was to prevent the government from closing down an already existing, life-saving medical facility. The decision has limited impact on the core problems of racialized, gendered, and class-based oppression which are at the root of the crisis in the Downtown Eastside. Significant social, not merely legal, change is required to tackle these underlying issues.

The position of organized labour in Canadian society also reflects the Charter’s limits as an engine of social justice. There have been a series of successes in court for unions asserting rights under s. 2(d) freedom of association and s.2(b) freedom of expression.

In 2004, the Supreme Court’s decision in BC Health Services (2007 SCC 27) affirmed a constitutional right for workers and unions to engage in collective bargaining under s. 2(d) of the Charter. This dramatically limits the potential for union activity to be restricted through legislation. But this legal victory does not mean that organized labour has suddenly become stronger in Canada. When one looks at how the power of unions vis-à-vis large employers has declined over the past few decades, and the hostile approach federal and provincial governments continue to take towards public sector unions, it is hard to argue that this case has tilted the balance of power in unions’ favour.

The Supreme Court has also avoided pushing organized labour rights too far. Last year, in Ontario (AG) v. Fraser (2011 SCC 20), the court upheld provincial labour legislation which created a separate, and significantly weaker, regime of rights for agricultural workers, without the full range of collective bargaining rights other workers are granted. The legislation was seen as consistent with the court’s decision in BC Health Services on the grounds that a right to collective bargaining did not entail a right to participate in any particular form of collective bargaining. Agricultural workers, most of who are racialized minorities with low incomes, were left with limited rights to organize and bargain collectively. This legislation hampered the workers’ potential to better their employment situation through collective action.

The position of unions in Canada highlights the degree to which progress for weaker groups must come from real social change, and why social justice proponents cannot simply rely on the law. The Charter protects a very specific set of rights that can be asserted, by individuals, against the authority of the state. The Charter’s ability to advance the interests of marginalized groups, and to induce positive change, is severely limited. Recognizing a right to collective bargaining, based in the individual’s rights to freedom of association, only prevents the government from legislating away bargaining rights to further weaken unions. It does not create a real platform for organized labour to enter a new era of power and influence to advance workers’ interests.

The truth is, no matter how it is interpreted, law cannot be the source of social justice. There is no replacement for collective political action to push for progress. But in a country built on liberal principles, with the rule of law, we often talk as if our rights are everything. This is reflected in Canadians’ veneration of the Charter. As the third decade of Charter jurisprudence comes to an end, there is much to reflect on how the Charter has actually served, or failed to serve, the quest for social justice. If we put it into perspective, we can recognize that, for many marginalized people in Canada, life is no better under the Charter than it was before.

It should also be remembered that for First Nations, Canadian law has been imposed without consent. While Aboriginal and treaty rights have been “recognized and affirmed” by s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, the Charter affects and informs the application of law generally, and the test for determining whether an Aboriginal right has been infringed bears a striking similarity to the Oakes test employed in Charter jurisprudence. The Charter is often viewed as the source of legal freedom and equality in Canada, but it does not play a key role in the pursuit of justice for Aboriginal peoples. Social justice in Canada demands reconciliation of the wrongs done to Aboriginal peoples by the assertion of Canadian sovereignty over their territories. This reconciliation cannot simply come through interpretation of the colonizers’ law. Aboriginal legal traditions reflect a different approach to justice than the one articulated in the Charter. Holding up the Charter as the pinnacle of law in Canada helps reinforce the profound injustice which underlies Canada’s emergence as a nation. True reconciliation must come from political and social change that recognizes First Nations’ sovereign claims, and the Charter can do little to advance this cause.

So as we celebrate the Charter’s anniversary and as another year of law school draws to a close, we should recall that law is, as Prof. Bakan suggested, just words. The law can be altered and employed in progressive ways. But in order for power imbalances to be reversed, the systems of power law functions to support must be tackled head on. Canadians cannot rely on the courts and the Charter to right social wrongs; they must be willing to take collective, direct action, and make progressive change in their own lives.
Whether you are starting a law-related job this summer, networking with lawyers in different practice areas, or just socializing with fellow law students, you have already started to build one of the most important features of your career: your professional reputation. The legal community in Vancouver and across Canada is surprisingly small.

Keep in mind the following tips as you make your way through law school and start building your legal or non-traditional career:

**You have already entered the legal profession.** Whether you pursue a legal career or not, your law school classmates are your future professional colleagues. Much of legal practice and other employment options involve ‘word of mouth’ referrals and anecdotes. Everything you do, say, and write will form a permanent part of how your colleagues will view you going forward.

**Socializing/Networking.** Socializing with current or prospective employers and with fellow law students will be a key component of your professional life. Try to keep alcohol consumption to a minimum and avoid becoming the subject of law firm or law school gossip. Remember that wine and cheese receptions and law firm tours are business events. You don’t want to be known as the student who brought a date to the wine and cheese or the student who tried to get a date with a lawyer at a firm tour.

**Be enthusiastic and take initiative.** Even if you are not sure why you came to law school or what kind of career you’d like to pursue, you can still meet different types of lawyers (e.g., public interest; large firm; small firm; government; in-house) from diverse practice areas. You also may want to investigate non-traditional careers (i.e. public relations; sports/entertainment; or public interest) by contacting some- one who has your ‘dream job’ and finding out how they gained their position.

The contacts you make during this information-gathering process will not only be helpful during your job search, but may also be valuable contacts for your future career. If you have a summer job, take the initiative to gain constructive feedback to improve your skills. Be creative and don’t be afraid to provide thoughtful comments on a project or issue. Finally, don’t wait for work to come to you. Find out about files or matters that interest you and approach the appropriate person to see if you can lend a hand! If not, ask them to keep you in mind for future cases or projects.

**Maintain confidentiality and be discreet.** Whenever you are working with clients, you must at all times keep everything confidential. Lawyers are often caught talking about their cases in elevators, on the bus or in bars! You may also want to be careful on voicing your thoughts about opposing counsel, other students, and lawyers.

**Deliver on the deadline.** Whether you are at Worksafe BC, at the university as a research assistant for a professor, at LSLAP, or with a non-profit organization or committ- tee, you should always avoid missing a deadline (including limitation dates). Even if your work quality is high, missing deadlines can seriously hamper your career prospects.

**Go ahead, make mistakes, but never lie.** It is not a question of “if you will make a mistake”, but “when you will make a mistake”. The key is how you deal with the aftermath. Take responsibility, be forth- right and tell your supervisor or the appropriate person immediately. The true test of character is how people react in the face of adversity. Don't compound a mistake by lying, although that may seem like the most attractive option at the time.

**Social Networking Sites.** Assume that current or prospective employers, clients and colleagues can and will view your online profile, which may include any material posted online such as photos you have posted; photos friends may have posted of you; and comments you have made on other people’s pages. Consider how an employer or client would view your language or clothing. If you are not comfortable with a potential employer, client or colleague viewing your personal life in this manner, ensure that your online profile is not public. You can also Google yourself to see if there is anything else online of which you are unaware. Keep your online profile professional.

**E-Etiquette.** Email can be a quick, convenient, and informal method of communication. However, being overly informal can also be viewed as unprofessional, especially when you are emailing someone for the first time. Emails are also permanent. Write in complete sentences and use appropriate capitalization. Do not use abbreviations like “LOL” or use emoticons in your professional email correspondence. Do not send numerous, repetitive e-mails as you run the risk of annoying the recipient – if you haven’t received a response or if you think something may not come across well by e-mail, pick up the phone and contact the recipient the old-fashioned way.

**Telephone Etiquette.** Telephone etiquette is important because you will be interacting with interviewers, clients, and opposing counsel over the phone, both during law school and throughout your career. Speak clearly and confidently and always state your full name, the full name of the person you are seeking, and a brief reason for why you are calling. If you are leaving a message, it is helpful to repeat back important information at the end of the message, such as meeting times or contact information. Ensure that all of your voicemail greetings are professional.

**Professional Style.** Always err on the conservative side and dress for the position you want, not the one you necessarily have. If business casual is appropriate (i.e. for an interview with a public interest organization or if it is specifically referred to on an invitation), still err on the conservative side.

**ATTENTION 2L’s SEEKING 2013/2014 ARTICLES THIS SUMMER**

The CSO is here to assist you in preparing your employment application packages this summer for 2013/2014 articling positions. Keep in mind that the process of looking for an articling position is competitive. Each year, approximately 50% of the 3L class starts the year without articles. Your commitment and a strategic approach will help you to secure an articling position.
Continued from Page 1

do today on this land when learning about and defending our legal values. Cultural leader and band councilor, Howard Grant spoke on behalf of the artist, as is the practice with the Musqueam. Howard said that Brent was “honoured to carve this house post as a way of commemorating the institution and what they’re defending.” The land where UBC stands has long been known as a place of defense for the Musqueam. In the past, this area was a strategic fortification site where warriors and their families resided to protect the land from marauders.

Howard Grant also expressed Brent was thankful to the selection committee for choosing him to carve the house post as well as to those who were in attendance and witnessed the ceremony. Musqueam Elder Larry Grant spoke in his Coast Salish dialect, followed by an English translation. He welcomed the public to the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people and highlighted that they have never formally surrendered or given up the territory upon which the university sits.

The house post may signify a reconciliatory relationship between the university and Aboriginal communities. As the Dean explained in her speech, “The figure recognizes the historic and ongoing relationship between the UBC Faculty of Law and the Musqueam people in the pursuit of Aboriginal justice and education.” This sentiment was echoed by Musqueam Councillor Wade Grant, who asserted that, “This post is seen as one that recognizes Indigenous laws and reconciling things that should have been done many years ago.” Counselor Grant reflected on the history of First Nations people being excluded from voting and higher education, but noted, the Musqueam now play a more integral part at the University.

The Dean also highlighted that the law school has long been seen as a leader in First Nations legal education. This year, the law school celebrates 30 years since the First Nations Legal Studies Program was launched, which was the first program of its kind in Canada. The Dean went on to say that the law school has been supportive not only of changes to the curriculum, but also in terms of research and the First Nations Legal Clinic. The Clinic allows students to gain practical experience by providing legal advice and services to First Nations clients in its Gastown office.

The ceremony also included a traditional Coast Salish blessing. Thelma Stogan, a member of the Musqueam Nation, who blessed the post using cedar boughs. She asked all those in attendance to pray in their respective fashion while she went around the post brushing it with the cedar boughs. Cedar boughs play a significant role with many First Nations people along the Northwest Coast who use it to bless and cleanse spaces and people. The ceremony lasted only an hour, but this house post will stand in front of the law school for a lifetime. It’s open to all those that look upon Allard Hall and see the house post and to reflect on what it means, and the people upon whose traditional territory it stands.

Each of us has grown as a person, has had their horizons expanded, and has learned from those we share these walls with. Since September, we have forged relationships that will last a lifetime like bonds with professors and mentors; collaborative relationships with classmates and future colleagues; and true friendships, built on a shared experience, no matter where we came from before.

If the Constitution is a “living tree,” Allard Hall has living walls – walls that will bring together future iterations of the community that we have built here at UBC Law. As we sought to do this year, the future LSS Presidents and student leaders will do their parts to promote inclusion, improve student life, increase student–faculty exchange, and enhance our communities. Yet to steal a phrase: it takes a village to raise a community. The community we have results from all of the interactions among all of us in the law school. The future that awaits us as we graduate is...