



Queen's Law Clinics



August 2018

Three new grads bring 'valuable experience' at Q

Like all Law'18 classmates, Rachel Law, Jane Mundy and Justin Turner strode across the convocation stage to accept their degrees on June 6. But these three are staying on at their alma mater with new roles. As articling students with the Queen's Law Clinics (QLC) this year, they'll expand their skills while continuing to assist those unable to afford legal services in the greater Kingston area.

"My favourite part of law school was my time at the QLC," says Law, who is splitting her articles between the Queen's Family Law Clinic (QLFC) and Queen's Legal Aid (QLA). "The directors and review counsel at the QLC are exceptional role models and I am very lucky to be able to be in a position where I can continue to learn from them while helping to bridge the access to justice gap."

Describing her years as a student caseworker with both clinics as a "deeply meaningful experience," she says, "Working first-hand with clients and actually seeing the impact of the legal process on individuals really made me aware of the importance of access to justice and the difficulties self-representing litigants face. It was this awareness that made me want to article at the QLC."

With the QLFC, she is assisting self-representing litigants prepare court documents and navigate the court process.

With QLA, she is assisting and representing clients at a number of courts, boards and tribunals in criminal, human rights, social benefits and landlord issues, to name a few.

"As an articling student," she says, "I am most looking forward to applying all that I have learned (and all that I will learn), being able to help clients during what are often the most

complex and trying experiences they will face, and assisting student caseworkers navigate their roles."

For Jane Mundy, articling student with QLA and the Queen's Business Law Clinic (QBLC), being a student caseworker was "invaluable" and one of her "best law school experiences." That, she says, is because she gained a "sense of the practicalities of working as a lawyer while being able to learn and improve with support from clinic lawyers, staff, and other students. The best part was working with clients to help them resolve their legal issues or get results they wanted or needed."

Like Rachel Law, with QLA Mundy is assisting low-income residents of the Kingston and Napanee areas, as well as Queen's University and St. Lawrence College students with a wide range of legal issues.

With the QBLC, she is providing legal assistance to start-ups, entrepreneurs, businesses and not-for-profit organizations in southeastern Ontario who might not otherwise be able to afford legal services. These services include drafting and reviewing legal documents for business organization and intellectual property matters.

"Student caseworkers often transfer files to new caseworkers following transition periods," says Mundy. "As a QLC articling student, I am looking forward to seeing clients' matters through to the end and working on new and more complex legal issues."

Justin Turner is articling with the Queen's Prison Law Clinic (QPLC), helping inmates incarcerated at the local correctional institutions. His work involves administrative law, small claims, parole hearings and quasi-criminal law at disciplinary

Build on 'best school Queen's Law Clinics



Justin Turner, Jane Mundy and Rachel Law, all Law'18, are completing their articles at the Queen's Law Clinics, where they are continuing to learn from "exceptional role models" as they "help bridge the access to justice gap."

NICOLE CLARKE

court. What he likes best about his new job is "working directly with the clients, advocating and advancing their legal interests under unique circumstances.

"Queen's Law Clinics really give you a chance to experience law beyond an academic setting," he says, noting how the experiential work builds upon the academic foundation laid through law courses. "It is very satisfying work as you get the opportunity to make a real difference in a person's life and the work really does matter. I feel that doing my articles at QLC will give me great experience from which to launch my legal career."

That's a sentiment all three QLC articling students share.

"I've had such a great experience with the Queen's Law Clinics and I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to continue learning and improving as an articling student," says Mundy. "And, as a Kingstonian, it is a privilege to be a part of providing necessary legal services to members of this community."

— LISA GRAHAM

Nervous, excited': Queen's Legal Aid Director appointed to Nunavut Court of Justice



Susan Charlesworth, Law'81, in 2015 in Nunavut. "My job at Queen's Legal Aid has really prepared me for this role," she says.

"A bit nervous, a bit overwhelmed, but mostly happy and excited": two years after returning from Nunavut, Queen's Legal Aid Director Susan Charlesworth, Law'81, is making a return ... as a federal justice.

Charlesworth – Justice Charlesworth – was appointed to the bench on June 21 – alongside fellow Queen's Law graduate Christian Lyons, Law'02. It's a role that her time at Queen's Legal Aid has made her distinctly well suited for, thanks to Nunavut's distinctive court structure. "Unlike most jurisdictions in Canada, in Nunavut there is only one level of court: the Nunavut Court of Justice," she explained.

"Judges do everything normally divided into two or more courts. In Nunavut, the one court – and

its justices – do everything! I will be looking at cases ranging from theft with a guilty plea to murder requiring a jury trial, from family law and estates to constitutional issues."

This breadth of scope – and judgment – is something that years of work supervising law students at Queen's Legal Aid has prepared Charlesworth for. "I love criminal law, but my job here has really prepared me for this role," she said the next morning. "As the Director of Queen's Legal Aid, I work with law students on files ranging from landlord-tenant issues to small claims court, traffic matters – an entire gamut of issues that will have relevance. This ability to accumulate a wide variety of experience and expertise while working with students and the public in a pro bono context will definitely be a benefit."

The call to the bench came not entirely unexpectedly – "I got a call earlier in June about CSIS security clearance, which gave me an inkling," Charlesworth laughs – but was still in some ways abrupt. "I got the call at 3:30 on June 21," she says. "They told me I was a judge – the order had been signed that morning. That's how it happens. They don't ask 'are you sure?'"

The announcement left Charlesworth happy, stepping back from her role ("As an appointed judge, I can't provide legal advice, so wrapping up at Queen's Legal Aid is a challenge") and looking forward to the next stage of a journey that began in 2013 with a first trip to the north – and now, almost five years later, returning to help shape its judicial future.

LAO funding furthers Queen's Law Clinics commitment to family law services

For the [Queen's Law Clinics](#) in downtown Kingston, early April brought more than showers – the first breaths of spring were accompanied by welcome news from Legal Aid Ontario (LAO).

As part of a province-wide investment from LAO to expand clinic law services for low-income Ontarians, the Queen's Law Clinics will receive an annual allocation of \$100,000 – in addition to existing LAO funding and faculty support – to maintain family law services.

As explained by the Clinics' Executive Director, Karla McGrath, the timing of the funding couldn't be better for its new and innovative Family Law Clinic. "In 2014, with funds provided by Legal Aid Ontario, Queen's was able to expand its experiential learning and local services with the addition of the Queen's Family Law Clinic," she says.

"Following the expiration of the three-year Family Law funding package in 2017, the Queen's Faculty of Law continued the operation of the QFLC while seeking long-term funding options. Although there had been no reduction in service to date, we were projecting a reduction in those services if new funding was not secured."

The new funding package from LAO means local residents with low incomes can continue to rely on the Family Law Clinic to help them with the complex paperwork and other tasks that are associated with self-representation at family court. Areas that the Family Law Clinic assist with include custody, access, child support, enforcement of support and divorce. "With this proposed \$100,000 increase in core funding, we will be in a position to continue

to provide family law services at current levels and will do so without interruption," McGrath says.

The dual role of the Clinics – both as a place for Queen's Law students to build skills and learn the value of pro bono work, and a source of much-needed legal aid for local residents with low incomes – will be well served by the LAO funding, McGrath says. "We are proud of and grateful for our excellent working relationship

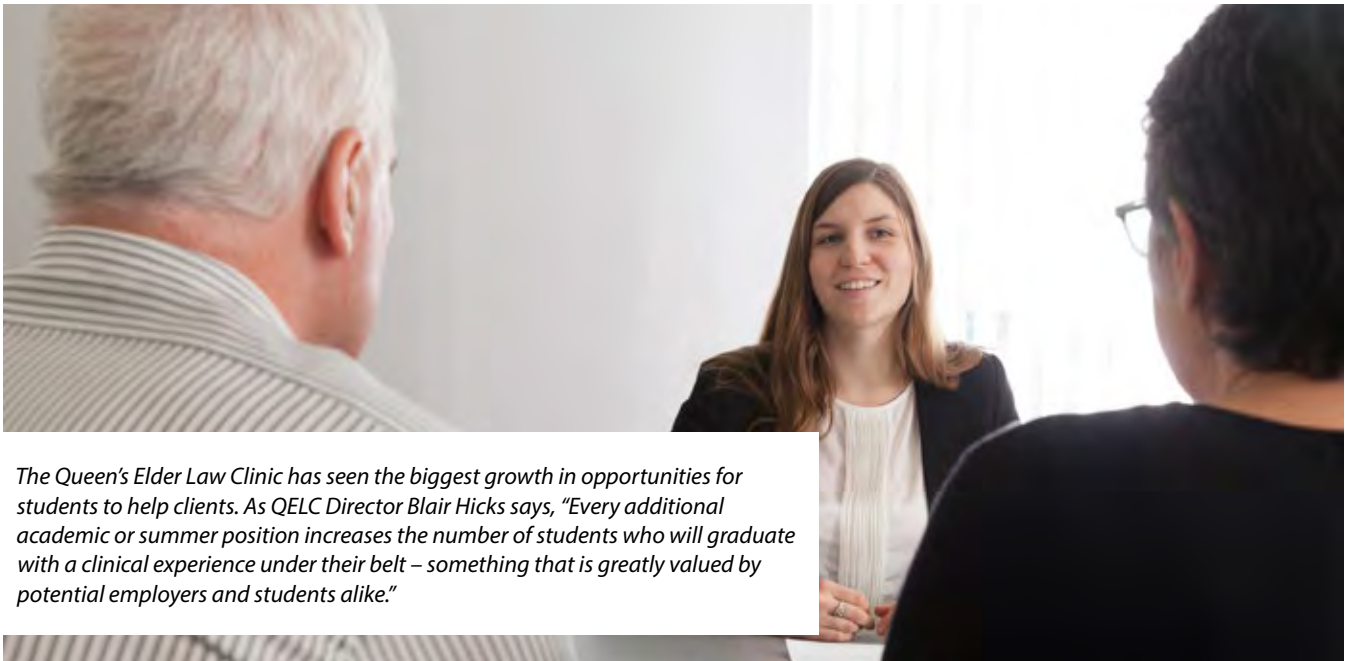


The Queen's Family Law Clinic assists self-representing Family Court litigants by completing their documents, helping them negotiate the Family Court process and referring them to other family justice resources.

with Legal Aid Ontario and we look forward to continuing to work together to provide training for our law students in a public service model and quality legal services for vulnerable members of the Kingston community."

The Queen's Law Clinics includes the Business Law Clinic, the Elder Law Clinic, the Family Law Clinic, the Prison Law Clinic and Queen's Legal Aid. Each year the clinics provide 218 volunteer, credit and summer student caseworker positions to first-, second- and third-year law students. Working under the close supervision of clinic lawyers, the students provide clients in Kingston and the surrounding area with legal assistance in business, elder, family, poverty and prison law matters.

Queen's Law Clinics keep students and the King



GREG BLACK

The Queen's Elder Law Clinic has seen the biggest growth in opportunities for students to help clients. As QELC Director Blair Hicks says, "Every additional academic or summer position increases the number of students who will graduate with a clinical experience under their belt – something that is greatly valued by potential employers and students alike."

Clinics now offer Queen's Law students 218 experiential learning opportunities each year. The growth means there are 46 per cent more credit, volunteering, summer and articling opportunities than there were in 2014.

Five clinics provide legal services in business law, family law, elder law, poverty law and prison law. Student caseworkers and volunteers work under the supervision of the directors and review counsel to meet the needs of clients who would otherwise have difficulty affording legal advice.

Since 2015, the clinics have operated out of the same building in downtown Kingston and Karla McGrath has served as Executive Director since 2017. "Like all good roommates, we do our own thing but we also find ways to share resources, realize efficiencies and explore what each other has to offer," said McGrath, who is also the Director of the Family Law Clinic.

The biggest growth has been in the Queen's Elder Law Clinic, the first clinic of its kind in Canada. The clinic,

formed in 2010, had eight credit students in 2014; this fall, 16 student caseworkers mentored by three student leaders will help seniors in southeastern Ontario with a variety of issues related to aging, including files like elder discrimination, abuse and neglect, and skills which apply to other areas of the law including planning wills and powers of attorney.

"The aging demographic is no secret. For the first time ever, Canada's senior population is larger than the number of children in this country, so all services for seniors are in high demand," explains Blair Hicks, the Director of the QELC. "Past student caseworkers have been diligent and creative in finding ways to alert the community to our service. Those efforts, and word-of-mouth from satisfied clients has meant that the number of applicants continues to rise each year."

Hicks says that the expansion of QELC will mean an even greater opportunity for Queen's Law students to have an impact in the community. "With additional student caseworkers, QELC can now serve more low-income clients in a shorter time."

Keep growing, benefiting Kingston community

Hicks, a Kingston estate planning practitioner, began as a part-time review counsel before becoming the clinic's director on a part-time basis in April 2017. As part of the clinic's expansion, her position is now full-time.

The Queen's Family Law Clinic opened with eight caseworkers and in 2018-19, Violet Levin, Law'20, will be one of 12 QFLC student caseworkers. Since June 2016, QFLC students have helped 245 people to navigate the family justice system including completing more than 750 court forms relating to divorce, support, custody and access.

Levin believes that "the best way to learn is to actually apply yourself in the field and experience itself is not something you can learn out of a textbook."

Hicks agrees. "For the law school student body as a whole, every additional academic or summer position increases the number of students who will graduate with a clinical experience under their belt – something that is greatly valued by potential employers and students alike."

The Queen's Business Law Clinic has continued to expand each year. Over the past four years, the number of student positions has more than doubled. Clinic

Director, Morgan Jarvis, Law'10, cites student demand, that couldn't have been met without generous alumni support, for the growth.

This fall, four second- and third-year students at the Prison Law Clinic will pilot a new advanced clinical course. The QPLC is unique to Queen's, enabling students to assist prisoners in one of seven institutions in the Kingston area.

"This new course will provide an opportunity to develop advanced advocacy and litigation skills through intensive involvement in the test-case litigation practice carried on by the Prison Law Clinic and by having carriage of more complex prison law files," explains Kathy Ferreira, Law'01, the clinic director.

Queen's Legal Aid, the longest-running clinic, continues to offer the most student positions: 100 in total.

Queen's Law Clinics can expand because of continuing support from Legal Aid Ontario, the Law Foundation of Ontario, Pro Bono Students Canada, the class of Law'81 Clinical Programs Fund, the United Way, and alumni and industry sponsors. — ALEXANDER MCPHERSON

Clinic	Credit students	Volunteers	Summer students	Clinic mentors/group leaders	Other
Business Law (QBLC)	24	5	3	5	0.5 articling student
Elder Law (QELC)	16	0	2	3	0
Family Law (QFLC)	12	6	2	6	1 summer intern; 0.5 articling student
Legal Aid (QLA)	24	55	10	10	1 articling student
Prison Law (QPLC)	18	1	4	4	4 in Advanced QPLC program; 1 articling student

Clinic Briefs

Queen's Business Law Clinic

The QBLC ended the academic year on a high note, serving its 800th client since 2009. With the clinic up from 20 to 24 student caseworkers in the fall and up from two to three caseworkers this summer, it's on track to serve 1,000 clients by its 10th anniversary. With 60 files each, the summer students have hit the ground running, especially keen to support the exciting start-ups coming out of the Queen's Innovation Centre Summer Initiative, along with Aaron Bains, Law'14, of Aird & Berlis LLP.



Queen's Elder Law Clinic

The QELC is excited to announce a substantial increase in student enrolment for the 2018-19 academic year. This September the clinic will welcome 16 new student caseworkers, doubling the former class size (of eight) to address the consistent student demand for this program, and the equally consistent need in the community. Former QELC volunteer Michelle Kang, Law'19, takes on the summer 2018 caseworker position. She has a demanding role: management of all clinic files, community outreach, and most importantly preventing any gaps in service over the summer months.

Queen's Family Law Clinic

In the 2017-18 academic year, 12 students were enrolled in the QFLC credit program and six volunteered at the QFLC through the PBSC Family Law Project. They all had the benefit of working with one articling student and five returning QFLC student caseworkers who served as clinic mentors. This summer, the QFLC has an articling student, two caseworkers and two volunteers. Since June 2016, QFLC students have assisted 245 people to navigate the family justice system, including completing more than 750 court forms relating to divorce, support, custody and access.

Queen's Legal Aid

QLA staff have been working steadily to get ready for the impending retirement of Sandy Tallen, who has worked at the clinic since 1996 and is a "veritable treasure trove of knowledge" about QLA's administrative processes and former students. Previously, Sandy worked at the Faculty of Law, and in total she has 31 years with Queen's Law. "As our Administrator, Sandy has kept track of our students, clients, deadlines, court appearances and finances (not to mention the review counsel!). We will miss her, but wish her well in her retirement!" These are the words of then-QLA Director Sue Charlesworth, Law'81, who was appointed to the Nunavut Court of Justice on June 21 ([see pg. 46](#)).

Queen's Prison Law Clinic

The QPLC Director appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women in February in view of its study on Indigenous women in the federal justice and correctional systems to provide recommendations on improving Indigenous women's experience. Currently, the clinic, in collaboration with faculty and experienced members of the private bar, is pursuing leave for the clinic to intervene at the Supreme Court of Canada in *Chinna v. Canada*. The case deals with the scope of habeas corpus jurisdiction – a vitally important issue for QPLC clients.



Queen's Law Clinics

Business • Elder • Prison • Family • Legal Aid

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The Queen's Law Clinics gratefully acknowledge the support of Legal Aid Ontario, the Law Foundation of Ontario, Pro Bono Students Canada, the class of Law'81, the United Way, and alumni and industry sponsors.

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