



# Queen's Law Clinics



Celebrating five years in  
downtown Kingston!

February 2020



*Richard Bogoroch is the founder and Managing Partner of Bogoroch & Associates LLP, a Toronto law firm that has donated \$200,000 to Queen's Legal Aid. By working with the pro bono clinic, a prime experiential learning opportunity, students acquire valuable practice skills as they serve the most vulnerable citizens in the greater Kingston area.*

# Prominent law firm's major gift supports Queen's Legal Aid at critical time

Bogoroch & Associates LLP has donated \$200,000 to Queen's Legal Aid (QLA), providing much-needed support to assist the highly sought-after clinic maintain its current level of service. By working with QLA, a prime experiential learning opportunity, students acquire valuable practice skills as they serve the most vulnerable citizens in the greater Kingston area.

Each year, QLA provides free legal assistance to approximately 900 clients and makes appropriate referrals for over 1,400 individuals.

"Queen's Legal Aid, along with our other Queen's Law Clinics, is central to our sense of what legal education is all about and to serving the community," says Dean Mark Walters, Law'89. "This generous donation from Bogoroch & Associates LLP will support the great success of our clinical legal education program to the benefit of our students as well as vulnerable members of the Kingston community."

"I am grateful to have the opportunity to make this gift, especially at a time when recent cutbacks to legal aid have left the clinic with a funding shortfall," says Richard Bogoroch, founder and Managing Partner of Bogoroch & Associates LLP. "This gift exemplifies our abiding interest in legal education and access to justice."

"Lack of access to justice is not an abstraction, it is reality for so many people who cannot afford a lawyer," he continues. "By this gift, those in need of assistance will obtain it and Queen's Law students will learn valuable skills; skills that should serve them well as they embark on their legal careers."

Karla McGrath, LLM'13, Executive Director of the Queen's Law Clinics, certainly knows how clinical education shapes a student's career. "Students working in Queen's Legal Aid – and in our other clinics in business, elder, family and prison law – are placed in a dynamic work environment, under the close supervision of clinic review counsel," she says. "The environment and stakes are real: clinic directors and review counsel pride themselves on not only giving the

students an education in law, but a genuine sense of what it means to be a legal professional and to litigate."

"We've heard a great deal of positive feedback from law firms about the benefits of recruiting students with clinical experience," says Blair Crew, Director of Queen's Legal Aid, which is the largest of five Queen's Law Clinics operating in downtown Kingston. "Each year, QLA offers experiential learning opportunities – on a volunteer, for-credit and paid summer employment basis – to more than 80 students who meet demanding standards and compete for the coveted positions."

QLA students provide a wide range of pro bono legal services to low-income residents of Kingston, Napanee and surrounding areas, and to Queen's University students. These are critical services that Bogoroch & Associates LLP wanted to support.

"Legal education is of paramount importance because a strong and vigorous bar is an essential component of a healthy and vibrant democracy," says Bogoroch. "Where there's no access to justice, there's increasing inequality and despair. This is not healthy for the functioning of our society. For that reason, our firm felt it important to make this gift so that Queen's Legal Aid could continue training future lawyers, lawyers we're confident will make a significant contribution to society."

Bogoroch & Associates LLP, a Toronto-based law firm, represents injured individuals and their families in all aspects of personal injury and medical malpractice litigation. In 2019, *Canadian Lawyer* magazine selected Bogoroch & Associates LLP as one of the Top 10 personal injury boutique law firms in Canada. Richard Bogoroch, a certified specialist in civil litigation by the Law Society of Ontario, is recognized as a leading personal injury lawyer by the *Canadian Legal Expert Directory* and *Best Lawyers in Canada*.

"I am very proud to be associated with Queen's Law, long known as one of Canada's premier law schools," says Bogoroch.

# Queen's Law Clinics continue to thrive at five

BY LISA GRAHAM

Expand experiential learning opportunities for students. Improve services to clients. Generate synergies through collaboration. These three goals were the driving force behind Queen's Law converging its five clinics – including a brand new one in family law – in one central location back in January 2015. This month marks the fifth anniversary of the [Queen's Law Clinics](#) in downtown Kingston, and there are many reasons to celebrate.

Today, there are more than 200 students (a 50 per cent increase) and nine full-time lawyers who work in a professional office that takes up the top floor of the LaSalle Mews, a prominent downtown office building. By sharing resources for a half-decade now, the clinics serve a greater number of clients and do it better. Students have regular and easy access to each other – as do their supervising lawyers – so they share ideas, help one another problem-solve and assist clients with issues involving more than one clinic.

“With this move, we went from being five smaller, individual operations that were mainly located in the Queen's Law building to being one of the largest and busiest law offices in Kingston,” says Karla McGrath, LLM'13, Executive Director of the Queen's Law Clinics. “The value of bringing the five clinics together here is truly beyond measure.”

Each clinic, through its directors, students and alumni, has its own story to tell. ▶

*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 of KFL&A, and alumni and industry sponsors.*



# Preparing students to be confident and capable family lawyers

In the summer of 2014, Karla McGrath, an LLM'13 grad and a 15-year Kingston-based family law practitioner, returned to Queen's Law to develop and lead its new Family Law Clinic. She had her work cut out for her. "We had a handful of intrepid students with lots of great ideas, but for the first couple of months we were borrowing available space on campus and, for the most part, working out of my black wheelie briefcase," she recalls.

When the new office space was still under construction but "habitable" in mid-November 2014, she and her team of student caseworkers became the first to move into the Lasalle Mews. "Our only source of Internet was my cell phone, but we made it work," she says.

Once the renovations were completed, and the lawyers, staff and students of the other four clinics moved into the office in January 2015, "the true impact of the co-location effort became apparent," she says. "We had a modern and efficient professional legal operation that clearly expressed to the clients and to the students something that the lawyers already knew – that they we are here to do important work and we are here to do it well."

Brittany Chaput, Law'15, a member of the initial cadre of QFLC student caseworkers, remembers "feeling excited and a sense of relief" because of the huge demand for services and limited resources. "We were really able to expand the number of clients that we could assist and the level of services that we were able to provide to our clients with the move to downtown Kingston. Having that access to resources was so important to serving the Kingston community."

Now the Supervisory Duty Counsel at Legal Aid Ontario in North Bay, Chaput assists unrepresented individuals with family law issues and manages a panel of per diem duty counsel who assist clients in court and at Family Law Information Centres. She credits the QFLC for providing her with "invaluable hands-on experience" to kickstart her career.

"Karla guided me in every step of the family law process from the initial client interview, to preparation

of the retainer agreement, to the drafting of court materials, guiding the client with serving and filing materials, and all the other steps in between (including, and arguably most importantly, managing the client's expectations)," she says. "I have become a confident and capable family lawyer as a direct result of my experience at the QFLC, which has also prepared me specifically for the unique challenges that are associated with being a full-time family law duty counsel."

Working alongside QFLC Director McGrath is what Chaput considers the highlight of her experience. "Karla is one of the most proficient, knowledgeable and client-focused family lawyers that I have met," says Chaput. "Every day, I continue to draw on my experiences from working with her. Being able to assist a client through what may be one of the most challenging experiences in his or her life was very rewarding as a QFLC student caseworker and it still is as a family law professional."

Over the past five years, the QFLC has increased the number of caseworker positions for which students earn academic credit from 8 to 12, developed a volunteer program and established an important year-round presence within the family justice community. Some students who have already participated in the clinic programs are invited back to mentor incoming students thereby giving the incoming students additional resources and the returning students the opportunity to engage the work in a new capacity. A manual started by 2014-15 students and contributed to by credit and summer students that have followed, has become "a valuable and growing resource," says McGrath. "Each year's students leave behind some of the knowledge they have learned for the benefit of the students who come after them."

QFLC students make public legal education presentations throughout the community, including at conferences and through Legal Aid Ontario's online continuing legal education programs for lawyers. "All this and more happened and continues to happen while we have worked on nearly 1,000 matters serving clients who otherwise would have limited or no access to legal assistance and therefore would be denied access to family



Karla McGrath, LLM'13, Queen's Family Law Clinic Director and Queen's Law Clinics Executive Director, reviews a case file with student caseworkers in one of four interview rooms in the downtown Queen's Law Clinics. "We have a modern and efficient professional legal operation that clearly expresses to clients and students that we are here to do important work and we are here to do it well," she says.

justice," says McGrath. "It's really quite breathtaking."

Richard Glennie, Law'19, is among the most recent Queen's Law grads who've participated in the QFLC. This year he is articling with Martha McCarthy & Company LLP, a family litigation firm in Toronto. "The QFLC prepared me in every way for my articling position," he says. "From drafting pleadings and initiating process to client management, Karla and Linda (Smith, Law'92, a 20-plus year Kingston lawyer who joined the Clinics as Review Counsel for both the QFLC and Queen's Legal Aid in 2017) gave me the tools that have allowed me to excel."

It was the client interaction at the QFLC that he says taught him how to support people during their incredibly difficult times. "Karla and Linda taught me that being a good family lawyer does not mean divorcing yourself from emotion. The empathy that they imparted has been something that I've carried with me."

Current QFLC caseworker Courtney Edwards, Law'21, finds the practice skills she is developing will put her in good stead for her future legal career. She regularly corresponds with clients, lawyers and

government agencies, which hones her writing skills. Working directly with her clients is another experience she appreciates for teaching her "the skills necessary for working with people and advocating for marginalized and disadvantaged individuals." And that's not all.

"Working in a clinic provides students with hands-on experience navigating the court system," she says. "That will be immensely helpful as I join the workforce. I already feel comfortable going to court for my client, and I understand the family law system outside a purely academic perspective."

Seeing the impact that the QFLC's work has on Kingston community members is what Edwards finds most rewarding so far. "Our clients are economically disadvantaged and often vulnerable individuals, so being able to help them is an amazing feeling," she says, noting a client she has worked with since she was a volunteer in first year. The client, who has cognitive impairments and struggles with communication, recently wrote her a poem to thank her for the work she had done for him. "To see that level of appreciation has been the best part of law school thus far for me."

# Practical experience for law students grows with elderly population

As the number of people becoming senior citizens and living longer increases rapidly, so does the need for free legal services for those who would otherwise be unable to afford a lawyer. That's a gap Queen's Elder Law Clinic (QELC) students are filling – and they're honing lots of practical skills along the way.

"The biggest challenge has been keeping up with the demand, both from the community and from the students wanting a turn at this experience," says Blair Hicks, QELC Director, who joined the clinic in 2016. By doubling the number of student caseworkers to 16 in September 2018, "we've addressed the student demand to some extent. But there's still lots more work to go around."

In addition to providing seniors with such legal services as drafting wills, powers of attorney, court applications and helping with elder abuse issues,

QELC students present public legal education seminars to community and professional groups on issues related to aging. The QELC opened 272 new files in 2019, over five times the 55 new files opened in 2015.

The QELC's co-location to downtown Kingston with the four other Queen's Law Clinics five years ago certainly helped both the students and the clients they serve. Prior to the move, eight students worked in the basement of Queen's Law building in one and a half rooms with a couple of desks and phones.

One of those students was Robert Maratta, Law'15. "I recall the excitement we all felt to have our own space established," he says. "After moving into one consolidated space, it finally felt like we were a law firm rather than separate groups of student organizations."

Highlights from his time at the QELC involve experiencing several firsts – like drafting his first will

– under the guidance and supervision of clinic lawyers. "It was then I first experienced the process of learning my clients' goals and objectives and establishing them as a legal reality."

Maratta, now a lawyer and trademark agent with Cunningham, Swan, Carty, Little & Bonham LLP in Kingston, notes how essential law school courses are for students to develop an understanding of legal principles and for learning problem-solving skills. "However," he adds, "experience applying those skills is crucial to becoming an effective lawyer and establishing a successful practice. The Queen's Law Clinics gave me my first experience building client relationships and working towards solving real world legal issues. I consider my time at the clinics as foundational to my ongoing practice as a solicitor."

These days, Hicks says, "students manage between six and 10 client files at any one time, and our community partners – federal institutions, and the Cobourg and Belleville Community Legal Aid Clinics – each carry ongoing waitlists for our services."

Current caseworker Tearney Johnston-Jones, Law'20, has travelled to those satellite offices several times. "No matter which of these clinics a client has sought our services from, being able to give someone the peace of mind in knowing that their affairs are in order and that our legal services will be there to support them in the future has been the most rewarding part of this position," she says.

Nurturing positive relationships with clients is a soft skill she has developed. "My QELC experience has taught me to understand the responsibilities that lawyers have to their clients as two-fold: to assist clients with navigating the legal environment in ways that best suit their needs and to respect the personal nature of the issues clients are faced with when estate planning."

Johnston-Jones, who will be articling with Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP in Toronto, credits the QELC with broadening her perspective on essential



As part of the Queen's Elder Law Clinic's legal education initiative and to reinforce community partnerships, caseworkers Alexander McPherson and Tearney Johnston-Jones, both Law'20, presented to the Knightsbridge Retirement Community on January 13.



A Kingston-area senior receives free legal advice from Queen's Elder Law Clinic student caseworkers in the downtown Queen's Law Clinics office. Students gain practical experience in serving and interacting with clients, as well as a chance to develop their own style of practice before articling.

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interpersonal skills to be successful in legal practice. "The casework students are exposed to provides us the opportunity to gain practical experience with client interaction, as well as a chance to develop our own unique styles of practice well before articling." Case management, client rapport and professionalism are other skills she says have given her a more comprehensive understanding of what it means to practice law.

What has been the best part of Johnston-Jones' QELC experience so far? "The highlight," she responds, "has been receiving feedback from clients on the positive impact we have had on their lives by providing them with legal services they may not have otherwise received."

# Business law students provide 'top-notch' legal services

Contributing to the economic growth and the social well-being of your community while in law school may seem an ambitious goal. But it's a reality for student caseworkers in the Queen's Business Law Clinic (QBLC) who help southeastern Ontario entrepreneurs, small businesses, charities, social enterprises and not-for-profit organizations with their legal issues.

"I am impressed with the enthusiasm, diligence, professionalism and commitment displayed by the student caseworkers in their interactions with clinic clients," says QBLC Director Tomi Adebisi, who joined the clinic in January 2019. "Over the past year, I have received appreciative emails from clients who have been recipients of the top-notch legal services rendered by the student caseworkers.

"It has become clear to me that the QBLC student caseworkers come into the clinic with a burning desire to learn as much as they can about business law practice while rendering a valuable service to the Kingston business community," she adds.

As in each of the previous two years, 24 QBLC students are gaining hands-on experience working on a caseload of about 150 files for clients who would otherwise have difficulty affording legal counsel.

Five years ago, before co-locating with the other four Queen's Law Clinics in downtown Kingston, there were only 16 students working in a small space in the law school.

Brody Appotive, Law'17, was one of those students. "The move to the downtown office shifted the clinic towards having a true law firm vibe," he recalls. "No longer were we all cramped into one basement office, but we now had a reception area, client offices, boardrooms, a coffee machine... it was great! Walking into the downtown clinic every day gave us a real perspective on how our careers would look and working in that type of environment motivated us to be professional, to take our work seriously, and to deliver exceptional service to our clients."

At the time, Christian Hurley had just taken over as Director of both the QBLC and Queen's Elder Law Clinics. "To me, the office at 303 Bagot Street was a

physical manifestation of Queen's Law's commitment to experiential learning," says Hurley, who went on to become the Director of Legal Education with the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador. "The new office was something that both staff and students could be very proud of and enhanced our ability to provide a high-quality educational experience to students and top-level legal services to the clinics' clients."

It's Hurley and Review Counsel Bob Milnes, Law'69, who Appotive credits for playing large mentorship roles. "They encouraged me to take on more challenging assignments while serving as a back-bone if I came across any difficulties or needed a second opinion," says Appotive, now an associate with Torys in Toronto.

"The clinic exposed me to the foundational aspects of corporate law – incorporation and corporate governance, legal drafting, and file management – skills I still use today in the early days of my 'real' legal career," he says.

His QBLC highlight was working with the Land O'Lakes Rescue Animal Petting Farm, a non-profit in Cloyne, Ontario, seeking to provide permanent homes and rehabilitation for animals and to teach children about them. "Our mandate was to obtain charitable status for the farm as it faced trying financial times," he recalls. "The story caught on and my work with the farm was featured in an article in the Ottawa Citizen."

Appotive was also impressed by many of the student entrepreneurs who received assistance by the QBLC as they tried to launch their new business ideas. "Some companies we incorporated and got off the ground are still in operations today," he says.

Under the leadership of Morgan Jarvis, Law'10, QBLC Director, 2017-2019, the clinic became more involved with intellectual property issues and serving innovators.

By working on files involving such issues as trademarks, copyright and privacy, Serin Cho, Law'19, says, "the QBLC helped me realize that I enjoy researching cutting-edge regulatory law, which played a large factor in my decision to article with the Department of Justice."



Queen's Business Law Clinic students interview a client at the Queen's Law Clinics in downtown Kingston, where they help entrepreneurs, small businesses, charities, social enterprises and not-for-profit organizations with their legal issues.

She also credits the QBLC for teaching essential intangible skills outside of the classroom. "The QBLC introduces caseworkers to the importance of professional responsibility; maintaining a high ethical standard in all client communications and interactions. Since caseworkers manage several clients and files at once, we were encouraged to take initiative and be independent. We also learned to recognize when to ask for help and to reciprocate when someone else needs it. The QBLC's collaborative atmosphere teaches students to be team players."

For Cho, the best part of working with the clinic was the unique opportunity to work on business law files in the name of public interest. "As a pro bono clinic, you help not-for-profits and small businesses take their first steps," she says. "Many QBLC clients are passionate about improving the local community. It's rewarding to see their various projects grow, knowing that the QBLC was a part of their success."

Current caseworker Mary Alfredsson, Law'21,

appreciates how learning the business of law will be helpful in her future career. "This experience has given me a head start on climbing the steep learning curve that I will face when I begin to work in a law firm," she says. "I have been practising managing client relationships, dealing with a task when I am unfamiliar with the area of law, docketing my time and keeping client file notes up to date, balancing and prioritizing my clients, and more. I still have so much to learn, but the clinic has been extremely helpful in allowing me to start learning before I even set foot in a law firm."

What does Alfredsson find most rewarding about the QBLC experience? "I find it fulfilling to go through the whole process of learning what your client needs help with, researching that and putting it into legal terms, creating a review-counsel-approved document – whether a memo or the actual final agreement – and finally sending out a finished product that is going to help my client."

# Students help resolve inmates' challenges in prison system

"My Queen's Prison Law Clinic experience exposed me to the wide variety of daily struggles of people living in custody," says Michelle Soucy, Law'19. "After working 'on the ground' for incarcerated clients, I was motivated to pursue larger-scale advocacy and policy reform. It also affirmed for me the importance of public interest law and supporting the work that needs to be done to build a more humane and effective criminal justice system."

Now articling with the John Howard Society of Canada, Soucy is off to a good start to meet her career goals. It all began in law school, where she worked in a clinical program that is a first in Canada. At the Queen's Prison Law Clinic (QPLC), students work under the supervision of lawyers to provide legal advice, assistance and representation in matters relating to prison and parole in Kingston-area penitentiaries and Warkworth Institution.

With the QPLC, Soucy has been one of 18 student caseworkers earning academic credit, one of four paid summer caseworkers, and in 2018-19, one of the first cohort of four students receiving degree credits under Advanced Prison Law, managing complex files and being involved in the clinic's test-case litigation practice.

Soucy, along with all other QPLC students over the past five years, has also enjoyed all the benefits of working alongside students and lawyers in the other four Queen's Law Clinics. Prior to the co-location of all five Queen's Law Clinics to the top floor of the LaSalle Mews building in downtown Kingston in January 2015, the QPLC operated in its own small satellite space.

At the time, current QPLC Director Kathy Ferreira, Law'01, was one of two staff lawyers working with then-Director Elizabeth Thomas. Recalling the new office as "fresh, modern and inviting," Ferreira

appreciated how their QPLC offices remained close together but gave them the opportunity to engage with the other Queen's Law Clinics.

"The proximity encouraged dialogue with colleagues, between students across clinics, and it also fostered legal assistance for QPLC clients in other need areas like wills thanks to the Elder Law Clinic, support advice thanks to the Family Law Clinic and small claims court matters thanks to Queen's Legal Aid," says Ferreira. "The QPLC is a not-for-profit corporation, so the Business Law Clinic has been incredibly helpful in assisting us with Board of Directors matters."

What other major changes has the QPLC seen over the past five years?

"We have been actively engaged in litigation since 2016 to safeguard the rights of our clients, with one of our three lawyers, Paul Quick (Law'09), dedicated to this important work," says Ferreira. "This piece is an essential complement to our tribunal advocacy."

Two much-needed staff positions have been added: an articling student, starting in 2016 with Nancy Brar, Law'16, who is now a staff lawyer; and part-time Indigenous Justice Co-ordinator Rick Sauve, hired in 2019 to work with the clinic's over-represented Indigenous clients and many others.

"The QPLC is busier than ever," says Ferreira, "but our staff members work really well together, and we manage to successfully handle the demand."

Megan Dawson, Law'21, is one of this year's caseworkers. "In just a few months, I've learned how to effectively interview clients, conduct legal research, draft submissions, craft persuasive arguments, and facilitate trials in Disciplinary Court," she says. "In addition, by hearing the perspectives of guest speakers, our staff lawyers and our clients, I've learned about the many challenges inmates face within the prison system, as well as ways we can work to resolve these issues."

The highlight of Dawson's QPLC experience so far has been assisting a client at his parole hearing. "I was able to witness firsthand our client's progression

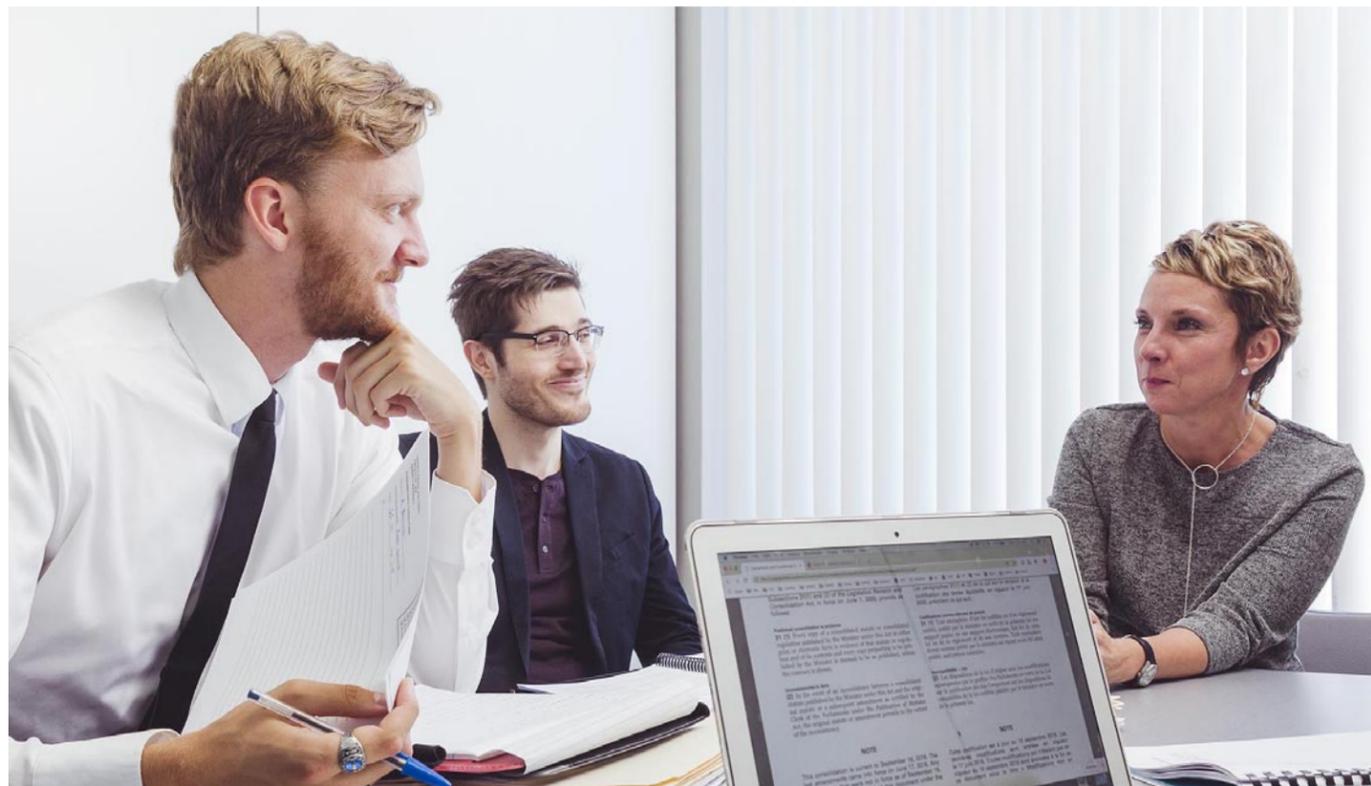
throughout our preparation and finally see his hard work pay off when he was granted parole," she says. "Not only was I able to gain experience advocating before the Parole Board of Canada, I also came to understand just how vital organizations such as the QPLC are in assisting inmates successfully regain their liberty and re-enter society."

Everything QPLC students learn – from managing the solicitor/client relationship to representing clients at hearings while juggling competing commitments – will help graduates become successful lawyers, Dawson says. It can instill a strong sense of professional responsibility, as well. "My experience working with a vulnerable population has shaped how I will practise law in the future; no matter what area of law I work in, I will always strive to promote access to justice."

Former caseworker Anastasia Toma, Law'17, now an associate with Nathens, Siegel LLP in Mississauga, Ontario, considers the QPLC her most enriching Queen's Law experience. "The QPLC prepared me for my legal career by exposing me to real clients with pressing legal issues," she says. "I learned how to interview clients, spot issues and ask the right questions to get the information needed to assist them. All clients come with complex narratives and learning how to extract that narrative is a key legal skill that I learned."

Toma's QPLC highlight was helping clients obtain parole and release, allowing them a fresh start at life. "One of my first clients was the same age as me at the time," she recalls. "Being able to assist him was very gratifying."

Soucy felt the same way about serving clients. "As a caseworker, you get invested in doing the best you can possibly do – not for a grade or for a professor's recognition – but because your work matters to the life of someone who is depending on you to do a good job," she says. "Working with the QPLC made me reflect on the privileges associated with going to law school and getting the skills that have put me in a position where I can help someone. It's a rewarding and humbling experience."



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Through our Queen's Prison Law Clinic, Director Kathy Ferreira, Law'01, and student caseworkers help ensure prisoners are treated fairly while serving their sentences, working with the most vulnerable inmates through disciplinary and Parole Board hearings.

# Confidence, drive and teamwork get legal aid students noticed by clients – and employers

“Working as a lawyer is just as much about law as it is dealing with people, from managing clients and their expectations to negotiating with opposing parties,” says Mike Adamek, Law’17. “Handling my own client files at Queen’s Legal Aid (QLA) gave me the confidence to hit the ground running as a practising lawyer.”

Now a lawyer with the Ottawa personal injury firm Badre Law, Adamek spent all three of his law school years helping real clients with real legal problems as he worked in “fantastic tight-knit teams.”

At QLA, he was a student caseworker, a group leader, and the resource and outreach coordinator. Under the supervision of clinic review counsel throughout that time, he and his student colleagues provided a broad range of free legal services to low-income residents of Kingston, Napanee and surrounding areas, and to Queen’s University students.

QLA students represent clients before a wide variety of decision-makers from criminal court to Small Claims Court, and from hearings before the Social Benefits, Social Security and Human Rights Tribunals to the Landlord and Tenant or Criminal Injuries Compensation Boards.

During the first half of his first year, Adamek did his work from the Queen’s Law building. Then, in January 2015, Queen’s Legal Aid co-located with the other four Queen’s Law Clinics to a central location in downtown Kingston.

“The new location bolstered the image of the clinics as a truly professional environment that matched the high-quality service clients were already receiving from staff and caseworkers,” recalls Adamek, who went on to split his articles between QLA and the Queen’s Business Law Clinic.

At the time, long-time Senior Review Counsel Sue Charlesworth, Law’81, was on leave to work in Iqaluit as defence counsel for the Legal Services Board of Nunavut. “When I left in mid-September 2013, QLA was ensconced on the fourth level of the

Queen’s Law building. The Business Law Clinic and the Elder Law Clinic had small rooms in the basement of the law school, and the Correctional Law Project (now Prison Law Clinic) was in an office downtown,” she recalls.

“When I returned in 2015, it was to a huge space on the top floor of the LaSalle Mews building in the heart of downtown Kingston at the corner of Princess and Bagot Streets. Instead of two lawyers for QLA, there were eight clinic supervisors and six staff co-located, because of the addition of the Family Law Clinic.

“There was a whole new energy from the students, staff and even the attractive space itself,” continues Charlesworth, who was appointed to the Nunavut Court of Justice in 2018. “Being able to associate closely with other teacher-lawyers, think about different ways to supervise law students, and work creatively with a new expansive database for client work and supervision made the bumps and grinds of getting used to new co-workers very worthwhile.”

In 2015, the person who would become her successor, Blair Crew, then a review counsel with another law school clinic, first saw the Queen’s Law Clinics office while visiting a former student serving as a QLA Review Counsel. “Far from the image of a student legal aid clinic being in a cramped space in the back of a law school or in a converted old house, I was immediately struck by how much the QLA offices had the design and feel of a mid-sized law firm,” he recalls. “Now that I have come to Queen’s, this image corresponds for me to the kind of work the students do at Queen’s Legal Aid. I feel the QLA space presents a very professional image for clients.”

For Anu Lalith Kumar, Law’19, the greatest advantage of the co-location was being exposed to even more areas of law. “Each clinic caters to a different demographic in the community,” she says. “The co-location of the five clinics ensured students had a minimal level of exposure to some aspect of all the other clinics. Whether this exposure was



Queen’s Legal Aid students, shown discussing a case in 2018 with Review Counsel Jana Mills, Law’92, serve approximately 900 low-income clients annually, developing skills to hit the ground running as lawyers.

through seeing other clinic’s clients in the waiting area, hearing students discuss their visits to a penitentiary or aspects of their files, such exposure is incredibly helpful to law students who are exploring the various types of law and trying to determine what types of legal jobs they wish to pursue.”

Lalith Kumar, who is now articling with the Ombudsman of Ontario, adds that the co-location also opened her eyes to the importance of having and maintaining relationships with peers who practise in different areas. “There would be times a client of one clinic would also have need for the legal services offered by a different clinic, or clinics,” she explains. “Being able to work in an environment where five distinct clinics shared once space taught me the importance and value of maintaining collegial relationships in the legal field and local bar.”

Not surprisingly, the highlight of Lalith Kumar’s QLA experience was the people she collaborated

with extensively. “The opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with review counsel and our fellow caseworkers was invaluable,” she says. “Although we had independent carriage of files, through frequent interaction and consultation on our files, we all had the opportunity to learn from each other’s experiences.

“QLA also provides a fantastic opportunity to get first-hand experience with the local bar in Kingston,” she adds. “Student caseworkers were able to interact with lawyers, justices of the peace and adjudicators on a regular basis to develop working relationships with them and expand our professional network.”

Her Law’19 classmate, Isabella Mira, came to an important realization through working at the clinic: “You don’t have to have all the answers; you just need to have the dedication to your clients and the drive to seek out those answers,” she says. “This makes the day to day practice much less intimidating, ▶



# New clinic director to cultivate business law partnerships

After only 10 months of supervising students who serve start-ups and entrepreneurs, Tomi Adebisi took the helm at the Queen's Business Law Clinic. Born in Lagos, Nigeria, Adebisi practised with one of her home country's leading business law firms for about three years before completing an LLM in corporate/commercial law at McGill. After her 2015 graduation, she worked in different capacities with Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and then joined the QBLC in January 2019.

Promoted from Staff Lawyer to Director of the QBLC, Tomi Adebisi speaks about her interests in business law, clinic experience and her plans for the future.

## What interests you most about business law and in providing legal services to small businesses, non-profit organizations and other QBLC clients?

I have always been intrigued by business law. I was curious to understand the intersection of law and business as a law student and this influenced my decision to pursue a business law practice. I also have a strong background in pro bono service, having worked as a staff member, articling student and volunteer lawyer at a pro bono organization in Saskatchewan. Being able to assist clients who would otherwise be unable to afford legal services has been quite a fulfilling experience for me. For many of our clients, the QBLC provides them with an invaluable opportunity to obtain excellent legal advice thereby avoiding potential mistakes that could cost their business a lot going forward.

## What did you like best about being a staff lawyer with the QBLC?

The best part of my job as a staff lawyer was supervising the student caseworkers. When I resumed last January, the student caseworkers were halfway through their time at the clinic and, at that

stage, were producing substantial work for review. I thoroughly enjoyed reviewing their work and advising the student caseworkers on their client files.

Last summer, I worked closely with the three QBLC summer caseworkers to provide our clients with top-quality and timely legal services. We had a great time working with clients from the Queen's Innovation Centre Summer Initiative (QICSI) Program run by the Dunin-Despande Queen's Innovation Centre (DDQIC). We helped clients incorporate businesses, prepared Shareholders Agreements and advised them on their intellectual property rights. It was satisfying to watch some of our clients as they presented their ideas, and won seed funding, at the Dunin-Deshpande Summer Pitch Competition.

## What surprised you about working with the QBLC?

The enthusiasm and dedication of the student caseworkers, as well as the versatility of files at the clinic, was a pleasant surprise. Working with startup companies and budding entrepreneurs presents a unique opportunity for students to experience hands on some of the issues that they are unlikely to find in bigger companies. It was a pleasure to watch students wear the adviser hat as they transferred the theoretical knowledge learnt at the law school into practical advice for the benefit of their clients.

## What do you like best about your new role as QBLC Director?

In addition to supervising the 24 student caseworkers at the clinic, I instruct the Queen's Business Law Clinic course. Over the summer, I worked with Morgan Jarvis (Law'10), the previous Clinic Director, to develop an intellectually stimulating syllabus for the 2019-20 school year. As part of my supervisory role, I meet with each student caseworker monthly to discuss file work and give feedback to the student

on their file work. I am also working in collaboration with our partners, the Office of Partnerships & Innovation and the DDQIC on various projects, including the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) Ecosystem Fund, which is a \$3.2 million fund provided by FedDev Ontario for Queen's University.

## What are your plans for the Clinic?

The QBLC is known for the provision of exceptional legal services to the Kingston area's growing innovation ecosystem, start-ups, social enterprises, not-for-profits and charitable corporations. I look forward to continuing to build up and enhance this reputation. I also look forward to enhancing the student experience at the QBLC by providing them with hands-on experiential learning opportunities throughout their year at the QBLC. We currently have a strong partnership with the DDQIC and the Office of Partnerships & Innovation and I look forward to renewing, strengthening and cultivating partnerships with other community organizations with similar goals and objectives, particularly groups focused on newcomers in Canada, budding entrepreneurs and innovators in the Kingston area.



Recently promoted QBLC Director Tomi Adebisi, looks forward to enhancing experiential learning opportunities for students and to building relationships with more community organizations that will help budding entrepreneurs and innovators in the Kingston area.



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