



We are Justice



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Myles J. Kirvan



Welcome to *We are Justice*

Welcome to *We are Justice* – a publication that showcases some of the interesting and diverse work of Department of Justice employees.

Our Department has close to 5,000 employees working from coast to coast to coast. They are part of a proud tradition of upholding Canadian values that dates back more than 140 years.

Whether their focus is on policy work, litigation, the provision of legal advice, drafting legislation or delivering programs, communications, or financial, human resource or management support services, Justice employees share a commitment to excellence. Our dedicated, diverse and professional work force plays an integral part in providing a broad spectrum of services that help to ensure Canadians enjoy a fair, accessible, and efficient justice system, now and in the future.

The pride, dedication and excellence that Justice employees bring to their work is truly inspiring. *We are Justice* provides you with an opportunity to find out what working for Canada's Department of Justice is all about.

Deputy Minister

Keith Reimer, Karen Moore and Kyle Friesen



You didn't see them up on the podium, but the Department of Justice Canada 2010 Winter Olympic Games behind-the-scenes teams deserve nothing less than gold.

Besides being one of the largest sports gatherings in the world, the Games also involved the largest peacetime deployment of security and policing operations ever to take place on Canadian land, air and sea – 7,000 police officers and 4,000 Canadian Forces and private security personnel.

With more than 35 federal departments and agencies involved, it was clear that a team of Justice lawyers was needed to respond to legal issues that might arise before, during, and after the Games.

In the event of a crisis during the Olympics, for example, many policing operations would require immediate legal assistance.

In preparation for that possibility, Kyle Friesen, British Columbia Regional Office (BCRO) Acting Senior Counsel in the Public Safety, Defence and Immigration Portfolio, was one of four lawyers located onsite at the Integrated Security Unit Command Centre in south Richmond.

The national Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games Justice Network included 120 lawyers, representing scores of federal departments and agencies involved in the Olympics.

The lawyers worked at the central location responsible for monitoring safety and security at the Olympic Games, where they were ready and able to provide legal advice instantly to the senior RCMP officer in charge, should any incident arise.

“We prepared for all possible threats and risks and the probability of each, from running out of water to an act of terrorism,” says Kyle, who has been for the past six years the legal advisor to the Integrated Security Unit, which has more than 500 personnel from two dozen agencies.

The scope of the colossal challenge was reflected by the number of sites involved – approximately 185 official Olympic venues in and around Vancouver and Whistler, including sports stadiums, ovals and ski hills, athletes' villages, VIP accommodations, free Olympic experience sites, pavilions, celebration tents, and designated protest areas.

The BCRO played a central role in the Department's preparations and participation before and during the Games.

The regional office's 2010 Justice Emergency Team was the office's primary point of contact for all Games-related issues. It also acted as the Department's “eyes on the ground” for the Games, with teams of lawyers, communications and security specialists on call 24/7.

“We had planned for a lot of possibilities and scenarios,” says Keith Reimer, Senior Counsel, Legal Risk Management, who was the BCRO Games coordinator. For example, the region and Headquarters participated in major emergency and security exercises over a period of 18 months prior to the Games.

“Having gone through Exercises Bronze, Silver and Gold and the general preparations leading up to the Games, the work during the Olympics themselves felt organized and totally under control.”

Bronze, Silver and Gold involved thousands of people and hundreds of municipal, provincial, federal, and international organizations, as well as the private sector, transportation, emergency and first responders, utility providers and a host of others. The exercises were designed to help the players prepare for any eventuality, including multiple concurrent worst-case scenarios.

In Ottawa, the Headquarters Justice Emergency Operations Centre – where counsel meet during a crisis to coordinate the input of the various lawyers across the country – also kicked into full gear as the Department's national coordination hub.

A number of other key groups also focused their energies on the Games.

The national Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games Justice Network included 120 lawyers, representing scores of federal departments and agencies involved in the Olympics.

The national Justice Emergency Team was a smaller virtual network of Justice lawyers from every area of the Department that assisted with Olympic public safety and security issues.

“Everything went really well and as expected during the Olympics,” says Karen Moore, Senior Counsel, Canadian Heritage Legal Services, who was the Network Coordinator.

“Exercises Silver and Gold were really great. They simulated a much higher and more intense level of multiple incidents – definitely excellent training and preparation for the real thing.”

“Everybody knew the flow of information – knew that people were in place to respond to emergencies,” says Keith.

“In the end, although we only had to respond to routine matters throughout the Games, it was reassuring to know that, every step of the way, all was in place to respond to any high-level emergency that might come up. I think that, in and of itself, was a very productive part of the whole Olympic experience.”

The Department won't be resting on its laurels now that the Olympic and Paralympic flames have both been extinguished.

The Headquarters emergency team and operations centre are preparing for the two upcoming high-security events: this summer's G8 Summit in Huntsville and the G20 Summit in Toronto.

With the insights, expertise and experience gained from the 2010 Winter Olympics, the Department is confident that it is 2010 Summit-ready.

Bill Basran



He hoped that he could gain a lot of experience quickly and, even though it was still early in his career, perhaps appear in court on his own.

“For a relatively new lawyer, it was a dream come true,” explains Bill. “During my second week at Justice, I was litigating my first case. It was quite an extraordinary opportunity and an experience that stays with me to this day.”

“One of the most interesting things about my work is that, on any given day, an incredibly impressive list of issues comes across my desk – in terms of their complexity and importance to Canadians.”

In 2001, Bill accepted a position in the region’s then-Senior Regional Director’s Office (SRDO), focusing his energies on a completely different side of Justice.

He helped launch the region’s extremely successful university outreach and recruitment program, and was responsible for the coordination and delivery of professional training to legal practitioners and for providing orientation to new counsel.

Of his experience in the SRDO, Bill says, “it gave me the kind of exposure I needed to see at first hand what a career in management would look like.” The 18 months there led not only to an appreciation of the extraordinary range of legal issues in the region, but also to “a better understanding of the organization itself, nationally.”

“I was able to work with colleagues from Headquarters and across the country on national orientation and recruiting objectives. This gave me a real appreciation for regional differences and the challenges involved in Department-wide initiatives.”



In 2002, Bill returned to the Tax Law Section. Six months later, he again jumped at an opportunity to expand his skills and accepted responsibility for supervising and mentoring a group of eight to ten new junior counsel, while still maintaining a full litigation practice.

As busy as it all was, this was one of the best jobs he ever had.

“The experience prepared me for acting, at various times, as the Section’s Director.”

In 2004, Bill became the Director of the Tax Section. Three years later, he was appointed Regional Director General of the nearly 500-employee BCRO, responsible for the delivery of all legal services for the federal Department of Justice in British Columbia.

In the top job, Bill’s work on national committees and initiatives has also expanded. He is the national Employment Equity Champion for Visible Minorities, co-chair of the national Mentoring Program, co-chair of the Department’s Pro Bono Working Group, and co-chair of HR Com, the human resources committee.

“One of the most interesting things about my work is that, on any given day, an incredibly impressive list of issues comes across my desk – in terms of their complexity and importance to Canadians,” says Bill.

“I have the privilege of working with extremely bright, motivated, and principled people who provide legal services on behalf of the Department of Justice and for the benefit of all Canadians.”

On the international front, Bill was recently selected to participate in Leadership Across Borders, a program involving 40 senior civil servants from Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. The participants are working on live case studies that focus on 21st-century global issues, while acquiring the skills and approaches critical to solving the kinds of complex problems and public policy issues that governments face.

“The first set of meetings in Australia focused on homelessness and climate change,” says Bill. “It was very interesting to work with colleagues from other Commonwealth countries, not only in terms of what tools we use when addressing some of these complex problems, but also for the sort of human and cultural dynamics that shape these decisions.”

The group next meets in the UK in June, and then in Ottawa in September 2010.

“It’s been an interesting journey on so many fronts,” says Bill. “I take a great deal of pride in working for the Department of Justice and the Government of Canada. I think of it as quite an honour to be able to do this work.”

Bill recalls a conversation he once had with a former judge of the Supreme Court of Canada.

“He told me that the message I ought to convey to people considering a career at the Department of Justice is that there is no greater privilege than having the people of Canada as your client.”

It is clear from his choices and his career – Bill embodies the philosophy behind those words in all the work he does.

Bill Basran was interested in litigation and wanted to be in court.

After graduating from law school in 1994, he articulated with a large firm in downtown Vancouver. It quickly became clear to him, however, that junior counsel in large law firms were usually limited to carrying out research and providing support to the firm’s litigators. Rarely did new lawyers conduct a trial on their own.

When an opening became available in the Tax Law section of the Department of Justice Canada in the British Columbia Regional Office (BCRO), Bill seized the opportunity and joined as a junior counsel.

Catherine Kane



Working in government was not an option Catherine Kane considered coming out of law school.

“I didn’t even know that criminal law policy existed nor what it would address,” she says. “I knew about criminal law, but I thought of it from the perspective of either a prosecutor or defence counsel.”

Then in 1982, Catherine got a six-month contract working in the Criminal Law Policy and Amendments Section in the Department of Justice Canada.

Twenty-eight years later, she is Senior General Counsel and Director General of the Section (now simply called the Criminal Law Policy Section) and still finds the work as interesting and challenging as she did then.

Catherine’s first job with the Department was to support a federal-provincial task force on victims of crime. She says it was the perfect job for a junior lawyer – doing research, gathering information and writing papers.

“The first thing I worked on was figuring out what already existed in the criminal law, in the *Criminal Code*, and in case law that is of use to victims of crime,” she says. “There wasn’t much. There was some stuff there, and I had to try and unpack all of that and take it a step further.”

Catherine did take it a step further. After the first six-month contract was renewed, she says, “I started to get my bearings and think that Justice was a pretty amazing place.”

She continued in Criminal Law Policy, making it her career. Victims’ issues remain particularly important to Catherine.

“I like to finish what I start,” she says. “Over the years there have been these waves of progress in victims’ issues at the federal level, and also many at the provincial level and non-governmental level, as well. But our involvement has ebbed and flowed with the resources available to us.

“In the early ’80s we focused on the task force recommendations, law reform and new program funding with new resources. Then, over a period of time, priorities would change and there would be less progress, then we’d gear up again to see if we could get more funding to expand the programs.

“So, I wanted to see it through to a certain point, so that it would become really ingrained in, or part of, the section, that we would have an ongoing mandate to look at some of these issues. And that is what happened.”



Between 1998 and 2000, Catherine was instrumental in setting up a separate unit at Justice – the Policy Centre for Victim Issues – which is dedicated to law reform and policy development in criminal law issues that affect victims.

The Criminal Law Policy Section has also changed and grown over the years. It is now a group of more than 75 people, including 50 lawyers. The Section provides legal and policy advice to the Minister of Justice, other parts of the Department, and other federal departments.

The Section is responsible for monitoring trends in the criminal law and developing options for criminal law reform. The issues addressed include sentencing policy, criminal procedure, high-tech crime issues, social and moral issues, victims’ policy, substantive law and evidence, and organized crime.

And it’s not just the law in Canada that the lawyers in Criminal Law Policy Section deal with.

Catherine notes that her colleagues work on international criminal justice issues and participate in Council of Europe and United Nations initiatives, sharing what Canada does and learning what other countries do, as well as providing direct assistance to developing countries.

Between 1998 and 2000, Catherine was instrumental in setting up a separate unit at Justice – the Policy Centre for Victim Issues

“Anything you can do in private practice, you can do here, and at a different level of complexity,” says Catherine. “There is a ton of stuff that you wouldn’t think of because you really have to scratch below the surface or ask someone to tell you what goes on in the Department.”

She feels her work can have a direct impact on the lives of Canadians, especially those involved in the legal process.

“Victim impact statements are one thing. You never heard of victim impact statements 20 years ago. Now, you read an account in the paper about a sentencing and how the victim impact statement was read, and we have all sorts of really positive feedback about that. You hear the victim say, ‘It may not have made a difference, but I’m sure glad I had the chance to explain it to people.’ It humanizes the law.”

Despite being Director General with the accompanying daily tasks of meetings, reviews and briefings, Catherine says she’s still a lawyer and wants to get “as immersed as possible” in the discussion and debates and advice.

She loves the diversity of her job and can never predict what each day will bring.

“Luckily I work with a wonderful group of expert colleagues who support me in responding to the daily challenges.”

Pierre Legault



Pierre is Assistant Deputy Minister of the Business and Regulatory Law Portfolio, the biggest portfolio in the Department with about 450 lawyers spread across 20 legal services units.

He was referring to the unusual challenges of leading the Canadian legal teams in the restructuring of Chrysler and General Motors, two of North America's largest car makers.

Pierre coordinated the Canadian legal teams of counsel from the Department of Justice Canada, the Province of Ontario, and Export Development Canada (EDC), as well as Canadian and American agents for all three parties.

Pierre is Assistant Deputy Minister of the Business and Regulatory Law Portfolio, the biggest portfolio in the Department with about 450 lawyers spread across 20 legal services units.

In spring 2009, the Justice team worked on complex agreements to provide these companies with funding and ensure that they would continue as productive employers in Canada.

The work was complicated and intense. The documents and files generated were voluminous. And it was all carried out at an extremely rapid pace, requiring long hours and all-nighters to meet the extraordinary goals.

It quickly became apparent that the Department needed to hire outside counsel with expertise in bankruptcy, commercial, corporate, and American law to supplement the in-house talent.

"We have the subsidiaries in Canada, but the parent company is American, and the bankruptcy filing was in the U.S.," says Pierre. "The agreements are under American law and the negotiations were in the States, so we needed to have American counsel there."

"It's one thing to work under a normal business deadline," says Pierre Legault.

"It's another thing when you know the deadline is at noon on a given day, and at noon the President of the United States will make an announcement, and the Prime Minister of Canada will make a similar announcement a few hours later."

Fortunately, Pierre is certainly not afraid of deadlines.



Each of the three main parties – Industry Canada, EDC, and the Province of Ontario – used both internal and external counsel to assist with the enormous workload.

Pierre says his role was to coordinate and develop a Canadian position on the various legal questions or agreements, manage counsel, and basically "forge one common legal view."

To accomplish all this work, the Canadian legal team "camped out" for seven days in Washington, where it concluded the Chrysler transaction.

Working in Washington posed certain challenges for the Canadian team. Pierre says security was often an issue, especially for meetings they had at the U.S. Treasury, where they needed security clearance in advance.

"One time, they had our information but didn't process it in time, so one of my clients and I were asked to stay out of the building out in the street for 45 minutes," he says. "So we went and opened an 'office' on a bench in Lafayette Park across from the White House."

Pierre says part of the Canadian team worked 55 hours straight during the last days leading up to the closing.

"Basically, we had to finish everything before noon, because at noon President Obama was having a press conference, and Prime Minister Harper was having his press conference about 2:00 p.m. So, it was a big deadline," he says. "We finished the agreement of interest to Canada half an hour before, and they went on with their press conferences."

While Chrysler was under bankruptcy protection, the Canadian team started working on the General Motors restructuring. Although there were lessons learned from the Chrysler experience, GM posed different challenges. Its restructuring was massive. In fact, it is considered the biggest industrial reorganization in history.

The Canadian legal team, led by Pierre, travelled to New York twice for negotiations to meet with the representatives of the U.S. Treasury, GM and their lawyers, and other key people involved in the deal, in addition to innumerable other trips to Washington.

It was very much a team effort – within Justice and with the other legal counsel.

Pierre will always remember his work on the historic file.

"It's a success story because of the extraordinary work that we did, our ability to do the work, to deliver on time under incredibly short deadlines given the size of the deals, and to achieve all our results: the main one to protect a whole sector of our economy – automobile manufacturing and the jobs that go with that."

A year later, he looks back on the project as being extremely successful. One major indicator is that jobs have been maintained and cars are still being produced in Canada.

Pierre is nostalgic. "It was a very exciting time – the kind of file we don't see every day, or every week, or every year for that matter."

He admits most people won't ever have the chance to work on a file like this, and feels fortunate to have played the role he did in such an extraordinary piece of history.

Matthew McCreery



“The experience of listening to my judgment along with those of my other judge colleagues on the moot court made me think that maybe there was a future in this for me. So I continued with a concentration in law.”

After completing his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1988, he earned his LL.B. in 1992 from the University of Ottawa. He then went to Scotland to study at the University of Edinburgh, where he completed his Master’s in Law, specializing in comparative public law, in 1995.

Matthew started his public service career at Correctional Service Canada in 1997, where he participated in the Management Trainee Program. During that time, he primarily studied French, as that was the first required element of the program.

When asked how he defines "success" in his career, Matthew laughingly answers that he finds it rewarding to "write decent legal opinions and have clients say 'thanks – that was helpful'."

In 2002, he joined the Department of Justice Canada, as counsel in the Information Law and Privacy (ILAP) Section, where he remains to this day. The Section’s work involves providing advice to the Minister and other federal institutions on the interpretation of the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*, and assisting and conducting litigation in cases involving access-to-information and privacy (ATIP) issues.

“ATIP law applies government-wide. So it is fascinating to learn about the operations of those departments and agencies and how ATIP law is being applied.”

“ILAP has a hand in promoting consistent approaches to the application of ATIP law, and I, as a member of ILAP, get to make a positive contribution.”



He also speaks highly of his section colleagues, a group that "works well together under a great boss [Denis Kratchanov] who shows exceptional leadership."

To assist in his work, Matthew uses "screen reader" software, which converts electronic documents into spoken words.

When he first started at the Department, he met with senior administration in the then-Public Law Group to discuss his particular software requirements.

As he is bilingual and works in both official languages, the software needs to be advanced enough to recognize whether the document he is working on is written in French or English, and read it out loud accordingly, without him having to switch software programs for each language.

In order to read any documents that are available only in printed form, Matthew uses a scanner in his office to make them electronically accessible to his screen reader software.

Matthew is also an active member of the Department’s Advisory Committee on Persons with Disabilities. This group’s mission is, among other things, to advise and support the Deputy Minister on issues affecting the hiring, retention, accommodation and career development of persons with disabilities.

“With the recent federal budget, the role of the Advisory Committee will, I think, become more important in order to help promote the interests of employees with disabilities.”

Former Deputy Minister John Sims recently attended a meeting of the Advisory Committee, along with Associate Deputy Minister Donna Miller and the Department’s Disability Champion Barbara Ritzen.

An accomplishment the Committee recently celebrated was to help secure a number of spots for various designated employment equity groups, including employees with disabilities, in the Department’s management trainee initiative, the Justice Leaders of Tomorrow Program.

Despite unexpected challenges that have not always been easy to overcome, Matthew is enjoying a successful and rewarding public service career.

When asked how he defines "success" in his career, he laughingly answers that he finds it rewarding to "write decent legal opinions and have clients say 'thanks – that was helpful'."

With a smile on his face, he credits his success to “part stubbornness, part determination – part and parcel of coming from good Celtic stock!”

Alnoor Meghani



An internationally focused legal career is a natural fit for Alnoor Meghani.

Born and raised in Tanzania, East Africa, Alnoor and his family immigrated to Canada as a result of the turbulent political and human rights situations in his homeland in the 1970s.

“As a child, I had experienced at first hand issues relating to human rights, so I appreciated Canada’s multicultural and pluralist environment,” says Alnoor.

“I feel connected to these types of issues, and want others to have the benefit, the luxury, of what I have in Canada.”

He studied at the University of Calgary, graduating with a BA in psychology in 1979, and then completed his LL.B at the University of Ottawa in 1985. He articulated and practised in Calgary with a private firm which was the standing agent for the Department of Justice Canada in *Narcotic Control Act* and *Food and Drugs Act* matters.

He was recruited by the Aga Khan Foundation Canada in 1989. Although working for an international development agency was exciting, after some time it became clear to Alnoor that he was becoming a “frustrated actor who was missing the courtroom environment.”

In 1994, he returned to working as a standing agent in *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* and *Income Tax Act* matters. Four years later, he was permanently recruited to the Department as part of the Integrated Proceeds of Crime Unit.

His internationally focused public service career began in 2003.

After the Afghanistan war started, Alnoor was the prosecutor chosen to assist the International Cooperation Group as the project manager for the “Afghanistan Project.”

In this role, he visited Kabul and was involved in the creation of a manual for the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC). The manual, designed primarily for use by the AIHRC and other groups involved in human rights issues, focused on topics such as how to interview abused people, how to apply appropriate interview techniques when talking to women and children and what signs of abuse to look for when visiting prisons.

In order to more fully satisfy his interest in international work, in 2004 he became the Field Project Director of the Department’s Legal Reform Project in Bangladesh.

The aim of the project was to provide legal and technical assistance to the Bangladeshi Ministry of Law, the Ministry of Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, and the Law Commission and to strengthen the country’s criminal justice system. The project provided training to the drafters



on modern legislative drafting principles, worked to increase the capacity of the Law Commission, and assisted in identifying issues that impacted the criminal justice system, including gender.

In Bangladesh, a major challenge was the scarcity, if not absence, of legal publications to give correct and up-to-date texts of the laws in force. This made it extremely difficult for the courts, lawyers and citizens not only to keep track of the flow of new laws, but also to ascertain the status of existing laws which have undergone extensive changes.

“Access to justice must necessarily mean that citizens should have access to the current laws,” says Alnoor.

The laws governing Bangladesh consisted of legislation from the British Raj period (1836–1947), the Pakistan period (1947–1971), and the years since independence. Additionally, all laws enacted after 1987 had to be in Bangla, the country’s official language. So the project undertook the task of consolidating all the laws from 1836 to January 2007. This resulted in 38 volumes, as well as an index in chronological and alphabetical order.

These volumes were printed and made available on-line on the Ministry of Law’s Web site, because, as Alnoor points out, “rule-of-law and economic issues go hand in hand. Publicizing the nation’s laws to a wider audience, even outside the borders of Bangladesh, has a direct impact on poverty reduction, as knowing the laws of a country will help encourage foreign investment in a country.”

After the Afghanistan war started, Alnoor was the prosecutor chosen to assist the International Cooperation Group as the project manager for the “Afghanistan Project.”

Alnoor believes it is very important for government institutions to be well established everywhere.

“In addition to access to health and education, there must also be access to justice as it preserves human dignity, and justice can and must always be administered by a governmental institution.”

As for the future, Alnoor remains firmly devoted to continuing to work on international issues.

He is now counsel with Justice’s International Legal Programs Section and the Director of the Sharaka Project, a technical legal capacity-building project with the Office of the Attorney General and the public prosecution service of the Palestinian Authority.

“Canada has a lot to offer to emerging democracies to help them establish themselves,” says Alnoor, and he plans to continue doing his part.

Thérèse Thy Ngo



Thérèse Thy Ngo is a woman who clearly enjoys variety.

After completing her Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Ottawa, she re-entered university in pursuit of a teaching degree.

Having obtained her teaching credentials, Thérèse next decided to study law.

Three years later, law degree firmly in hand, Thérèse realized that continuous learning was clearly a priority in her life. Her next challenge was to identify a career path versatile and dynamic enough to support this passion – a challenge she has successfully met working at the Department of Justice Canada.

“A career at the Department of Justice is not limited to what they teach you at law school,” she says.

“Here you can do almost anything. If you want, your job can completely change every few years, since a person’s skill set can easily be transferred to another area of legal practice.”

Thérèse joined the Public Service in 2000, as an Employment Equity Advisor for the Visible Minorities Portfolio.

“I believe in diversity in the workplace,” she says with conviction. “It is important to be representative in order to serve Canada. I wanted an opportunity to work with the Department to help advance the implementation of this policy.”

In 2005-2006, after a year as co-chair, Thérèse became the chair of the Department’s Advisory Committee on Visible Minorities. In this role she advised the Deputy Minister on issues affecting the hiring, retention and career development of visible minority employees.

“I want to help those who don’t have a voice. If I’m in a better position to raise an issue, I can be their spokesperson. I would want that for me if I were in a position of disadvantage.”

In 2003, she started work with the Professional Development Division. She developed programs tailored to the continuing legal education needs of the Department’s lawyers and helped design materials for legal workshops, courses and conferences. She loves helping employees progress along their career paths.

While working part-time toward a Master of Arts degree in Education, Thérèse became Counsel and Programs Manager in the Human Resources Directorate.

As the lead on two important human resources initiatives – the National Mentoring Program and the National Outreach and Recruitment Strategy for Public Service Renewal – Thérèse has found a means of sharing her passion for growth.



Recognizing that an important part of learning comes from interpersonal relationships, especially among co-workers, the Department has added less conventional methods to its continuing education programming.

Mentoring is a learning relationship in which both the mentor and the associate (the person being mentored) have an opportunity to share and develop their professional and personal capacities. This relationship can be a valuable way to pass on corporate values and departmental knowledge and also assist in integrating new employees.

“A career at the Department of Justice is not limited to what they teach you at law school.”

“You don’t want to watch 20 years of expertise walk out the door whenever someone retires. It is important to create an opportunity for employees to share their experience and knowledge with one another. I help to facilitate this.”

Since its launch in September 2008, more than 680 employees have registered for the Program, evidence that many of her colleagues share this same vision.

In addition to the versatility of her work and the opportunity to advance her interests, Thérèse has also enjoyed the flexibility that comes from working in the Public Service.

“We have the technology for things like teleworking. You can have access to everything from almost anywhere,” she says.

She has worked compressed and flexible hours since she started with the Department, and with two small children, she loves being able control the start and end of her workday.

“As long as you do your hours, there is a lot of freedom. It is important to have a frank discussion with your manager about your working arrangements. Managers are really supportive; I have been really inspired by some of my superiors,” she says.

An inspirational employee herself, Thérèse is enjoying her newest role as counsel supporting the implementation of the Department’s Change Agenda, to ensure that the Department remains relevant and effective as the government faces ever-changing demands.

This next phase of Thérèse’s career should prove to be yet another new learning experience – just how she likes it.

Dawn Pritchard



She quit high school in Grade 12 to follow her musical dreams and ended up playing guitar and singing backup vocals in a rock band in Toronto for a few years. When she returned to Saskatoon, she completed high school and decided to follow a cousin's footsteps into a career in law.

Within two years, she had earned the President's Award for highest marks in every class at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and been accepted into the University of Saskatchewan's law school.

"To me, success is when your boss and colleagues recognize your talent and you get to use it and not hide it."

She juggled her studies with life as a single parent, graduating in 1996. Over the next few years, she held various positions, including clerking in the Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan and working in private practice and with the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission.

In 2003, she accepted a position in the Department's Saskatoon office working in Indian Residential School Litigation.

"I worked in the Prairie Region Office for nearly five years, including a stint in advisory services, where my colleague offered me the opportunity to become an expert in the newly emerging field of duty to consult. I jumped at the chance."

Dawn flourished in her role as expert in this new field, but she was called back to her substantive position.

However, she soon became dissatisfied with her work life and began considering offers from private practice. It was then that she made a call to Berlin, whom she'd met a few years earlier through her work as National Chair of the Litigation Section of the Canadian Bar Association.

"I called him out of the blue, and without hesitation, he took me under his wing and offered to be my mentor."



That began a period of intense self-analysis, research and talks with colleagues in Ottawa and Gatineau. Guided by Mark, as well as by Marilyn Poitras, a Métis lawyer in Saskatchewan, and Carolyn Kobernick, Employment Equity Champion, Dawn started to figure out what she needed from her career and the scope of choice that was available.

"I was amazed at all the different areas a person could work in at the Department of Justice and all the people who were so willing to help."

After narrowing her search to two positions, she was soon rewarded with an offer in the legal services unit at Environment Canada, the position she holds to this day.

"I am completely happy with where I am in my career now," Dawn says. "To me, success is when your boss and colleagues recognize your talent and you get to use it and not hide it. I've found that in my current position."

"It is also when your boss asks you to do something that you would die to do anyway, and they ask because they believe in you."

Dawn believes in being involved and in giving back. She is finishing her term as co-chair of the Department's Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Peoples and will continue as a working member on subcommittees. She has also been asked to supervise and mentor an articling student.

"I am really excited, and hope that I can be as positive an influence as others were for me."

Life has come full circle. Along with the balance and contentment Dawn has achieved in her work and personal life, she has once again picked up the guitar after many years of not playing. She also realized a life-long dream when her partner gave her a piano for Christmas. She is teaching herself to play.

André Solecki



“I have the best job in the Department,” said André. “I get to use the skills I learned in school while I am learning new skills. I would recommend working as a student in the Research and Statistics Division to anybody.”

After earning an undergraduate degree in sociology and statistics from the University of Ottawa, André worked in Toronto as a carpenter during the summers and spent his winters doing contract work on data management for several large corporations.

André’s idea of success is to have the confidence of his managers.

He soon realized that he would need a graduate degree to find a solid job in his chosen field, so he moved to Ottawa to begin his Master’s in the sociology of law and statistics at Carleton University in 2005.

André’s initial placement with RSD for the summer of 2006 extended into the fall while he attended school and finished up his Master’s degree. His supervisors supported his schoolwork by giving him the flexibility he needed to complete his studies. When he graduated, he was bridged into the junior researcher position.

Working in RSD helped him with his Master’s because most of the researchers in the Division have graduate degrees and willingly shared their knowledge and experience.

“It was the difference between being alone in a room full of books and being surrounded by people you can consult. The work placement made my academic life much better.”

André says his work in RSD perfectly meshes his love of writing and English with his interest in math and statistics, while justice issues are “the meat in the sandwich.” Researching, crunching numbers and writing about topics that interest him – drugs, impaired driving and extradition – make his job endlessly fascinating.



André’s idea of success is to have the confidence of his managers. He admits he dislikes being micromanaged, so having the encouragement to take the initiative and to work on his own keeps him motivated to perform even better.

In fact, he finds that the open and clear management style in RSD has been the single most important factor guiding his career.

He also appreciates that collaboration is fostered in the Division, along with a multi-faceted approach to work.

“We are not stuck doing one thing over and over, but we get to do a variety of tasks. For example, I interview people, collect data, write papers, work on policy research, and support the legislative process.”

André says he takes pride in the fact that his co-workers seek him out when they have a problem – they respect his opinion and knowledge even though he is a junior member of the team.

André’s future is wide open. He is considering going back to university to earn a Ph.D. once his wife’s law practice is established. He would also love to manage RSD “years down the line.”

Wherever the future takes him, André will value the solid foundation he received at Justice and the colleagues who so generously mentored him during his student years.

Michael Audet and Luc Vachon



It didn't take long for Legislative Counsel Michael Audet to discover that private practice wasn't for him either.

Before law school, Michael did an undergraduate degree in English literature. The role of legislative drafter was a good fit – it marries words and the law.

Michael and Luc are two of the 28 legislative counsel in the Department's Legislation Section who are involved in drafting the federal government's bills.

The method of simultaneously drafting a bill in both official languages is called co-drafting, and it is unique to Canada.

"A bill is a legislative expression of a policy. The very first thing we need to do is have a sound understanding of the policy, as much as time and circumstances allow, so that we can properly express it," says Michael.

"We try to understand what we need to create," adds Luc. "First, we discuss what results should be achieved with legal counsel who are experts in the field and policy experts who have developed the policy. Then we work on what the new rules should be."

The actual process of writing legislation involves drafters and instructing officers who come from the government department which is sponsoring the bill. They might be legal experts who work in the legal services unit, representing the policy interests of their client department. Often, though, they are experts in their field – anyone from economists to scientists.

The writing of the legislation is done in teams of two: a French drafter and an English drafter. They work in specially designed drafting rooms, which have a long table in the centre with two computers mounted on each side. The two drafters sit together on one side of the table, each with a computer. One drafts the legislation in French, while the other simultaneously drafts it in English.



The instructing officers sit on the opposite side of the table with two computers in front of them, literally reading the bill in both languages as it is being written, and making sure that what it says is what is intended by the policy. The instructing officer makes comments on the text, and the drafters can make the corresponding changes to the legislation on the spot.

This method of simultaneously drafting a bill in both official languages is called co-drafting, and it is unique to Canada.

The drafters aim to write a text that sounds natural in each language, as opposed to one being a literal translation of the other version.

"It's not translation," Michael points out. "The French means the same thing as the English without being an awkward, clunky word-for-word translation."

It is a model that started in the late 1970s. Prior to this, the French version was simply a translation of the English text.

"Often it was done at the last minute by a translator who didn't have much contextual information," says Luc. "They didn't have access to the expert in the field, so they didn't have enough information, so they would stick to the English wording. Unfortunately, following the English text word-by-word made the French text hard to understand and interpret."

So the co-drafting model was developed, and it has evolved over the years. Delegations have come from other countries to Justice to study the side-by-side drafting process, but Michael and Luc don't know of any that use a similar system.

However, they are confident that it works for Canada.

Patrick Vézina and Renée Soublière



Renée Soublière and Patrick Vézina are a couple who are proof you can have both a stimulating career at the Department of Justice Canada and great work-life balance.

Renée, Senior Counsel and Litigation Coordinator, Official Languages Law Group, and Patrick, Director and General Counsel, Legal Risk Management Division, met in 2000, at the suggestion of a mutual acquaintance, who would often talk about one to the other.

Eventually, curiosity got the better of them, and when Renée and Patrick finally met, it was love at first sight.

Renée and Patrick see no disadvantages to working for the same department. Before they had children, they enjoyed walking to and from work together, while discussing their respective days.

Their professional paths didn't cross until September 2009, when they began having joint meetings.

"It is important to find one's balance, and the Department will respect it," says Patrick. "The Department functions when everyone does their part. When you love what you do, it's not an effort."

Renée's first stint at Justice was an internship during her second year of law school, with the same group she is part of today. She was sworn in as a lawyer on February 16, 2000, and began her career at the Department the very next day.

Renée and Patrick are proud to work for Justice, and they recognize that the Department offers its employees the flexibility they need to have a balanced family life.

Her work is diverse – legal opinions, litigation support, policy, orientation, training and management – and she admires the large number of colleagues she can learn from and grow with.

Renée also had the privilege of being part of the first cohort of the Justice Leaders of Tomorrow Program – an initiative for employees who are intent on developing their leadership and management potential with the aim of becoming future leaders in the Department.

What she finds both exciting and motivating are the underlying values that frame her daily work. She loves to contribute.

"I feel I'm contributing to Canadian society and to the values I embody, and that's what makes me happy in my work."



From the beginning of his career, Patrick wanted to argue cases. He decided that the best place to learn was in the Department of Justice, and he feels he was right, as he was quickly entrusted with many interesting files.

In 1995, Patrick was a litigator at the Atlantic Regional Office, which enabled him to explore all of Canada's Atlantic provinces.

He moved to Ottawa in 1998 to practise civil litigation. Since then, he has held a number of positions, including Chief of Staff within the Tax Law Portfolio. In September 2009, he was appointed Director and General Counsel of the Legal Risk Management Division.

Patrick's division is responsible for the development and coordination of national policies and tools that support the integrated and efficient identification, assessment, communication, prevention, mitigation and management of legal risks in government.

He says it is both gratifying and pleasant to work with a team of passionate professionals, and he appreciates the way of thinking at the Department, the collegiality rather than emphasis on hierarchy, which reflects his personal style.

He recalls how, at the beginning of his career, he was consulting Supreme Court decisions and required additional information on a case. Patrick found the litigator's name and called him directly, and the man at the end of the line took the time to speak with him and help him over the telephone.

The litigator was none other than Ivan Whitehall, then-Chief General Counsel of the Department – the government's top litigator. For Patrick, that said it all.

Renée and Patrick feel they have adopted a balanced lifestyle.

Although their careers can demand a lot of time and energy, they maintain their perspective as professionals and as a couple. They understand and help one another.

With a four-year-old son, Laurent, and an eighteen-month-old daughter, Béatrice, their challenge is the same as that of many couples – coordinating schedules to accommodate daycare and the children.

Renée and Patrick are proud to work for Justice, and they recognize that the Department offers its employees the flexibility they need to have a balanced family life.

"We feel we have it all by working here: extremely interesting files and work, and the possibility of maintaining a healthy and well-balanced lifestyle," says Renée.

The couple has some words of wisdom for young lawyers starting their career.

Renée underscores the importance of taking advantage of opportunities to interact with colleagues.

"Take advantage of what the Department has to offer. Shine. And get to know people who speak the other official language."

As for Patrick, he states "Love what you do, because life is too short. Find your balance." And he adds, smiling, "Manage the risks."

Patrick Walton



He studied photography at Algonquin College, never imagining the people he would make his career taking pictures of.

Patrick began working at the Department right out of college on a short-term contract. His first job was to build a database of photographic images that could be used in departmental communications across the country.

This project gave him his first opportunity to work with a diversity of people in the Department, including all levels of management.

“My work offers me a platform to be creative and provides me with the tools I need to put ideas into motion.”

Patrick now takes photographs for the majority of the Department’s corporate publications, both for print and for on-line material. He is often at press conferences, or taking pictures at ministerial announcements, which sometimes include the Prime Minister. (He also took most of the pictures in this publication.)

Patrick is proud to be a Justice employee, and enjoys the prestige of working in such an important and well-respected institution.

“I enjoy working on a national scale,” says Patrick. “It is rewarding knowing that the work I do will be seen by people across Canada and occasionally internationally.”

Since he began working at the Department, his job has evolved. Through his own initiative and ingenuity, and with encouragement from management, Patrick has taken on other visual creative tasks, such as graphic design, video and Web publishing. For example, for the recent Department-wide Managers’ Forum, he created a highly popular video montage featuring employees from across the country entitled *I am Justice*.



“My work offers me a platform to be creative and provides me with the tools I need to put ideas into motion,” he says.

Patrick thrives on his freedom to take the initiative in improving processes and adopting new technology in his work. “It’s an exciting time to work in government communications,” he says. “The industry is changing, and keeping up with new advances such as social media and collaborative tools like GCPEDIA will mean more employees with these skill sets will be needed in the federal public service.”

“My job gives me the space I need to be creative,” he says.

More than anything, for Patrick success means “delivering for my clients and always striving to improve my services.”

Diversity in work is important to Patrick, and his job provides variety. Another key to job satisfaction, he says, comes from the integrity of the people he works with.

“This is one of the things that motivates me to do my best,” he says.

“Growing up, I never thought I would work for the government, but now I know that I am in the right place.”

He sees himself one day leading a team of people in Creative Services. Given his colleagues’ fondness for him, it seems they might like that, too.