



Police Officers and Rape Culture: The Silencing of Sexual Assault Survivors

Toronto, April 3, 2017—The Barbra Schlifer Clinic applauds the decision of Ava Williams to launch her constitutional challenge to the London Police Services.

The Clinic has read the statement of claim and supports Ms. Williams and her lawyers in their pursuit of the individual and social remedy for the personal and systemic breach of Charter rights her case represents.

“In our everyday work, the Barbra Schlifer Clinic sees the devastating effects of systemic discrimination in the policing of sexual assault complaints,” says the executive director, Amanda Dale. “While no aspect of the criminal response to sexual assault is without legally and socially discredited myths and stereotypes, policing has a unique role at the outset of a claim. The disproportionate number of ‘unfounded’ cases is a direct denial of access to justice for the women services like ours seek to support”, she concluded.

“In addition to assisting women with their legal matters each day, the Barbra Schlifer Clinic has also played a significant role in challenging the laws related to sexual assault and gender-based violence,” offered Schlifer Clinic legal director, Deepa Mattoo. “Our executive director was an integral part of the so-called Jane Doe Audit of Toronto Police, and we have intervened in many recent court cases in order to ensure the rights of sexual assault survivors to have equal access to the law and public policy responses,” she continued.

“Ms. Williams will be faced with an emotionally and financially difficult battle by launching this challenge”, added Amanda Dale. “We are happy she has decided to launch her self-funded campaign to make this challenge that has the potential to benefit all women”.

Ms. Williams has established a crowdfunding site at:
http://fnd.us/d1Dj4?ref=sh_36XPX5

The Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic is a specialized clinic for women experiencing violence, established in the memory of Barbra Schlifer – an idealistic young lawyer whose life was cut short by sexual violence on the night of her call to the bar of Ontario on April 11, 1980. In her memory, the Clinic is a multi-disciplinary, front-line service provider that assists nearly 4,000 women a year to build lives free

from violence through counselling, legal representation, and language interpretation. Since it was founded in 1985, the Clinic has assisted more than 60,000 women whose experiences of violence have intersected with the law. The Clinic is a site in the provincial pilot program to provide independent legal advice to sexual assault survivors.

For more about the Barbra Schlifer Clinic, see <http://schliferclinic.com/>
To speak with the executive director or legal director of the Barbra Schlifer Clinic, please contact 416-323-9149 ext. 262.