

Community support at 2016 Annual Tribute raises record \$205,000 in support of women who want to build lives free from violence

Under The Cover

- Intervening in the Camp inquiry
- Global pandemic, national action
- The next generation of social justice warriors
- End Notes: Saying thanks to a pioneer



Message from the Executive Director

I am optimistic, though the United Nations has declared violence against women a global pandemic, that we are poised to make significant advances in our endeavor to prevent and end violence against women and girls in all its forms.

I am hopeful, because the overwhelming support we continue to receive tells me a shift is coming. Not only did we have record attendance at our 22nd Annual Tribute, we exceeded our goal, making

this year's event our most successful to date. The funds raised during this signature event are invested back into the services the Clinic provides to support the nearly 4,000 women who come to us each year wanting to rebuild lives free from violence. Students are joining us in record numbers: volunteering, interning and articling at the Clinic—these women represent a future less tolerant of violence. They are determined to achieve equality not just for women's human rights in general, but for their own equal power and social standing.

This year's Ghomeshi trial afforded feminists an opportunity to expose the truth about sexual assault and the ways that the law is not only buttressed by myths, but also serves to perpetuate them. The Clinic was a level-headed and reasoned voice that challenged stereotypes and discrimination, and successfully advocated for reform in many areas of law, thus shifting how we, as a society, respond to these crimes. The statistical reality of this crime paints a clear picture: the status quo created conditions that approached impunity.

While the Ghomeshi trial was taking place, so was one that received far less immediate attention—that of a York University PHD candidate who was convicted in July of raping fellow doctoral student, Mandi Gray. In delivering his verdict, Justice Martin Zuker stated the need to dispel the myths of rape once and for all [R.v. Ururyar]. Similarly, in a recent decision by the Alberta Court [R v JR], Justice Topolniski gave a clear argument for a stricter interpretation of the Canadian precedents on sexual assault, while overturning a lower court's acquittal in the sexual assault of a 15-year-old girl.

The Clinic continues to expand on its services, with the introduction of an independent legal advice (ILA) pilot program, supported by the Ministry of the Attorney General, to provide

free, confidential legal advice to survivors of sexual assault. Through the Barbra Schlifer Clinic, people in Toronto who identify as women and people with non-binary gender identity, who are survivors of sexual assault, can receive legal advice over the phone or in person, to help make an informed decision about what next steps to take. For more information, visit www.schliferclinic.com/ila.

On another note, the Clinic is entering a period of renewal, but with the mixed feelings left by bidding farewell to Mary Lou Fassel, who has retired from the Clinic as its Director of Legal Services. Mary Lou joined the Barbra Schlifer Clinic as the Clinic's first Legal Director and was instrumental in the development of the Clinic's comprehensive legal services for women who experience many different forms of violence.

Mary Lou is widely respected by bar and bench, and leaves behind a tangible reflection of her values in the Clinic she was instrumental in shaping. I would like to personally thank Mary Lou for her many years of service, and celebrate her commitment to ending violence against women. And while we will miss her immeasurably, she has done more than her fair share for advancing the rights of women. We wish her a full and restful retirement. More information is coming soon about how you can celebrate her contribution with us.

In turn, I would like to welcome our new Legal Director, Deepa Mattoo. Deepa brings to the Clinic invaluable experience defending the rights of women in both legal and public policy contexts, as well as an energy and enthusiasm for a fully intersectional approach to women's rights. She will—without a doubt—inject a renewed sense of purpose for the work we do within the legal department and the entire Clinic.

Sincerely,

Amanda Dale

Board President
Tamara Jordan

Board Vice President
Afshan Ali

Board Treasurer
Shawn Tse

Board Secretary
Christine Bradshaw

Director, Legal Services
Deepa Mattoo

Director, Counselling
Lynne Jenkins

Director, Resource Development
Meldina Smith

Director, Interpreter Services
Nora Angeles



Message from the Legal Director

I am delighted to join the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic as its new Legal Director. For me, as for so many, the Clinic represents much more than a centre that provides critical services to underrepresented women: It is a lifeline to those who have nowhere else to turn in the midst of crisis.

I join the Clinic at a pivotal time in its existence, as tolerance for violence against women begins to shrink, and as a shift in our legal team takes place. Our respected

immigration lawyer, Rathika Vasavihasan has left the Clinic to pursue further education. As a passionate advocate for women's rights and inexhaustible defender of those with precarious immigration status, Rathika remains an inspiration to the many she supported and worked with.

New to the legal team, and specializing in immigration law, is Caitlin Maxwell, founder of the feminist/social justice law practice, Equity Legal, and the first recipient of the *Elizabeth Grace Emerging Leaders Award*. Joining her in family law is Janet McGill, whose career with Legal Aid Ontario affords her a unique understanding of the intersecting areas of law that are crucial to the clients we serve. Both bring with them an exceptional ability to listen without judgement. We are inspired by the values, priorities and motivation each brings to their practice. Also, we are excited to have with us Petra Molnar as our new articling student. Petra will play an integral role within the Clinic's overarching legal services.

Each year the Clinic offers a limited number of positions to law students who wish to exercise their growing knowledge of social justice law. I encourage you to read the personal accounts of our most recent summer students later in the newsletter, as they represent much more than the future of law; they hold within them a promise to practice what we are

working so hard to establish in legal reform—an intersectional approach to law where it concerns women who have survived violence.

My own personal journey within law has afforded me the exceptional opportunity to become an expert on issues related to access to justice for women, children's rights, LGBTQ rights, as well as income security, immigration and poverty law, and not-for-profit empowerment. In the more than 17 years I have worked providing direct human rights related services as well as public education, social justice and advocacy, I have developed a deep passion for defending women's rights to safety, and in particular, self-determination. I have learned that it takes a particular skill to defend the complex rights of women in legal and public policy contexts where the tendency is to simplify women's claims into oppositions between their rights to enjoy their culture and their protections on the basis of gender.

Among my responsibilities at the Barbra Schlifer Clinic will be my ongoing pursuit to reveal systemic failures in immigration policy, family law, sexual assault and criminal law by exposing women's daily struggles for individual rights, while ensuring our clients remain in control of their wishes and outcomes. I look forward to taking the helm of the legal department and helping to guide us through this next iteration of growth and development. What a sound foundation I have to work from!

Deepa

Deepa Mattoo

Nominate someone for the Spirit of Barbra Schlifer Award

Since 2012, the Spirit of Barbara Schlifer Award has recognized a woman who makes a demonstrable contribution to improving the lives of women wanting to live free from violence. She is selected on the basis of outstanding commitment to improving the lives of women through increased access to justice and other systems. She is recognized for her advocacy in the area of violence against women—either through her paid employment, community leadership or volunteer work. The successful candidate will exemplify her understanding of the important intersections of gender, race, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, geographic isolation/disadvantage, disability and/or religious belief in building lives free from violence.

Anyone can nominate a candidate they believe meets the criteria of the the award.

For more information, please visit <http://schliferclinic.com/spirit-award/>



The Spirit of Barbra Schlifer Award
is proudly presented by:

TORYS
LLP

Clinic granted “exceptional request” to intervene at upcoming hearing into the conduct of Judge Robin Camp.

The Barbra Schlifer Clinic will be among a small group of women’s organizations who have been granted an exceptional request by the Canadian Judicial Council (CJC) to intervene in the upcoming inquiry into the conduct of Justice Robin Camp. The hearing will take place in Calgary from September 6 to 9, 2016.



(Andrew Balfour/Federal Court of Canada)

During a 2014 sexual assault trial in Alberta, Justice Camp made numerous comments showing sincere antipathy toward legislation in place to protect the integrity of vulnerable witnesses. He revealed stereotypical assumptions about how someone, confronted with sexual assault should behave. Repeatedly referring to the complainant, a 19-year-old Indigenous woman, as the accused he now famously asked, “Why couldn’t you just keep your knees together?”

The Alberta Court of Appeal overturned the decision to acquit the accused, stating that the judge’s conduct called into question his understanding of the law governing sexual assault. The appellate court ordered a retrial, having been persuaded that “sexual stereotypes and stereotypical myths...found their way into the trial judge’s judgment”.^[1]

Justice Camp was removed from the bench, but was later

appointed as a judge of the Federal Court by the Honourable Peter MacKay, former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

Of concern to the Clinic is the interaction Judge Camp now has with individuals who experience intersecting inequalities, such as race, religion, newcomer status and Indigeneity. Judge Camp has apologized for making inappropriate and insensitive comments during the 2014 trial, and has voluntarily sought out training and counselling. However, significant concern remains on the effect that the biased thinking and discriminatory comments expressed by the judge will have on survivors, whose worst fear is that they will not be believed by the criminal justice system.

The Clinic, in collaboration with the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre (Avalon) and Ending Violence Association of British Columbia (EVA BC) has the opportunity to intervene on the basis that no new evidence is submitted or that a position is taken on the merit of the allegations facing Judge Camp.

1. R v Wagar 2015 ABCA 327

Reflecting on 2016 at the Barbra Schlifer Clinic Annual General Meeting

Join us for our Annual General Meeting as keynote speaker Joan Riggs and special guest Asha el Karib participate in a panel on the Clinic’s international women’s rights work, moderated by Legal Director, Deepa Mattoo.

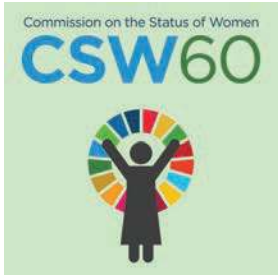
October 6, 2016 from 6 – 8 p.m.
Oakham House, Thomas Lounge,
Ryerson University, 63 Gould Street
Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1E9

Food and refreshments

RSVP by September 22 to Sarah Gray
s.gray@schliferclinic.com or at 416-323-9149 ext 262



Asha el Karib is one of Sudan’s leading feminists, the Director of the Sudanese Organization for Research based in Khartoum, Sudan and co-founder of the Gender Centre for Research and Training.



Global pandemic is a United Nations and national priority

The numbers are shocking. At some point in their lives, an estimated 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced a form of

physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner.^[1]

In Canada, one in three women will experience violence in her lifetime.

The United Nations has declared violence against women as a “grave violation of human rights.” When a woman comes to the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic, she is made to feel a part of a global movement to end and prevent violence against women.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A GLOBAL PANDEMIC IN MANY FORMS

Whether at home, on the streets or during war, violence against women is a GLOBAL PANDEMIC that takes place in PUBLIC and PRIVATE spaces.

FORMS OF VIOLENCE



It is because of the Clinic’s proven commitment to protecting the dignity, equality and security of women that the Clinic’s Executive Director, Amanda Dale, was asked to participate in the UN Commission on the Status of Women that took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York earlier this year.

Amanda joined a select delegation of Canadian women who represented non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to round out an international body of women from Member States, UN

entities, and other Economic and Social Council-accredited NGOs. She was further asked to facilitate a discussion to evaluate progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions stemming from the 57th Session that focused on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls by addressing the social and cultural norms, including gender stereotypes that perpetuate violence.

Though significant progress has been made, and awareness of violence against women and girls continues to increase within the international arena, the prevalence of violence against women remains unacceptable.

The many contributing factors posing a challenge to progress include:

“limited allocation of resources to implement laws, policies and programmes and insufficient monitoring and evaluation of their impact; the ad hoc approach taken in interventions to prevent violence against women; limited reliable data for monitoring progress; limited coordination among multiple stakeholders; underreporting of incidents; and the discriminatory attitudes of officials handling victims/survivors and insufficient enforcement of legislation.”^[2]

While the conclusions outline significant strides that still need to be taken, it is encouraging to note that nearly all Member States refer to the importance of multi-sectoral services, such as those provided by the Barbra Schlifer Clinic, in playing a critical role in the empowerment of women in the prevention of violence.

While much has been said elsewhere about our feminist Prime Minister, it is everyone’s responsibility to acknowledge violence against women as a violation of the most basic human rights. We must all continue to raise awareness of violence against women, to identify and combat the root causes of violence, and to support survivors both here at home and around the world.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. For more information about the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, or to download official documents coming out of the 60th Session, please visit: www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016

1. World Health Organization, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, South African Medical Research Council (2013). Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, p.2. For individual country information, see The World’s Women 2015, Trends and Statistics, Chapter 6, Violence against Women, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015. - See more at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures#notes>

2. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/4

Students acquire real-life experience in social justice law

Each year, the Clinic offers student placements within the legal department to current law students. The legal department staff supervise and mentor these students throughout their time at the Clinic, ensuring they receive hands-on experience in the areas of law requested most often by women: family, immigration, sexual assault and criminal. This summer, the Osgoode students supported the legal department in everything from assisting on client files and helping with legal intake to spearheading their own projects.

In their own words, here is how being at the Clinic has benefitted them.

Amy: Since high school I have wanted to work in some capacity with survivors of gendered and domestic violence and sexual assault. When I decided that I would try to do that with the law, my sights were set on the Clinic. This summer I have been lucky enough to work with Tiffany Lau on some of her family law files as well as sit in on some of the sexual assault independent legal advice sessions the Clinic provides. I have watched Tiffany in action during Summary Legal Advice sessions, client meetings and court appearances. I have also been able to work directly with clients on drafting court documents and fielding questions as they arise between meetings. Through working at the Clinic, I have gained an appreciation not only for the importance and value of the services offered to women, but also for the compassion, patience and devotion required to do this work.

Perhaps the most valuable lesson I will take with me, is the importance of non-judgement, open-mindedness and creativity when approaching clients coming from diverse backgrounds with individual histories of which we may only know a small portion. There is no textbook or one-size fits all solution to the legal problems women bring to the Clinic. My summer at the Clinic has been an invaluable experience that has only reinforced my desire to work in the violence against women sector.

Through working with the Clinic, I have gained an appreciation not only for the importance and value of the services offered to women, but also for the compassion, patience and devotion required to do this work.

Lindsay: When I began law school, I had the intent of working with women who have experienced violence, and knew that the Clinic would be a great fit for my goals and intentions.

My work at the Clinic has largely focused on a project that I created, and I am extremely grateful to the Clinic for the opportunity to see it materialize. Because of my pre-law work experience, I started thinking about the intersection of legal work and other services (specifically, medical and counselling) that assist survivors of violence, and the potential overlap. Services for survivors often don't (or shouldn't) exist in a vacuum—they necessarily interact with each other.

I was able to connect with the Clinic—and specifically Joanna Birenbaum—who served as my supervisor. We have been working collaboratively with the Ontario Network of Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres to examine the legal information that nurses, social workers and program coordinators have, what legal information clients tend to seek when they access services, and how that information and those referrals are delivered to clients.

Having the opportunity to work on my project with the clinic has given me the chance to think about actionable tasks that can further the cause of social justice.

Having the opportunity to work on my project with the clinic has given me the chance to think about actionable tasks that can further the cause of social justice. For example, how might the results serve as the basis for greater access to legal help for survivors of violence? How can partnerships between services agencies be strengthened to achieve this?

My time working at the clinic has been energizing. It reminds me of why I started law school and why I want to work with survivors of violence. Reflecting on my time at the Clinic will keep me grounded and focused as I progress and help will remind me to keep the most important aspect of this particular work top of mind.

Enough cannot be said about the value of third party engagement when it comes to meeting organizational fundraising objectives. Without the valued support of those who care to lend their efforts and voices to raising awareness and funds for the Clinic, we simply would not be able to meet our bottom line or continue to provide the many services and programs the Clinic offers women who have experienced domestic violence and sexual assault.



FILLING THE GAP

Filling the Gap, the brainchild of three very motivated women, is a conference held annually to empower young women in their daily personal and professional lives. Though still in its infancy, **Filling the Gap's** conferences have been a resounding success, with 100 per cent of the proceeds benefiting the Clinic. Stay tuned for information on next year's event!



The **Toronto Corporate Run** is held each fall with proceeds benefiting the Clinic. This spectacular run around Ontario Place at dusk is a post work favourite among those who want to combine corporate teambuilding with a little spirited fun. To register for this September 29th run, please visit: <http://www.torontocorporaterun.com/>

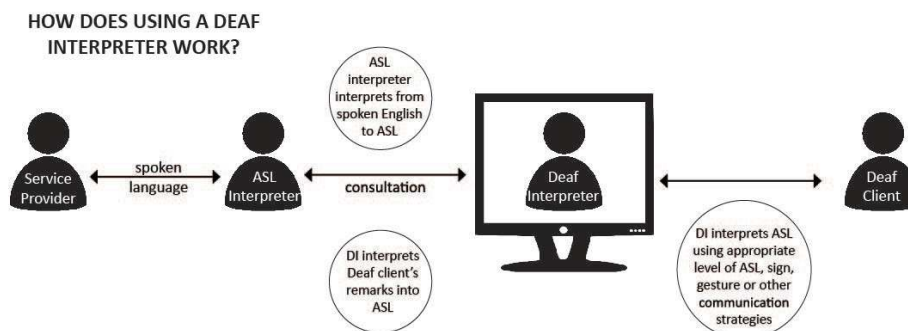
If you are interested in hosting your own fundraising event in support of ending and preventing violence against women, we are able to provide you with the tools you need to make your event a success. Contact s.stefania@schliferclinic.com to learn more.

Interpreter Services Toronto launches innovative new service for Deaf interpreters

Interpreter Services Toronto (IST), the Barbra Schlifer Clinic's social purpose enterprise, has worked hard over the past few months to fill an identified gap, and has recently developed a new service that enables providers to access a Deaf interpreter using video.

Because Deaf interpreters are limited in availability and can be difficult to access, especially in rural areas and with short notice, IST is making social services more accessible for Deaf newcomers to Canada, by providing interpretation with a Deaf interpreter using video remote interpretation. This critical new service increases accessibility and helps to ensure that Deaf interpreters and service providers can communicate more effectively, anytime, anywhere.

Service providers are eligible for a free trial!



For more information about Interpreter Services Toronto, please visit our website at www.interpreterservicestoronto.ca, contact us at 416-323-2503 or contact@interpreterservicestoronto.ca.

End Notes

A thunderous THANK YOU to a fearless leader

The Barbra Schlifer Clinic and thousands of women who now live free from violence, owe tremendous gratitude to Mary Lou Fassel, who retired from the Clinic as its Director of Legal Services earlier this year.

Mary Lou joined the Barbra Schlifer Clinic in 1987 as the Clinic's first Legal Director, and was instrumental in the development of the Clinic's comprehensive legal services for women who experience many different forms of violence. In her role, she oversaw the Clinic's legal representation in family, immigration, and criminal law as well as a range of legal support services.

A compassionate defender of women's rights, Mary Lou guided the Clinic through many phases, maintaining clear

focus on the Clinic's mission to always place the well-being of the women it serves first. This she did with immeasurable skill and determination.

As a result of her commitment, in 2009, the Barbra Schlifer Clinic was recognized for its work in promoting access to justice for women, with the receipt of the *Guthrie Award* presented by the Law Foundation of Ontario for "Excellence In Community Service". In 2012, Mary Lou herself was awarded the *Victim Services Award of Distinction* from the Attorney General as well as the Ontario Bar Association's *Award Of Excellence in the Promotion of Women's Equality*.

In 2015, the Clinic was the first ever organization to receive the *President's*

Award from the Women's Law Association of Ontario.

The Clinic thanks Mary Lou for her many years of service, and celebrates her commitment to ending and preventing violence against women.

Stay tuned for a retirement party announcement.



Mary Lou Fassel, the Clinic's first Director of Legal Services, retired in 2016

Congratulations Fay Faraday, 2016 recipient of the Spirit of Barbra Schlifer Award



The Tribute celebrated Barbra's spirit when the much-coveted Spirit of Barbra Schlifer Award was given to Fay Faraday for her commitment to migrant women, especially those who are exposed to precarious labour situations.

Thank you to our numerous supporters and donors—including Torys LLP for their 4-year commitment as the Award Sponsor; and Blakes, Cassels & Graydon LLP, our Tribute Title Sponsor of the past five years—for their long-standing financial support and commitment to the work we do.

This year, we were also fortunate to have CUPE join us as a Companion Funder.

Our Mission: The Barbra Schlifer Clinic offers legal representation, professional counselling and multilingual interpretation to women who have experienced abuse. Our diverse, skilled and compassionate staff accompany women through personal and practical transformation, helping to build lives free from violence. **We are a centre by, for and about women.** We amplify women's voices, and cultivate their skills and resilience. Together with our donors and volunteers, we are active in changing the conditions that threaten women's safety, dignity and equality.

- legal 
- counselling 
- interpretation 
- education 
- advocacy 

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