

Q & A

These dynamic WTLC Chairs are passionate about the field of personal injury and helping women grow in the profession.



Rachel Radomski
2019-20 WTLC Chair



Simmy Yu
2019-20 WTLC Vice-Chair

Q1

Why did you decide to become a personal injury lawyer?

For me, the question is not why I decided to become a personal injury lawyer, but rather, why I continue to be devoted to my practise in this area of law.

I fell into personal injury right out of law school, as a fresh, bright-eyed, young articling student. Since then, I have become passionate about this area of law. I am honoured to advocate on behalf of injured victims in a system weighed against them. Although much of what we do requires us to continuously explain the shortfalls in the law (non-indexed income replacement benefits, with an indexed deductible – don't get me started!), it really is a rewarding area. To be able to provide access to justice and a voice to those that would not otherwise have it motivates me to continue on a daily basis.

I knew I wanted to be in a field where the work was interesting and varied. Thankfully, personal injury law allows you to do a bit of everything. Between meeting with clients, doing legal research, attending discoveries and mediations or communicating with counsel and adjusters, there is always so much going on. It is also satisfying to be able to help people when they need it most. The insurance system is tricky and plaintiff lawyers serve an important role in leveling the playing field.

Q2

What would you like accomplish in your WTLC leadership term?

I would like to deepen my connections with the other talented female lawyers in the field, and create a strong network where advice and stories can be shared for the benefit of all.

I understand that practice in this area of law, especially as a female, can be particularly challenging at times. There is immense pressure to continue to move your career forward in the “correct” way. More than ever before, we must recognize that there is no “one size fits all” model of how to become successful, or what success means. I would like to generate a conversation about these conceptions, and provide access to mentors who can provide guidance and leadership based on varied experience.

I hope to be able to engage more OTLA members to participate in women’s caucus activities. It is such a valuable initiative to build a sense of community and to collectively find ways to tackle issues that affect female lawyers. I hope I can help make it easier for women to support other women in their practice of law, especially when it comes to issues that we face with career progression and practice management.

Q3

Have you faced any issues/barriers as a woman in law?

I believe that the landscape for women in law is a unique one that is ever changing. We are lucky in that there are many pioneers in this industry who have afforded us the rights and liberties that we enjoy today. However, we continue to face ongoing hurdles in our careers. The old “boys club” may not be as overt as it once was, but it remains present in subtle ways that we encounter and must overcome daily. The challenges may be small at times, but they still exist.

In the past month, in the same week I was mistaken for a secretary by a potential client, called “sweetie” by a male client while preparing him for a discovery, and asked to join another client on a trip abroad. These are just the tip of the iceberg, and are by no means a comprehensive review of the

Issues and barriers certainly exist, but the more awareness and understanding there are to the issues women face, the more we can do to continue to close those barriers. You may recall recently OTLA published an issue of The Litigator on the topic of Women and the Law. Many lawyers took their time to share their insights and I am grateful for their collective effort. Many of the issues female lawyers face are shared by women working in other professional services. Taking time off to start a family can hurt career progression. Even those who work solo or at small firms may find it difficult to take time off without having to rebuild their client base. OTLA provides a great platform for us to come together over common issues by identifying them, raising awareness and helping to devise

Q4

Is there anything outside of law that you are really passionate about?

hurdles that we continue to face.

We must continue to do as those before us have done, by breaking down those barriers until we no longer need to pose the question of what hurdles an individual faces just because they are a woman. For every door that has been opened us, we must try to open doors for others.

I am passionate about travelling. Nothing is better than exploring a new place. This year, I was fortunate to travel in India. India is an incredibly vibrant and diverse country that provided unparalleled perspective on life in Canada. I followed this trip with a one week hiking trip in Tonto National Forest, near Scottsdale, Arizona, which allowed for quiet reflection.

I believe that a work-life balance and enjoying your passions are necessary ingredients to a successful career in law.

ways to solve or manage these issues.

Travelling – it lets you see things from another perspective.

Call for Writers:

Do you have a passion for women's issues in law?

We are looking for OTLA members who are interested in publishing an article for our WTLC section. This is a great opportunity to build your professional profile among OTLA's more than 330 women trial lawyer members. Published work also looks great on your firm website profile.

Please contact Jeff Hanlan at jhanlan@otla.com for more information.