

I am a feminist lawyer, working as an advocate and activist for women's equality. My expertise and primary area of interest is in violence against women and the law.

For a number of years, I had a law practice in which I represented primarily women who had experienced violence and those who provided services to them. My clients included women with or leaving abusive partners, women who had experienced sexual violence and battered women's shelters and rape crisis centres. My work took me into family, child protection and criminal court as well as before tribunals, professional regulatory bodies and the human rights commission.

Over my years in practice, it became clear to me that women were being systemically denied equal treatment in whatever legal or quasi-legal system they found themselves and that systemic advocacy within the legal realm was essential to women's equality.

In 1998, I joined the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC, www.metrac.org) as Legal Director, where I established the Ontario Women's Justice Network (OWJN, www.owjn.org). While at METRAC, I was involved with policy analysis of women's equality issues, law reform consultation with all levels of government, development and presentation of legal information workshops, training and education sessions for police, Crown Attorneys and other professionals, development and delivery of legal information teaching materials for use by abused women and women's shelter and sexual assault centre workers.

I was the legal writer for OWJN's website, which offered basic, plain language legal information written from a feminist perspective for women experiencing violence who wanted to know about their rights and responsibilities.

After leaving METRAC, I took the position of Executive Director with the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL, www.nawl.ca), an organization that uses research, writing, education and lobbying to work for the equality of all women in Canada. This was a short-lived move, since NAWL lost its traditional funder when the Stephen Harper government eliminated women's equality advocacy from the mandate of Status of Women Canada.

I joined the staff of YWCA Canada's National Office in 2007 as Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, where I developed public policy and advocacy strategies for the YWCA's 30+ Member Associations.

I was a member of the Management Committee of Ontario's Family Law Education for Women Project (FLEW, www.onefamilylaw.ca), which, through a collaborative project involving a number of women's equality and public legal information organizations, developed plain language legal information on women's rights under Ontario family law.

From 2007 – 2009, I was a member of Ontario's Domestic Violence Advisory Council, which provided recommendations to the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Deb Matthews. You can read our report and recommendations at the Ontario Women's

Directorate website (www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/owd).

Since mid-2008, I have worked as a consultant and trainer with a wide variety of women's equality/violence against women organizations, on such topics as legal issues faced by survivors of male violence, sexual assault, record keeping, disclosure, duty to report, confidentiality and custody and access law. I provide consultation services to a number of organizations with respect to policy development and have developed and delivered strategic planning to several women's organizations in Ontario.

My training work includes online legal information courses for frontline workers (with Springtide Resources, www.springtideresources.org), development of curriculum for Legal Aid Ontario's domestic violence training for lawyers and work with the National Judicial Institute.

At the present time, my major projects include working with Luke's Place Support and Resource Centre for Abused Women and Children, as the Legal Director of the Pro Bono Summary Advice Clinic. This unique clinic brings together pro bono lawyers and Legal Support Workers to assist unrepresented abused women through the family court process.

I am also continuing to work with the National Steering Committee of NAWL in a strategic planning capacity, as the organization works to find a way to continue to operate without reliable government funding.

I am a frequent speaker on national radio and television and at provincial and national conferences on the topic of violence against women and the law.