

CCLA 2nd Annual Equity Conference “EDI: Beyond the Fad”

Thursday, May 29, 2025

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

David Ang, *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada & Conference Co-Chair*

David works for the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada.

Yameena Ansari, *Ansari Immigration Law*

Yameena’s legal acumen is backed by her licensure in multiple jurisdictions, including Ontario, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories, reflecting her comprehensive understanding of Canadian immigration law. Recognized for her impactful work, the Canadian Council of Muslim Women awarded her the “Woman Who Inspires” accolade, a testament to her influence and dedication. Yameena’s legal prowess was honed at the University of Victoria School of Law, where she emerged as a lawyer with a deep-rooted passion for immigration issues.

Natasha Bakht, *University of Ottawa*

Natasha Bakht is a Full Professor of law at the University of Ottawa. She held the Shirley Greenberg Chair for Women and the Legal Profession from 2020-2024. Prof Bakht graduated from the University of Ottawa’s English common law program and then served as a law clerk to Justice Louise Arbour at the Supreme Court of Canada. She was called to the bar of Ontario in 2003 and completed her LL.M at New York University School of Law as a Global Hauser scholar. Professor Bakht joined the Faculty of Law in 2005, where she teaches/has taught Criminal Law and Procedure, Introduction to Family Law, Advanced Family Law, the Walsh Family Law Moot, Multicultural Rights in Liberal Democracies, Children and the Law and Women, Religion and Law.

Katie Black, *Black and Associates, CCLA President*

After practicing at a national firm, Katie helped found a bilingual litigation boutique before starting her own firm of Black and Associates. Katie received her law degree with honors standing from the University of Ottawa’s Faculty of Law. Katie publishes and lectures in the areas of contract law, constitutional, privacy and tort law. She enjoyed her time teaching first year contract law at the University of Ottawa’s Faculty of Common Law. From 2016 to her return to private practice in 2018, Katie had the honour of serving as the Judicial Affairs Advisor to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. Active in the wider community, Katie co-founded the Refugee Sponsorship Support Program (RSSP). With over 1000 lawyers across the country, the RSSP has given pro-bono legal services to the refugee sponsorship community resulting in over 4,000 refugees obtaining haven in Canada. She also co-created the Pro Bono Employment Law Clinic, in the summer of 2020, in response to the unprecedented layoffs due to COVID-19. In recognition of her professional excellence and commitment to her community, Katie was awarded the Gordon F. Henderson Award in 2016 by the County of Carleton Law

Association. In 2017, she received the Ontario Bar Association's David Scott, Q.C. Award for Pro Bono Law. In 2018, Katie was inducted into the Common Law Honours Society of the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Common Law for her leadership, excellence and community work in law.

Claire Boychuck, *RavenLaw*

Claire received her B.C.L./L.L.B. from McGill's Faculty of Law and her B.A. (Hons.) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she was a Davis Scholar. Claire is an alumnus of the Parliamentary Internship Programme and takes an interest in questions of law and public policy. She is currently completing a procedural textbook on the role of public interest interveners in Canadian courts (*Intervening in Canadian Courts*, forthcoming 2025). Claire speaks English, French, Spanish, and some Mandarin Chinese.

Ronalee Carey, *Ronalee Carey Law*

Ronalee has been practicing law in Ontario since 1998 and started focusing exclusively on immigration law in 2008. Immigration law has become her passion. She truly enjoys her work because she helps people land a dream job in Canada, reunite with family members, or even escape a potentially dangerous situation back home. It's important work, and Ronalee takes pride in doing it well. She's an active volunteer in her community and has taken on a variety of leadership roles for non-profit organizations.

Natasha Chettiar, *Cybulski Chettiar Johnston LLP & Conference Co-Chair*

Natasha was called to the Bar of Ontario in 2017 and practices exclusively in the area of family law.

Laila Demirdache, *Community Legal Services Ottawa*

Laïla Demirdache has been working as a staff lawyer with Community Legal Services of Ottawa for over 20 years where she has providing legal representation advice in both English and French in the area of immigration and refugee law. Laïla has also been involved in a variety of advocacy initiatives including litigation as co-counsel on behalf of immigrant and refugee-serving organizations before the Federal Court, the Federal Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court of Canada. Laïla is often appointed by all four of the Immigration and Refugee Board's Divisions to act as a Designated Representative for people who, because of their mental health or age, are unable to appreciate the nature of the proceedings.

Maya Fernandez, *Nelligan Law*

Maya practices labour, employment, and human rights law at Nelligan Law. Maya was drawn to this area of practice because she deeply believes that everyone should be treated fairly and with respect in their work. Maya completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Guelph as a Loran Scholar. She received the Foundation Canada Scholarship to complete her master's degree in Human Rights at the London School of Economics. She completed her law degree at the University of Ottawa. Before working in law, Maya worked in various policy roles for the Government of the Northwest Territories, in Yellowknife.

Emily Lam, *Lam Law Firm*

Emily Lam is an accomplished litigator and creative problem solver at Emily Lam Law. She has appeared at all levels of court, largely representing individuals from marginalized and racialized groups. She has a particular interest in addressing issues of systemic discrimination in both criminal and civil law, and her practice includes conducting workplace investigations, inquests, civil Charter litigation, and state accountability cases. She graduated from Osgoode Hall Law School and is a co-founder of the Group of Racialized Ontario Women Litigators (GROWL).

Cathy Lin, *Public Prosecution Service of Canada*

Cathy is counsel with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, where she prosecutes cases under federal law, specifically prosecutions under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Before joining the Public Prosecution Service, Cathy served as a counsel with the Department of Justice. Earlier in her career, Cathy worked in the Senate of Canada as a staffer for the Honourable Marilou McPhedran and the Honourable Stan Kutcher. Cathy has had an extensive career with the public service and worked for various departments in government, including the Privy Council Office, Global Affairs Canada and the Immigration and Refugee Board. Cathy est avocate au Service des poursuites pénales du Canada, où elle mène à procès des accusations en vertu des lois fédérales, en particulier, la Loi réglementant certaines drogues et autres substances. Avant de se joindre au Service des poursuites pénales, Cathy a été avocate au ministère de la Justice. Plus tôt dans sa carrière, Cathy a travaillé au Sénat du Canada à titre de membre du personnel de l'honorable Marilou McPhedran et de l'honorable Stan Kutcher. Cathy a eu une longue carrière au sein de la fonction publique et a travaillé pour divers ministères du gouvernement, y compris le Bureau du Conseil privé, Affaires mondiales Canada et la Commission de l'immigration et du statut de réfugié.

Virginia Lomax, *Lomax Law*

Virginia Lomax is the owner and principal lawyer at Lomax Law, and provides quality legal services specializing in Employment Law, with a focus on employment advice for Indigenous Nations and organizations, S. 35 Aboriginal and Treaty rights. Human rights (Charter of Rights and Freedoms, provincial and federal human rights codes), Specific Claims; First Nations' Bylaws, Not-for-profit corporate governance. Justice and policy reform, Self-governance agreements, and Contract drafting. Virginia previously provided legal advice and services during her time with two boutique Aboriginal law firms with national scope (First Peoples Law LLP and Westaway Law Group). Virginia was also in-house counsel to the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). She acted as lead counsel for NWAC during the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. She has been honoured to represent Indigenous clients as interveners before the Supreme Court of Canada on high-profile cases: *R. v. Ewert, Canada (Canadian Human Rights Commission) v. Canada (Attorney General)*, *Southwind et al v. Canada*, and *Restoule v. Canada (Attorney General)*.

Graham Mayeda, *Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa*

Graham Mayeda joined the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa in 2005. His current research focuses on criminal law, private law, administrative law, legal theory, and the impact of international law on sustainable development. Graham began his academic career in

philosophy, in which he received both M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Toronto. His work in this area focuses primarily on the philosophy of Japanese philosophers Nishida Kitarō, Watsuji Tetsurō and Kuki Shūzō. He also writes about Immanuel Kant, Hannah Arendt, European phenomenology (esp. Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger), and Neo-Kantianism.

Anne-Marie McElroy, *McElroy Law*

Anne-Marie grew up in Ottawa, Ontario and graduated with a degree in sociology and contemporary studies from the University of King's College in Halifax. She completed law school at the University of Ottawa in 2009 and has been practicing criminal law exclusively since her call to the bar in 2010. Anne-Marie is active in the legal community. She supervises Pro Bono Students Canada projects and sits on the Board of CoSA (Circles of Support and Accountability). She has taught first year criminal law at the University of Ottawa law school and mentors female defence lawyers as part of the Women in Canadian Criminal Defence mentorship program. Anne-Marie previously served as a director on the Ottawa Defence Counsel Association from 2016 to 2020, as well as sitting on the Adult Community Justice Network. Anne-Marie is an award-winning blog writer. She won the 2015 Canadian Law Blog award, 'Clawbie' award for the best new blog and the 2016 'Clawbie' award for the best practitioner blog.