



2024 SPEAKERS

Elder Jan Kahehti:io Longboat, Turtle Clan of the Mohawk Nation



Jan Kahehti:io Longboat, Turtle Clan of the Mohawk Nation, is an Elder, educator, writer, herbalist, cultural advocate, and visionary, having dedicated her life to the dissemination and learning of Indigenous language and culture. Longboat ran a ten-year program called Idawadadi, which won the Aboriginal Healing Foundation's best practices award and an outgrowth project entitled Dotah's House to assist Indigenous women survivors to heal from the abuse of Residential Schools while strengthening their communities through cultural knowledge. Frequently called on as a counselor, committee and board member, Kahehti:io has served on the Centre for Indian Scholars and Association of American Indian Physicians, Chiefswood National Historic Societies Board, Six Nations Elders Council, Kanatsiohare:ke Mohawk Community, the Children's Aid Society of Brant, among others.

Longboat continues to serve as a board member at the St. Michael's Hospital Well Living House project in Toronto as well as the on the Elders' councils at the University of Toronto, Enahtig Healing Lodge and Learning Centre, and the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto.

Jan Longboat is currently an Elder Advisor to the Ministry of Justice: Indigenous Peoples' Court in Brantford. She taught at Mohawk College, McMaster University, and the University of Toronto and has worked with several Indigenous health centres including Wabano, Desdwadadesnye, and SOHAK. Kahehti:io received her degree as a Natural Health Practitioner from the Canadian College of Natural Medicine and received a degree in counseling from Laurentian University. She continues to live, teach, write, and garden on the Six Nations of the Grand River, where she was born and raised.



Justice Catrina Braid, Superior Court of Justice

Justice Braid graduated in 1994 with both a B.A. in psychology from Brock University and an LL.B. from Osgoode Hall Law School. She started her legal career at a litigation firm in Waterloo where she had a varied practice including criminal defence work, family law, civil litigation and standing agent work for the Federal Crown. In 2000, Justice Braid took a permanent position as a drug prosecutor. She worked as a Federal Crown in Toronto and Kitchener. Justice Braid was appointed to the Superior Court of Justice in 2014. She presides in family, civil and criminal matters in Kitchener, Ontario.

Justice Lori Anne Thomas, Ontario Court of Justice

— Keynote speaker



The Honourable Justice Lori Anne Thomas has been an Ontario Court of Justice (Toronto) Judge since 2020. Before her appointment, Justice Thomas was a criminal defence lawyer.

In addition to being a defence lawyer, she was the President of the national Canadian Association of Black Lawyers, an Executive Board member of the Ontario Criminal Lawyers' Association, program director of a pro bono appeal program and an educator for law students.

Justice Thomas was raised by her single mother in Toronto. She was the first person in her family to attend post-secondary education.

Kimmy Adams-Wiersma, Paralegal



Kimmy Adams-Wiersma has over 20 years of experience in the legal field. She began working for law firms during high school summer breaks and her passion for the law has developed from there. Kimmy attained her paralegal licence in 2016 and has worked under the direction of some amazing lawyers. She has experience in various types of law including wills and estates, real estate, corporate, municipal, provincial offences, family, civil, and administrative law.

Kimmy has proudly been an Ontario Public Servant since 2021 where she has held many roles including Court and Client Representative, Caseworker, and Supervisor Court Operations.

Kimmy has sat on various committees including the City of Kitchener Property Standards Committee and various diversity, equity and inclusion committees.



Alyssa Bain, Crown Attorney

Alyssa is a graduate of Wilfrid Laurier University (BA – Psychology, 1997) and the University of Ottawa (LLB, 2001).

She was called to the Ontario Bar in 2002 after completing her articling year with the Department of Justice in Toronto. She began her legal career as a Federal Prosecutor with the Public Prosecution Service in Kitchener. In that role she gained extensive criminal trial litigation prosecuting drug offences within the Waterloo Region. In 2019, Alyssa joined the Waterloo Region Crown Attorney's Office as an Assistant Crown Attorney, where she expanded her role in public service to prosecuting homicides, offences related to firearms, intimate partner violence, and sexual assault. She is currently on secondment in Stratford, continuing her work as an Assistant Crown Attorney for the County of Perth.



Jennifer Bolduc, Family Lawyer

Jennifer began her career in Thunder Bay, Ontario with a full-service law firm but ultimately returned to Southern Ontario and commenced work in the Waterloo Region in 2014. After working other local firms where she developed a stellar relationship with her fellow lawyers and the courts, Jennifer joined Giffen LLP in March 2023. Jennifer practices solely in family law, including being a panel lawyer for the Office of the Children's Lawyer.

Jennifer currently sits as the Vice President of the Waterloo Region Law Association (the first in the organization's history to be from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community) and sits on numerous WRLA committees including the Continuing Professional Development Committee, the EDI Committee, and the Unified Family Court Bench and Bar Committee. She also sits as a representative on the Courthouse Child Protection Committee and the Courthouse Community Resource and Liaison Committee which works to bring together stakeholders around the Region to identify and improve family law and associated services.

Jennifer has been an active volunteer in the Ontario Justice Education Network's Waterloo Braiding Diversity program which aims to connect marginalized and/or racialized young women (cis and trans) in high school with women working in the legal sector. Jennifer is currently

co-chairing the development of Braiding Diversity 2.0, a program geared towards post-secondary students.

In addition to being the current Chair of the Family Lawyers of Waterloo Region, Jennifer is a member of The Advocates' Society, the Family Lawyers Association, the Waterloo Region Law Association, the Ontario Bar Association, and the Canadian Bar Association.

Jennifer grew up in Southwestern Ontario before obtaining her B.A. in English Literature from Kentucky State University on a full fastball scholarship in 2006 (summa cum laude), graduating from the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law in 2009, and being called to the Bar in 2010. In her spare time, Jennifer enjoys playing hockey and golf as well as attempting to keep up with her dog on walks.

Megan Brohman, SCJ Law Clerk



Megan was born and raised in Waterloo. She graduated from Carleton University in 2020 with an Honours B.A. in Criminology, with a Concentration in Law and a Minor in Sociology. She then attended Western Law where she earned her J.D. in 2023. She is currently articling as a Judicial Law Clerk with the Superior Court of Justice and will be called to the Ontario Bar in June 2024.

Megan is passionate about helping others. During her third year at Western, Megan worked as a Student Caseworker at the Community Legal Clinic, where she managed family, criminal, administrative, and landlord and tenant files. She also volunteered as a Co-Team Leader of the Legal Information for Sexual Assault (LISA) Pilot Project in its inaugural year.

Megan hopes to pursue a career in litigation. In the summer between second and third year, Megan worked at Giffen Lawyers as a Summer Student in the litigation department. She also worked as a Research Assistant to Professor Claire Houston during her second year, assisting with the studies of spousal support for men and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Ontario family courts. Megan is currently interested in both family and criminal law.



Annika Butler, SCJ Law Clerk

Annika received her JD from Osgoode Hall Law School at York University in 2023. Prior to obtaining her law degree, she graduated with highest distinction from McMaster University with an Honours BA in Political Science and Indigenous Studies.

During law school, Annika was heavily involved in the Osgoode Community in a variety of ways. During her second and third year she had the privilege of being the Osgoode Indigenous Students Association's Director of External Affairs and Co-Chair, respectively. She was also a member of Osgoode Women's Network and the Criminal Law Society. Apart from extra-curriculars, Annika also had the privilege of participating in Osgoode's Intensive in Indigenous Lands, Governments and Resources where she was placed within the Minister of Justice/ Attorney General of Canada (MOJAG) Office in Ottawa. Her involvement in community, as well as her academic achievements led Annika to being awarded a Dean's Golden Key.

In her 1L summer Annika worked for the Crown Attorney's office in Halton; she built upon this work during her 2L summer, where she worked for the Crown Law Office- Criminal, contributing to important policy work within the office.

Outside of the law Annika is an avid reader and hockey fan.

Abby Carpenter, 3rd Year TMU Law Student



Abby Carpenter is Mohawk, Bear Clan who is born, raised and resides on Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. She began her legal career in 2008 as a Law Clerk and originating the Indigenous Liaison in Personal Injury at Pace Law. In 2015, she received her paralegal diploma. In 2016, she became a licensed Paralegal at the Law Society of Ontario. With entrepreneurial work in mind, Abby opened up her own practice, Carpenter Law Office Licensed Paralegal, and continued to work in personal injury until she was offered an opportunity to work as a Gladue Caseworker.

Currently, Abby is in her final term as a 3L law student at Lincoln Alexander School of Law at Toronto Metropolitan University. She is working in the Aboriginal Law area and is completing her placement with Dr. Beverly Jacobs. Abby has served as the President of the

Indigenous law student association and the Indigenous Legal Education committee at Lincoln Alexander. Last year she represented the law school at the Kawaskimhon Moot in Victoria, BC. Abby strives to give back to her community. She continues to do so with her work on Six Nations as the System Navigator at the Survivors Secretariat.

Sarah Cheshire, Criminal Defence Lawyer



Sarah Cheshire was called to the bar in 2018. She graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University with an Honours B.A. in Criminology and Contemporary Studies. She then attended law school at the University of Ottawa. Sarah summered and articulated in Kitchener with Brennan Smart and opened her own criminal defence practice in 2020 before the pandemic started. Since law school, her career has focused exclusively on criminal law, with a keen interest in youth matters and drug cases.

Sarah is on the Legal Aid Duty Counsel Panel in both Guelph and Kitchener, where she provides summary legal advice and representation on bail and plea matters for clients who cannot afford their own lawyer. She is also a member of the Grand Valley Women's Institution panel of Duty Counsel lawyers who assist inmates with defending disciplinary charges.

In 2023, Sarah became the Director for Waterloo-Wellington on the Board of the Criminal Lawyer's Association where she is focused on creating educational events for young criminal lawyers.

Prior to law school, Sarah spent seven years coaching competitive swimming with the Cambridge Aquajets Swim Club. During her spare time, she enjoys a variety of fitness and outdoor activities and is planning to cycle the entire Guelph to Goderich trail.

Mara Clarke, Family Lawyer



Mara Clark started her legal career in the areas of securities and corporate law, upon being called to the Bar. In 2008 she returned to her social justice/public legal education roots when she joined the outreach team of Ontario Justice Education Network. In her role as Director of Outreach, Mara was responsible for managing the team that taught vulnerable youth about the law. In this role, Mara designed family law public legal education programs for

some of Ontario's most vulnerable mothers. Through this challenging work, Mara found her passion: family law.

Mara's settlement focused, culturally sensitive approach to family law practice prioritizes her client's interests and the parties' relationship. This helps establish the "new normal" that will guide their interactions moving forward. At times, the assistance of the court is required to settle matters. In those cases Mara offers zealous advocacy, paired with a no-nonsense but reasonable, client focused approach.

A proud product of Ontario's social welfare system, raised by her mother in a busy household with 5 siblings, Mara understands socio-economical challenges first hand. Mara is a resolution focused, zealous family lawyer who works efficiently to guide her clients through the family court system.

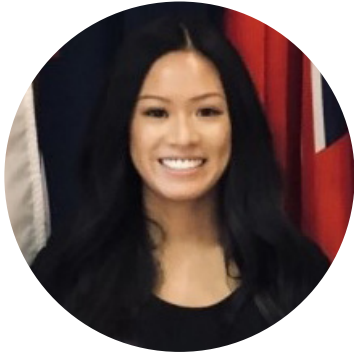
Rebecca Currie, Probation Officer



Rebecca holds a Bachelor Degree in Social Development Studies and an Honours Degree in Social Work from the University of Waterloo. Rebecca commenced her employment as a Probation & Parole Officer in 1998 and has worked in Kitchener and briefly in Hamilton. Rebecca has also had the opportunity to complete developmental assignments as a Social Worker at the former Guelph Correctional Centre and as a Victim Witness Services Worker at the Victim Witness Assistance Program at Kitchener Court.

Rebecca has predominantly supervised specialized case loads such as Sex Offenders, Intensive Supervision/High Risk Offenders, Guns and Gangs, and Prolific Offenders. Her current duties include supervising offenders placed on conditions by the Court or the Ontario Parole Board, completing assessments, writing court reports, and liaising with various community resources as well as the police.

Rebecca has had the opportunity to participate in a number of committees including Aftercare, Forensic Mental Health, Employee Health and Productivity, and Guns and Gangs. Rebecca is an active union member of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) and sits on the executive of her local branch.



Linda Dinh, Probation Officer

Linda received her bachelor's degree in Community and Criminal Justice from Conestoga College. She started her career as a Probation and Parole officer in 2018 and has worked in Kitchener, Toronto, Woodstock, and London.

In her role as a Probation and Parole Officer, she has worked briefly in a specialized caseload working with sex offenders.

Prior to her career in corrections, she spent several years working in the social service field working with individuals who experienced chronic homelessness with complex mental health and/or addiction related issues.



Cst. Robyn Esplen, Waterloo Regional Police Service

Robyn Esplen has been with Waterloo Regional Police Service for 12 years.

She started her journey into criminal justice through her schooling. She completed her undergraduate degree at University of Guelph, in Criminal Justice and Public Policy. She was deciding between becoming a lawyer or a police officer and decided to continue her education at Durham Collage in a graduate program, Advanced Policing and Investigations, which ultimately swayed her into the career of policing. Robyn decided she wanted to be part of the action, and work within the community.

Robyn became a Special Constable with WRPS, and worked in the court system for two years before becoming a police officer.

Robyn has had amazing experiences and opportunities in her career and is currently in the Community Wellbeing and Engagement branch, as part of the Direct Action and Response Team (DART).

Robyn has always been passionate about the Criminal Justice System, and how she can leave her mark on her community, which can look different everyday.



Alanna Fedak-Tarnopolsky, Crown Attorney

Alanna Fedak-Tarnopolsky began her career in law as a summer and articling student with the Crown Law Office - Criminal in Toronto. In July 2011, she joined the Peel Crown Attorney's Office as an Assistant Crown Attorney, where she specialized in serious firearms prosecutions as well as cases involving domestic and sexual abuse. In April 2022, Alanna became the Crown Attorney for the Region of Waterloo. In her spare time, Alanna volunteers with equine therapy programs, to share her passion for horses with children.

Thusha Mayuran, Civil Litigation Lawyer



Thusha Mayuran is an in-house defense lawyer at a large national insurance company. Thusha earned her law degree at the University of Windsor Ontario in 2011. Although today, she is a litigation lawyer tasked with arguing before judges, she arrived in Canada as a refugee 3 decades ago with knowledge of little to no English. As a refugee herself, Thusha is very familiar with the plight of new arrivals in a strange, western country.

Thusha's pivotal experience was the Co-op program she was fortunate enough to complete with Justice Catrina Braid at the Department of Justice when she was only 17 years old. This experience and watching the fearless litigation and leadership exemplified by Justice Braid inspired Thusha to be a litigation lawyer. Today, she lives in Pickering with her husband and son.

Cst. Nicole Morrison, Waterloo Regional Police Service



Cst. Nicole Morrison graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University in 2018 with an undergraduate degree in Communication studies. During her time at Laurier she was team captain for the Varsity Women's basketball team and was awarded female athlete of the year in her last year. Nicole continued to support the Laurier community by working as a special constable at the University before getting hired in 2019 with the Waterloo Regional Police service where she is currently a patrol officer in the Kitchener area. Nicole most recently represented her police service in the 2023 World Police and Fire games where she won gold medals in the powerlifting event and set new world records.

Nicole has always had a passion for community work especially working with female youth, by being a volunteer coach for girls basketball in the Kitchener Waterloo region. Becoming a police officer has allowed Nicole to continue to serve her community in a meaningful way and involve herself in volunteer work related to youth outreach.

Cst. Leona Mueller, Waterloo Regional Police Service



Cst. Leona Mueller has been a police officer with Waterloo Regional Police since 2018. She is currently working in the Community Engagement Unit where she is assigned to the Rural Townships within the Waterloo Region. The Community Engagement Unit solves complex problems within the community that may require more time, collaboration of community partners, connection to resources and out of the box thinking, which is where Leona excels. Leona has a passion for helping vulnerable members of the community feel safe, connected and supported. Outside of policing, Leona has three daughters who keep her busy with all their sports and activities.

Najla Nureddin, Law Librarian



Najla is a Library Technician at the Waterloo Region Law Association. She received her Bachelor's of Environmental Studies from the University of Waterloo in 2017. During her studies, she completed co-op placements at the Government of Canada's department of Agriculture and Agri-Food and MMM Group, an engineering firm. After graduating, Najla worked for five years as a mapping and field technician at WSP, an engineering firm working. She specialized in mapping and modelling soil and groundwater contamination across southern Ontario. In 2022, she decided to change her career path and began working at the Waterloo Public Library while pursuing her Library and Information Technician diploma. Since working at the Waterloo Region Law Association, her passion for researching has flourished. She is a member of the Canadian Association of Law Libraries, the Toronto Association of Law Libraries, the Ontario Library Association, and the Ontario Courthouse Libraries Association. Najla's parents and siblings immigrated to Canada in 1994, and she is the first in her family to be born in Canada. Najla currently lives just outside Breslau with her husband. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening, yoga, and reading.



Thaniya Jeyachandra, SCJ Law Clerk

Thaniya is currently articling as a judicial law clerk at Superior Court of Justice. She earned her law degree from the University of Windsor in 2023. Thaniya went to Brock University for her undergraduate degree. As part of the dual degree business program she was in, she spent 2.5 years at Brock and 1.5 years at the European Business School in Germany, graduating with both an Honours BBA and BSc in Management.

Prior to law school, Thaniya lived in the Kitchener-Waterloo region and worked in human resources and marketing as the Co-op Recruitment Coordinator and Social Media Lead at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada.

During law school, Thaniya competed on Windsor Law's Wilson Moot team, volunteered at the John Howard Society of Niagara as a justice services volunteer, and was also a peer mentor. Thaniya was a teaching assistant for law related courses at the Odette School of Business during her 2nd and 3rd year of law school. During her summers while in law school, Thaniya worked at the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO) and as a summer student at Sullivan Mahoney LLP, a full-service law firm in the Niagara region.

Thaniya served on SALCO's board as a student board member for two years and is currently a member of NextNiagara, a non-profit advisory council to the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce which brings the perspective of young professionals. Thaniya enjoys kayaking, hiking (in both the summer and winter!) and participating in CrossFit.

Kathy Jiang, Civil Litigation Lawyer



Kathy Jiang is a litigation and dispute resolution associate in Gowling WLG's Waterloo Region office where she practises in the areas of construction and municipal law. Kathy completed her JD at Queen's University where she co-founded the Queen's Asian Law Students Association and volunteered with the Queen's Women and Law Club.

Prior to joining Gowling WLG, Kathy worked as a Judicial Law Clerk at the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. She gained valuable insight into the judicial reasoning process and how to effectively advocate for her clients. Kathy has also practiced construction litigation at a boutique firm in Toronto.



Kerri Rice, Supervisor of Court Operations

Kerri Rice is currently a Supervisor of Court Operations at the Waterloo Region Courthouse. Kerri oversees operations in the Civil, Small Claims, Estates, Enforcement, SCJ Criminal, Exhibits, and Finance areas of the courthouse. Kerri has always had an interest in the Criminal Justice System. She has a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Criminal Justice and Public Policy from the University of Guelph, and obtained her Paralegal licence in 2020. Kerri started working for the Court Services Division in 2021 and has pursued a variety of positions since then, including Administrative Assistant and Group Leader. In her personal life Kerri enjoys photography, true-crime podcasts, reading, crafting, and spending time finding new coffee shops and hiking trails with her partner and their dog Hemi!



Jennifer Roggeman, Immigration Lawyer

Jennifer attended the University of Guelph where she obtained her B.A., (Psychology). Then Jennifer attended University of Victoria Law School, where she earned her law degree, graduating in 1998. As an immigrant herself, Jennifer understands her client's circumstances. When she arrived in Canada in grade 11, she didn't speak a word of English. Today, as an immigration lawyer, Jennifer has helped hundreds of immigrants start a new life in Canada. She lives in Kitchener, with her spouse and two children.



Armin Sethi, Acting Deputy Crown Attorney

Armin did her B.A. Honours at York University, specializing in Criminology and International Development Studies, her J.D. at Windsor Law, and her LL.M. at Osgoode Hall Law School. She was called to the Bar in 2013, after articling at Crown Law Office - Criminal. She started at the Kitchener Crown Attorney's Office in 2013 and became the Acting Deputy Crown Attorney in August 2022. She specializes in mental health, youth matters, and hate crime, and works on major prosecutions and warrants. Outside of law, she writes screenplays with her sister, dances, and enjoys sports.



Ritu Singh, Counsel at Giffen LLP

Ritu received an Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree (with Distinction) in Political Science from Wilfrid Laurier University in 2021. Following her undergrad, Ritu attended law school at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom, where she obtained an Honours Bachelor of Laws in 2022.

Ritu started her career at Giffen LLP where she worked as a Summer Student and Articling Student and gained a wide range of experiences in litigation. Since being called to the Bar in June 2023, her practice has primarily focused in Family and Civil litigation. In addition to learning and growing her practice, Ritu teaches Business Law at Conestoga College.

As a first-generation immigrant, Ritu appreciates the challenges and vulnerability of navigating the legal system as a newcomer. She is passionate about creating a justice system that is workable and accessible to all members of our community. Outside of law, Ritu never turns down a match of tennis, squash or pickleball with friends. Outside of court (both legal and tennis), you'll find her spending time with her dog, Tia. Ritu is bilingual and able to assist clients in English, Hindi and Punjabi.

Shuchanna Swaby, Family Lawyer



Shuchanna Swaby was called to the Bar in 1998 and began practicing Family Law in Toronto. From 2008 to 2017 Shuchanna worked with Legal Aid Ontario as a Family Law Duty Counsel Supervisor in Waterloo Region assisting unrepresented litigants successfully achieve their Family Law goals.

Since 2018 Shuchanna has returned to private practice where she practices exclusively Family Law and advocates for clients in their matrimonial matters. She has been trained in Collaborative Family Law. She is an Agent with the Office of the Children's Lawyer, a member of the Waterloo Region Law Association and a member of the Family Lawyers of Waterloo Region.

She has been a Tutor with the Bar Admission Course. Shuchanna has a strong commitment to community service, having volunteered her time with many organizations over the last four decades. In 2021, Shuchanna was appointed to the Family Law Rules Committee. She has participated in the Iron Girl Triathlon twice and is hoping to participate in future Triathlons.



Pia Williams, Law Librarian

Pia Williams has over 20 years of experience as a librarian working in various libraries, including over ten years as a law librarian. Currently, Pia is the Library Manager and Executive Director of the Waterloo Region Law Association (WRLA). She received her Honours Bachelor of Arts in History and Politics from the University of Toronto, and her Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) from Western University.

Prior to joining the WRLA, Pia was a librarian at Mohawk College, a prospect researcher for St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, a technology and systems librarian and Laurier Liaison librarian for the Brantford Public Library, a law librarian for the Hamilton Law Association and a law librarian for Torys LLP. Pia has been the Library Manager and Executive Director of the WRLA since 2018.

Ann Marie Yantz, Paralegal



Ann Marie Yantz is an experienced paralegal from Kitchener, Ontario, and the first paralegal in Ontario to be appointed to the executive of a law association. She joined the firm Kelly & Co. in September 1997 and received her law clerk diploma from the Institute of Law Clerks in 2000 and became licensed as a paralegal by the Law Society of Upper Canada in 2008. Ann Marie has provided per diem prosecution services for matters concerning the Provincial Offences Act for both Halton Region, the County of Perth and the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Ann Marie is a member of the Prosecutors Association of Ontario and an associate member of the Institute of Law Clerks. In 2013, Ann Marie became the first elected paralegal board member of the Waterloo Region Law Association, where she was a trustee and treasurer until 2017. Ann Marie's community involvement includes being the President of Sunbeam Community and Development Services and formerly, the Secretary Treasurer of Thresholds Homes and Supports Inc.. Ann Marie was also a board member of Legal Aid Ontario and the Paralegal Advisory Committee at Conestoga College of Applied Arts & Technology.