

Honoured and Distinguished Guests,

Over 40 years ago I used to hitchhike, or sometimes take the bus, to UBC Law School from 10<sup>th</sup> & Alma every day.

I had no idea that the mystery of the law and its impact on society would become so ingrained in my psyche and change my life from that point on.

Back then at UBC, the “hip” people brought their dogs into the library to sit under their desks while they studied, the “cool” students played bridge in the common room all day long, and for simple numbers reasons, women students had their own special room.

People like me didn’t fit into any of those categories, so we developed friendships with others, who were neither cool nor hip, just different.

Characters and strong personalities filled the law school; sometimes it seemed to me that at least 10% were certifiable or on their way.

I made many friendships then, some of which have lasted to this day.

Three of my four brothers graduated from law. We all practiced for several years to twenty years, giving service to our clients. We all felt that pro-bono work was important, as well as making a living. The practice of law was always a series of challenges that kept us on our toes and kept our minds working.

My application for law school was inspired by my father, who always wanted to be a lawyer. He was at the top of his class in medicine and the Chief of Surgery of the Edmonton General Hospital.

He started at least 7 major companies from scratch: printing companies, car dealerships, construction companies, trust companies, banks and insurance companies, methanol plants and similar major enterprises.

My father had an insatiable appetite to learn, understand and master everything.

It was during my time at UBC that I grew to appreciate how the law affected every aspect of our lives.

On looking back over my many years in law, there was no more important class in my mind, than the first year course in ethics. “Honesty”, “integrity” and the unofficial “smell test” are the hallmarks of the Rule of Law, and with the Rule of Law comes justice.

It fosters to this day a sense that the Rule of Law is, and should be, accessible to, and respectful of, every single human being.

The UBC professors who dedicated their lives in decades past (and in some cases still do) to teaching the law will always be with me - characters and scholars such as Dean Curtis, Bertie McClean, Charles Bourne, Tony Sheppard and many others who inspired me and my fellow students with their deep understanding of their respective specialty in law.

There is no question in my mind that these dedicated professors sacrificed their time and effort for the love of teaching.

But they also knew that it was the only way that the lifeblood of transparency, ethics and justice for all would be carried forward by the young generation sitting in front of them.

And that is why I am here; to help UBC Law and its students and faculty carry on.

It is a thrill for me to be part of the opening of this new building.

I envy all the thousands of young, and not so young, dynamic minds that will come through these doors daily for several years each.

They will be challenged by tuition fees, living costs, exams, marks, new relationships, along with the uncertainties and promises of future jobs and direction.

You already know that lawyers are involved in and affect every segment of our lives, often behind the scenes. And I don't have to remind anyone that lawyers, besides practicing law, go into politics, become judges, and pursue a host of other occupations in the private and public sectors.

Many of you know or can expect that the practice of law can be a grind.

I have deep respect for those who "do the grind" year in and year out in their ethical service to society.

But I have an even greater respect for those who believe that buried deep within each legal strategy or decision must be a social contract and equity that provides for the long term greater good in society, no matter how trivial the task, no matter how small the retainer.

Our profession has more impact on our society than any other. When we do our job well, we see that the Rule of Law is upheld and we protect our clients, our neighbors and fellow citizens against the vagaries of unchecked abuses of power and corruption.

If we didn't do this, day in and day out, we would lose our freedom. It is more than eternal vigilance that is the price of freedom but a strong and moral judicial activism to enforce these concepts.

And if we don't do this the right way, we will not sustain long term growth and stability for our nation and our fellow world citizens.

I do worry. Over the past decade I have noticed that legal checks and balances have sometimes “flown out the window” with lawyers losing sight of their privileged role in society and their duty to uphold the Rule of Law.

I think sometimes lawyers are willfully blind or regrettably even complicit in the short term gains and greed of their clients versus long term growth and stability.

We only have to look at what happened in 2008.

It was a time when rating agency opinions were bought, and banks accepted securities documents knowing that they were not “Triple A” but rather junk bond status, or in fact worthless.

Ordinary people now suffer terribly as a result of regulatory bodies being gutted and silenced.

Equity losses in homes, businesses and pension funds have hurt nearly everyone in our nation and around the world to a degree never before seen in my lifetime.

It didn't have to happen.

There were many lawyers, as well as individuals and organizations who fought for responsible corporate governance and reasonable regulation, but it wasn't enough.

The small group of lawyers who did speak up were drowned out by those who put profit before principle.

Willful blindness and blinkers were the “modus operandi”, and “how does this affect me” and “it's none of my business” that allowed an unaccountable process to take root and accelerate.

Too many of our countrymen have suffered and are paying the price today for this decade of deregulation and loss of checks and balances.

But every person here has special talent.

And this talent can be a part of the process to restore accountability and transparency to our fragile democracies.

It is my belief that UBC Law at Allard Hall could be pivotal each year in recognizing and spotlighting one or more individuals and/or organizations internationally who have struggled to overcome the abuse of power or who have steadfastly promoted human rights to champion a much more stable and sustainable long term democracy.

To this end, in addition to my gift to the Law School, I have committed to fund the creation of an annual “Allard Prize for International Integrity”.

The prize will each year highlight one or more individuals or groups who have struggled to enforce the Rule of Law so that basic human rights can triumph over abuses and corruption.

I would like to pay tribute to those who worked collaboratively and supportively to help create and build this new building, all the people who have helped me through my life, especially my professors, colleagues, clients, friends and advisors; my long time personal secretary Dennie Flynn; Bob Lee, who steadfastly encouraged this donation; President Stephen Toope, Dean Mary Anne Bobinski, Heather McCaw, Kari Streelasky, Rob King, Tom Bell and Geoff Lyster; my father whose motto was “It is not how far I walked, it is how many lives I touched along the way” and finally my mother whose indomitable spirit, commitment and social conscience taught me and my siblings the difference between right and wrong.

Thank you.