

MOVING TOWARDS RECONCILIATION

Our goals in the **CBABC Reconciliation Action Plan** are to raise Indigenous cultural awareness through professional development programs, to ensure Indigenous lawyers are well supported, to develop and advocate for law and policy reform, and to reflect principles of Reconciliation in our governance and operations. To this end, here's just a few highlights:

Spotlighting Indigenous Knowledge

This year's Advancing Reconciliation webinar series drew over 200 lawyers from all practice areas. The series discussed how the implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* can affect lawyers' practices, how to create a trauma-informed practice, and how to respect and preserve Indigenous identities. Retired Justice Harry LaForme spoke with ALF and SAGDA members on the intersection of Indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Throughout the year, Indigenous lawyers amplified relevant topics through the *Indigenous Matters* column in *BarTalk*. Provincial Council members learned from their colleagues, Randy Robinson and Adam Munnings, about their respective journeys as Indigenous lawyers. And the Aboriginal Lawyers Forum published two issues of *Forum Drum*, a newsletter that builds community and shares legal developments affecting Indigenous peoples.

Advocating for change

The Truth & Reconciliation Committee worked on submissions on amendments to the *Land Act* and another regarding registration of land in the name of First Nations. The Committee met with leaders from the Declaration Act Secretariat, the Indigenous Justice Secretariat and the Law Society of BC.

Opening the door wider

The Indigenous Lawyers Waivers of Dues Program welcomed 30 members in its inaugural year. The program seeks to improve membership access for Indigenous lawyers who would otherwise be unable to afford membership and to retain Indigenous lawyers within the profession. Late in the year, the program expanded to include articling students, including those seeking articles.

Building connections

The Aboriginal Lawyers Forum hosted their annual Holiday Banquet with record-breaking attendance of nearly 300 guests and keynote speaker, the Honourable Justice Michelle O'Bonsawin. The event raised funds for the Warrior Project, which supports Indigenous law and articling students. The annual auction to mark National Indigenous Peoples Day raised \$16,772 to support the Project. Darren Patrick was the 2023 recipient of the CBABC Aboriginal Lawyers Forum Scholarship at the Everyone Legal Clinic.

The annual ALF Retreat provided a weekend of reflection and connection for over 60 guests and featured keynote speaker the Honourable Chief Justice Leonard Marchand. This year, ALF Co-Chair Michelle Casavant hosted monthly beading lunches and a speed mentoring event brought together UVIC Law and Allard Law students to meet with Indigenous lawyers.