

# Diversity at Osler

2020 Year in Review

Fostering an inclusive  
and welcoming workplace



OSLER

# Table of contents

Message from Osler's Diversity Committee Chair	4
Message from Osler's National Managing Partner	5
Our Diversity Mandate	6
In support of our clients	7
Commitment to gender diversity	8
Representation of women at Osler	10
Internal diversity initiatives	11
Legal Professional Resource Groups	14
Industry recognition: Notable awards	26
Our commitment to our communities	28
Diversity Committee	35

*For all the turmoil that has been the story of 2020, I am optimistic about our future and, with the dedicated support of every member of the firm, we will succeed in building a better, more inclusive work culture in the years ahead.*

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**Shuli Rodal**

Chair, Osler Diversity Committee  
(2020)

**Shuli Rodal**Chair, Osler Diversity Committee (2020)  
Chair, Competition/Antitrust

# Message from Osler's Diversity Committee Chair

I assumed the role of Chair of our Diversity Committee in early 2020. It has truly been a year unlike any other in my experience, full of unexpected, challenging and distressing developments, but also inspiration and momentum towards positive change.

Throughout my more than 20 years of practice and in my current position as head of the firm's Competition and Foreign Investment Group, I have seen first-hand the difference that engaged mentorship, a sense of shared core values and a committed partnership can achieve. I began leading our diversity and inclusion initiatives knowing that the pioneering work achieved by retired partner, Doug Rienzo, and the Diversity Committee at that time had built a sturdy foundation for our future work.

Then the pandemic arrived and tested each of us in ways that forced a re-examination of our values to each other, to family, to friends and colleagues, and to our community.

It revealed deep fissures of economic, racial and gender inequality that were not visible – at least not as visible – as they are at this moment.

We recognize that while we have made important strides in advancing the progress of our women professionals, and in providing a welcoming environment for all members of the firm, regardless of their ethnicity, sexual preferences and gender, our work needs to be accelerated.

We are rededicating ourselves to this goal – not just because it is the right thing to do, but because it is the only thing to do if we want to sustain a successful firm that provides the highest quality advice and service to our clients.

In 2020 we took a hard look at all the ways we recruit, retain and advance our people, and at the systemic hurdles in our industry that have made career progression less than optimal.

We launched a firm-wide program that focusses on how to uncover unconscious bias in our hiring practices and in the ways we engage with each other in the workplace.

We created two new Legal Professional Resource Groups – the Osler Black Lawyers' Network and the Osler South Asian Network – which are fully supported by the firm and will contribute to a more meaningful dialogue and outcomes for advancement.

We rolled out our fifth demographic survey conducted by a third party to ask more incisive questions about the learned experiences among the members of the firm.

We committed to the BlackNorth Initiative and are actively supporting local organizations who are dedicated to improving the health, education and welfare of members of the Black community.

Our legacy of promoting women into positions of leadership across the firm has been a hallmark of Osler from its earliest days. But as proud as we are of that history, we have to make more meaningful changes to keep our women professionals engaged throughout their career so they not only stay, they thrive in all the ways they aspire to.

For all the turmoil that has been the story of 2020, I am optimistic about our future and, with the dedicated support of every member of the firm, we will succeed in building a better, more inclusive work culture in the years ahead.



**Doug Bryce**  
National Managing Partner

# Message from Osler's National Managing Partner

In a year that radically altered how we lived and worked, 2020 also forced a pause in how we have viewed Osler as a place of work life, as the physical spaces we formerly shared have been supplanted by virtual gatherings, meetings, and social interactions.

For me, it also created a new imperative and that is to keep our far-flung Osler community – our people, their families, alumni, retired partners and our most recent recruits – united, strong, and supported in all the ways they need to be. A return to the office for many of us is by no means assured anytime soon.

Against this backdrop of uncertainty and dislocation, there has been a newfound focus and energy on the struggle against systemic racism, and a groundswell of support to finally begin to address the injustices of the past.

Our Osler team is dedicated to moving the dial on diversity and making our workplace as inclusive as it can be. Our Diversity Committee has a substantive mandate to deploy the firm's resources in ways that will make a

difference to our communities, and the equitable society we aspire to have. Our Chair is fully engaged in the task and, with her Committee, has detailed in this Report some of the initiatives they are or will be launching in the period ahead. While we have made progress in the hiring, professional development, career counselling and retention of our talented people, one area of increasing focus is in working collaboratively with other stakeholders in encouraging the development of talent well before they arrive at Osler.

The journey we are embarking upon has been altered by the experiences of the past year and in ways that have meant an acceleration of our work.

# Our Diversity Mandate

Supporting diversity and inclusion is at the core of our firm, reflected in how we support our clients and the communities in which we work, live and recruit our talent, and most importantly in our longstanding commitment to building a workplace where talented people with diverse viewpoints, characteristics and backgrounds can come together to deliver the highest quality legal services.

We were one of the first law firms in Canada to establish a formal Diversity Committee and Diversity Mandate, which is to promote diversity in our firm, within the framework of our culture of excellence and merit. In addition to this primary mandate, we also aim to promote diversity in support of our relationships with our clients and in the institutions and communities from which we recruit our talent.

Our culture is one of mutual respect and collaboration, which values and celebrates diverse viewpoints and backgrounds. We believe our diversity in views, ideas and perspectives positively informs our services to clients and reinforces our commitment to each other, as we work to create internal programs and policies that promote an inclusive environment. We strive to attract, retain and promote lawyers and staff who are the best at what they do and who reflect the diversity of our communities.

Our commitment to diversity also reaches well beyond our firm. We are involved in a wide range of external initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion within the communities we serve, often in conjunction with our clients and in support of their goals.



# In support of our clients

We know how important diversity is to our clients and believe we share a common mission to build a diverse and talented workforce supported by an inclusive and welcoming environment. We see our diversity objectives as a reflection of our clients' goals, and we support these diversity aims through our external support and internal actions.

By embracing differences, not only do we offer a better work environment, but we also deliver better offerings to our clients. We believe that diversity drives innovation, which enables us to find new solutions to complex problems and provide the highest quality legal services through a broad range of perspectives.

Our diversity work is a continuous and collective effort, and we strive to keep our clients updated on our progress. Some of the ways we communicate our diversity efforts to our clients and a sampling of the initiatives we have developed to support their goals are outlined below.

## General Counsel Dashboard

As part of our service to our clients, we offer the Osler General Counsel Dashboard, a unique reporting tool that enables us to report on diversity and inclusion at Osler at the matter level to help support our clients' diversity objectives both strategically and in a measurable manner.

## Diversity Disclosure Practices Report 2020

In 2020, we published our sixth annual *Diversity Disclosure Practices Report*, offering an updated snapshot on the representation of women in leadership roles in corporate Canada. Last year, new disclosure requirements under the *Canada Business Corporations Act* (CBCA) broadened the range of corporations required to provide disclosure regarding women in leadership positions and added new requirements for disclosure regarding visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples and persons with disabilities, which are reflected in the report. As in previous years, the report also provides detailed disclosure on TSX-listed companies to show year-over-year comparisons.



## Board Diversity Policy Template

To support industries' and clients' diversity efforts, we offer a complimentary Board Diversity Policy Template. Developed in conjunction with the Institute of Corporate Directors, this template helps organizations address gender diversity by adopting a written policy respecting the representation of women on the board. In addition, the policy can be customized to address the CBCA disclosure requirements with respect to the representation on the board of Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities, as well as other diversity characteristics.

# Commitment to gender diversity

Rooted in our history, our commitment to embracing gender diversity is integral to who we are as a firm, and starts with our legacy of strong and dynamic female leadership. Osler was one of the first corporate law firms in Canada to admit a woman, Bertha Wilson, to its partnership ranks more than 50 years ago – which was just the beginning of our ongoing dedication to supporting female members. Bertha went on to become the first female Justice appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

## Current leadership

Our leadership team today includes Dale Ponder, Osler's first female National Co-Chair. Prior to becoming our current Co-Chair, Dale led Osler as our National Managing Partner and Chief Executive for nine years. When she served in that role, she was the country's only female chief executive of a major law firm and is still among very few women leaders who are at the helm of a business law firm in our category.

We have five Office Managing Partners, two of whom are outstanding women – Sandra Abitan in Montréal and Donna White in Ottawa. Our Calgary office was previously managed by Maureen Killoran, QC, who was the first woman to be named managing partner of a Calgary law firm and is currently one of our most senior litigation partners. And our five most senior administrative positions (Chief Operating Officer, Chief Client Officer, Chief Marketing Officer, Chief Professional Resources Officer and Chief Human Resources Officer) are held by women.

A number of the firm's departments and practice groups are managed by women, including two national departments that are among the firm's largest business lines – Sonia Bjorkquist chairs our National Litigation Department and Monica Biringer co-leads our National Tax Practice. Janice Buckingham has been in charge of our Energy/Oil and Gas specialty group for many years. Andraya Frith runs our Franchise and Distribution Practice, Wendy Gross heads our Technology and Outsourcing Practice, Jacqui Code chairs the Research Practice and Shuli Rodal, our Diversity Committee Chair, leads our Competition and Antitrust Practice.

We are also extremely proud that several of our female lawyers have been appointed to the country's top courts, including the Supreme Court of Canada. Jana Steele, the past Chair of our Pensions and Benefits Group, was appointed as a Judge of the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario in 2020.



## Commitment to the 30% Club

Osler is also a long-time member of the 30% Club. Our Partnership Board (equivalent to a company's board of directors) has set the mandate that at least 30% of its members be women and has implemented a guideline that women comprise at least 30% of the partners on our Compensation Committee. Currently, 5 of the 13 members of the Partnership Board are women, and our Operations Committee consists of 7 women and 12 men.

## How we support the advancement of women

Our work to further the advancement of women within the firm and the legal profession is an ongoing priority. Throughout 2020, we supported numerous initiatives to promote the advancement of women within Osler, our industry and the broader communities we serve, including events hosted by the Osler Women Lawyers' Network, which you can learn more about on page 23.

### Advancement of Women Lawyers initiative

Our Partnership Board has determined that the advancement of a greater percentage of women into our partnership is a strategic priority for the firm, with the overall objective of greater gender parity. In support of this goal, we have committed significant resources to a multi-faceted Advancement of Women Lawyers program that includes mentoring, coaching and training, among other things. This strategic objective is being led by a task force headed by our Co-Chair, Dale Ponder.

This initiative helps to identify and dismantle obstacles that hinder inclusion and focuses on implementing targeted and tailored strategies to enable Osler to retain women lawyers, promote women associates to partner and advance women partners into leadership positions within the firm.

### Removing obstacles to success

We understand that working parents have enormous responsibilities and must constantly juggle both work and home life. We have established a suite of flexibility options designed to foster an inclusive workforce as well as promote balance between career and family demands. These policies and programs are outlined on page 11.

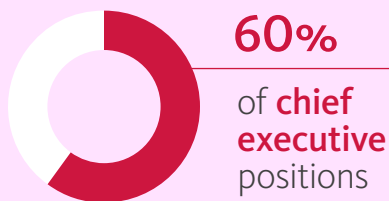
### Gender Work Allocation Report

Osler's Gender Work Allocation Report provides partners with an individualized summary indicating the number of hours that associates spent on their various files over the past year, broken down by gender. The report also shows the gender breakdown of the associates in the partner's practice area and office as well as across the firm, so that the partners can see the percentage of hours spent on their files by women associates and compare that to the percentage of women associates in their department and office as well as in the firm as a whole.

# Representation of women at Osler

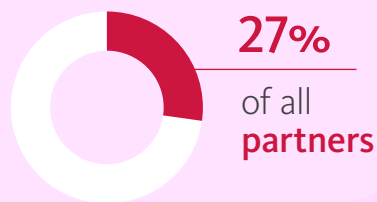
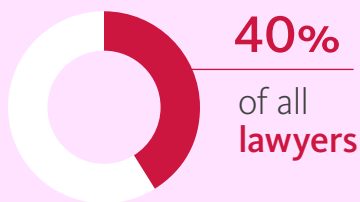
As at December 31, 2020

## Women hold



As at December 31, 2020

## Women represent



## Between 2014 and 2020

**42%**

of our **new partners at Osler** were women

# Internal diversity initiatives

We are dedicated to developing innovative policies and opportunities that promote diversity and inclusion within the firm. Our practices, procedures and employee programs are aimed at fostering a work culture that promotes equality and inclusion and ensures that all individuals who work at Osler are treated with dignity and respect.

## Policies

Osler has a number of policies in place to support an inclusive and healthy work environment, including our fundamental policy on diversity and inclusion, which has been in effect since 2014:

- Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Respect at Work Policy
- Accessibility Standards for Client Service and Integrated Accessibility Policy
- Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Policy
- Personal and Family Relationships Policy
- Fitness Reimbursement Policy (amended in 2020 to support diverse approaches to maintaining personal well-being)

## Employee benefits and programs

Osler's employee benefits and programs are designed to support an inclusive workforce as well as promote balance between career and family demands.

- **Pregnancy/Parental Leave Buddy Program for associates:** Both women and men receive guidance and support before, during and after maternity or parental leave to help them stay connected to Osler activities and assist in the transition back to full-time practice.
- **Pregnancy/Parental Leave Benefits for associates:** In most situations, provided certain conditions are met, the firm will top up the lawyer's pregnancy leave benefits for up to 17 weeks. In addition to pregnancy leave benefits, the firm will top up the parental leave benefits for birth mothers for up to four weeks for a total of 21 weeks. For non-birth parents of new children or parents of adopted children who take parental/adoption leave, the firm provides the equivalent of the lawyer's salary for up to four weeks.
- **Alternate Track Policy:** Osler's non-partnership career advancement track offers greater flexibility and work-life balance to our lawyers with family or other external commitments.



- **Pregnancy Leave Benefits for staff and paraprofessionals:** The firm will top up the employee's pregnancy leave benefits for up to six weeks, provided certain conditions are met.

## Supporting our people

Part of offering an inclusive environment includes providing all of our members with the tools and support they require to succeed. To better deliver on this support, we implemented various initiatives over the past year to help us learn more about our members. This insight will inform our ongoing diversity and inclusion activities. We also expanded our mental health offerings to increase our support within Osler in an especially challenging year.

### Fifth biennial Demographic Survey completed in 2020

In 2012, we conducted our first internal demographic survey to take a snapshot of our workforce – broken down by gender, sexual orientation, racialized status and other characteristics – to establish a baseline that could be continually measured going forward. Osler was one of the first law firms in Canada to undertake such a survey, and we have repeated the survey bi-annually since that inaugural year. Conducted by a third party, the survey and its results help us to develop initiatives that best respond to the needs of our firm and our diverse client base, and last year, we expanded the survey by incorporating questions on inclusion to ensure we continue to learn, grow and improve our diversity and inclusion efforts at the firm.

### Unconscious bias training

We believe a critical element of a successful diversity and inclusion program is recognizing the existence of unconscious bias and taking steps to address this bias through training as well as through policies and procedures that eliminate the scope of bias to affect decision making.

In 2020, all Osler members received unconscious bias training through a virtual, interactive program led by Tanya (Toni) De Mello, Assistant Dean, Student Programming, Development and Equity at Ryerson Faculty of Law.

### Mental health and wellness support

Over the past year, the effects of the pandemic have taken a significant toll on everyone's health and mental well-being, with additional challenges for families and individuals relating to isolation, caregiving and addressing uncertainty and change. Recognizing the amplified need for additional mental health support during this challenging time, we offered our firm members access to various resources and programs to help them maintain their personal well-being and get the care and support they need, including through health and self-care resources, a revised fitness reimbursement credit and mental wellness programs.

### Osler Mental Health Week

We held our third annual Osler Mental Health Week on May 4–8, 2020, to coincide with the Canadian Mental Health Association's annual campaign,



which rallies communities, schools, workplaces and legislatures in a common push for mental health.

Throughout the week, Osler held a number of internal events to support mental health and connection, including an introduction to meditation and mindfulness, and a webinar, “Building resilience through positive psychology,” delivered by Steven Cline, Osler’s Career Development Officer. In addition to the week’s activities, we also offered a wellness webinar by lawyer and psychotherapist Kara Hardin on May 14 that focused on supporting mental well-being during challenging times.

### **National Mental Illness Awareness Week**

During Mental Illness Awareness Week on October 4–10, 2020, Osler offered a webinar by BEACON, “From stressed-out to resilient: Strategies for challenging times,” in which clinical psychologist Dr. Leorra Newman shared insights to help participants deal with negative stress and boost resiliency.

### **Ongoing mental health support**

Members and their families also had access to various resources and programs throughout the year:

- Morneau Shepell Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
- Osler’s Mental Wellness Account to help offset the cost of professional services of licensed psychologists, psychotherapists and MSW clinical counsellors
- Guided online Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) program with BEACON (Toronto only), including access to a new health anxiety and managing stress module relating to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Health and wellness resources on our intranet and our ongoing Virtual Wellness Wednesday program that offers weekly webinars on various wellness topics

### **Employee fitness reimbursement**

To help support firm members’ changing wellness needs while working from home during the pandemic, we revised our Fitness Reimbursement Policy to reimburse eligible members, up to a certain amount, for at-home fitness equipment and audio/visual fitness and health-related materials that support well-being, including online classes and meditation apps. Eligible equipment also included a task or desk chair to be used in a home office environment.



# Legal Professional Resource Groups

Over the past several years, our Legal Professional Resource Groups (LPRGs) have played an integral role in our commitment to diversity and inclusion – and 2020 was no exception. Developed by and for members of the Osler community under the umbrella of our Diversity & Inclusion Policy, our LPRGs are driven by legal professionals who bring their shared experiences and backgrounds to the table to assist colleagues by providing social networking, professional support and business development opportunities.

Two new LPRGs were initiated last year: the Osler Black Lawyers' Network and the Osler South Asian Network joined our three existing LPRGs – the Asia-Pacific Affinity Network, the Osler Pride Network and the Osler Women Lawyers' Network.

Throughout 2020, our LPRGs organized various virtual events that promoted a sense of community and collaboration and enabled members to develop their networks, get involved in mentoring and access professional development support. During the pandemic, our LPRG Leads and Partner Supports pivoted their outreach and found creative ways to reach out to members to ensure everyone stayed connected through online discussions, virtual coffees and shared meals, online game nights and even a year-end family-friendly paint night.

International Women's Day  
Photo Credit: Photagonist.ca





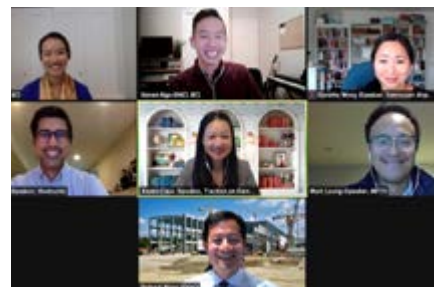
## Asia-Pacific Affinity Network (APAN)

APAN supports employees with cultural, ethnic, professional and other links to the Asia-Pacific region through professional development and networking opportunities. Over the past year, APAN shifted its events to a virtual format to ensure members had a way to connect and get support.

- On February 20, more than 100 law students, articling students and lawyers attended the annual Speed Mentor-A-Thon organized by the Ontario chapter of the Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers (FACL). This event gives students the opportunity to expand their professional networks and to make valuable connections with prominent members of the legal profession. The evening began with a cocktail reception at Osler, followed by six 12-minute “speed mentoring sessions” where law students and articling students engaged in one-on-one networking with lawyers from diverse backgrounds and practice areas, and concluded with a post-event reception.
- In lieu of its usual in-person summer social event, APAN hosted a virtual bubble tea party to help ensure its members stayed connected during the difficult times posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Members were sent Uber Eats gift cards so they could order bubble tea and a treat to their homes and enjoyed a group Zoom social call to catch up. APAN also hosted a virtual bubble tea party at the end of the year so members could celebrate the holidays and enjoy each other’s company.
- On September 30, Osler sponsored and participated in the Behind the Curtain: Working In-House event presented by the Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers BC’s in-house committee. The in-house committee is the first of its kind for FACL and is founded by Steven Ngo, Senior Counsel at Visier Inc., who is an Osler alumnus and former member of Osler’s Diversity Committee. Richard Wong, the Chair of Osler’s Construction Group, provided the opening remarks and discussed the synergies between APAN and FACL. The virtual event was held via Zoom for more than 70 attendees, including law students and private practice and in-house counsel, and featured lawyers who shared their experiences, advice and myths about working in-house. This collaboration continues to strengthen APAN’s support of FACL chapters across Canada, including FACL BC, and further opened up new opportunities for outreach activities in British Columbia.



Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers (FACL)  
2020 Annual Speed Mentor-A-Thon  
Photo Credit: Ryan Chan



Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers BC  
(FACL BC)’s in-house committee’s  
Behind the Curtain: Working In-House event  
on September 30th

### Leads



Eric Choi



Jasmy Lee



Richard Wong

### Partner Support



Navigating a career, legal or otherwise, can be difficult, particularly when you're a minority. Personally, finding mentorship support and a community of people who I can relate to has been incredibly important. APAN has played a role in providing both.

APAN fosters a vital sense of connection and community within Osler and access to an extensive network that extends beyond the firm through affiliations with a wide range of groups, including the Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers, Asians Without Borders, the Korean Canadian Lawyers Association and others. It hosts events that bring people together to share ideas and insights and enables you to build relationships that provide invaluable professional support.



**Jasmyrn Lee**  
APAN Lead  
Associate, Banking  
and Financial Services



Osler  
Asia-Pacific  
Affinity  
Network



## NEW TO 2020

## Osler Black Lawyers' Network (OBLN)

One of our new LPRGs, OBLN was created to support the Black community by fostering the recruitment, retention and career advancement of Black employees at Osler and committing to community outreach and engagement with a focus on legal practice and the law.

OBLN's Associate Co-Leads, Theresa Donkor and Kojo Hayward, initiated the LPRG with their Partner Supports. OBLN developed several initiatives in 2020 and plans for new events are underway.

- Throughout the year, OBLN members offered mentorship to Black law students and undergraduate students to support their growth and development and to enable them to access the advice and support they need to succeed.
- Approximately 80 students attended two virtual Osler tours and virtual lunches for Black Law Students' Association (BLSA) chapters from various law schools, which included a panel discussion on recruitment and diversity with members of OBLN. The first was held on November 6 for students from the University of Toronto, Osgoode Hall and Ryerson University BLSA chapters. The second was held on November 13 for students from all chapters of the BLSA across Canada but outside of the Toronto region, including the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, Dalhousie University, McGill University, University of Ottawa, Université de Sherbrooke, University of British Columbia, Western University and University of Windsor. Theresa Donkor and Kojo Hayward, the Associate Leads of OBLN, led informal panel discussions on diversity in the legal profession at each event. Panelists included Ethan McCarthy, Tobor Emakpor, Stella Gore and Chima Ubani. Andrew MacDougall joined as a panelist for the GTA event and Diversity Committee Chair Shuli Rodal participated in the Canada-wide event.

Following the discussions, students engaged in three rounds of breakout groups with our panelists and the members of OBLN. The first round was dedicated to day-to-day life at Osler, the second focused on the recruitment drive, and the final round encouraged attendees to discuss diversity and inclusion in today's context with our lawyers.

- OBLN members also connected for an evening of fun in a virtual game night for their year-end social.



BLSA Canada Annual Conference,  
February 2020  
Photo Credit: The JRGi Aesthetic

### Leads



Theresa Donkor



Kojo Hayward



Tobor Emakpor



Chima Ubani

### Partner Supports



Osler  
Black Lawyers'  
Network

When we're doing student outreach, we're often asked by students, "What does 'fit' mean?" To me, fit is about finding a firm where you can be your authentic self and that's what I found at Osler. I've been able to connect and build relationships with people from different backgrounds – some of whom have become my closest friends, which is a testament to the people who form the fabric of the firm. While there's still work to be done in furthering diversity and inclusion, I'm encouraged by the support of senior leadership and other firm members in the creation of initiatives such as OBLN and Osler's Black History Month programming and I'm looking forward to being involved in creating a more diverse and inclusive legal environment for future generations of lawyers.



**Theresa Donkor**  
OBLN Lead  
Associate, Emerging  
and High Growth  
Companies



## Osler Pride Network (OPN)

The Osler Pride Network (OPN) was created by and for Osler legal professionals who identify as LGBTQ2S+ and their allies, to foster professional development and offer networking opportunities. In 2020, OPN supported various initiatives within the firm, with law students and with our clients, and during the pandemic, extended its support to community efforts in a virtual format, in lieu of its annual in-person events. OPN Associate Lead Kaleigh Hawkins-Schulz also participated in various virtual events throughout the year, speaking on panels about her experience at Osler and life as an out lawyer.

- As part of a wider initiative coordinated by several Bay Street law firms, OPN joined the first annual 1L LGBTQ2S Bay Street Firm Hop by hosting a breakfast for approximately 30 law students from across the country in late February as part of the two-day event. A panel of Osler lawyers spoke to guests about Osler's various diversity and pro bono initiatives as well as what life is like for articling students at the firm. Several current articling students and junior Osler lawyers were also present so attendees could ask questions on topics like recruitment, law practice and career development. OPN also participated in a follow-up mentorship program that paired interested LGBTQ2S students with legal professional mentors at Osler.
- Before the pandemic started, OPN offered LGBTQ2S+ law students in-person professional development support, which involved a cover letter and resume workshop and interview practice.
- Although OPN was unable to hold its annual Pride event in person this year, Osler recognized Pride by holding a virtual fireside chat in June with Tuvia Borok, an executive director and senior counsel for Goldman Sachs. Borok is a diversity leader both in his corporate life and through the reach of a charitable organization he co-founded, The P3 Network. Hosted by Elliot Smith, an Osler partner and the Partner Support for the OPN, and attended by more than 300 participants, the event featured a discussion on a range of topics, including what being LGBTQ2S+ means, how organizations need to get beyond the diversity and inclusion playbook for the legal profession and the diversity revolution in these challenging times.
- Osler sponsored Start Proud's Start Out 2020 Digital Conference, which was held in September 2020. The first of its kind, Start Out is a digital conference where LGBTQ2S+ talent comes to meet some of Canada's largest and most inclusive employers.
- In lieu of its usual gatherings and year-end holiday event, OPN hosted a team-building virtual escape room event to bring its members together.

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### Lead



**Kaleigh  
Hawkins-Schulz**

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### Partner Support



**Elliot Smith**



One of the things that stands out to me about Osler is that it breaks misconceptions that law firms are extremely conservative and have a “don’t ask, don’t tell” approach when it comes to LGBTQ2S+ issues. Inclusivity is embedded into its culture and Osler is a place where you can be openly yourself from day one. I am also proud that Osler is one of the first law firms to have a transition and gender identity policy. Having a real policy in place means that we are thinking about, and acting on, important LGBTQ2S+ issues.



**Kaleigh  
Hawkins-Schulz**  
OPN Lead  
Associate, Taxation



## NEW TO 2020

## Osler South Asian Network (OSAN)

The Osler South Asian Network (OSAN) is a newly formed LPRG created in July 2020. OSAN was created by and for members of the Osler community and is dedicated to the support and professional development of Osler legal professionals identifying as South Asian, Indo-Caribbean, Indo-African or from the South Asian diaspora, and their allies, through social and networking events, business development opportunities and new recruitment initiatives.

Since it was formed, OSAN has connected Osler legal professionals throughout the year and has welcomed several new members. There are several new initiatives on the horizon, including pro bono efforts, outreach to Osler alumni and plans for student recruitment. In a short period of time, OSAN was able to organize the following activities in 2020

- With community support top of mind, OSAN held its inaugural event on September 17, in support of small businesses that have been greatly affected by the pandemic. Featuring four female South Asian lawyers from Osler – Niveda Anandan (Employment and Labour), Arshia Asif (Financial Services), Komil Joshi (Privacy and Data Management) and Kristin Ali (Privacy and Data Management) – the virtual event provided businesses with practical legal information and tips on how to navigate legal issues that have arisen due to COVID-19.
- OSAN closed off the year with a virtual year-end social to bring new members together and support local restaurants that have been adversely impacted by the pandemic.



OSAN small business panel

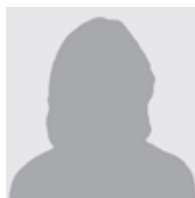
### Leads



Kristin Ali



Komil Joshi



Pooja Mihailovich



Al-Nawaz Nanji

### Partner Supports



I often field questions from students who are concerned about workplace culture and whether they will feel like they will belong at Osler. In those conversations, I can truly tell them that – drawing from my own experience – Osler is a place where you can be yourself and find support and mentorship. Even if you are the first lawyer in your family or the first person to go to university in your family, there are others like you here, who come from different backgrounds and can relate to you, and are successful and happy at Osler.

This has really rung true for me in being part of the Osler South Asian Network. Through OSAN, we have brought together lawyers from across the firm, cultivating personal and professional relationships and giving back to the community through pro bono initiatives and student events. And we are able to do this with the support from senior leadership who believe in LPRGs at the top level. Through my involvement with OSAN, I have seen first-hand Osler's impressive commitment to diversity, inclusion and the success of individuals from all backgrounds.



**Kristin Ali**  
CIPP/C  
OSAN Lead  
Counsel, Privacy and  
Data Management



Osler  
**South Asian  
Network**

## Osler Women Lawyers' Network (OWLN)

OWLN encourages and supports the advancement of women through social and networking events, informal mentoring and coaching, pro bono and volunteer initiatives, and business development opportunities. OWLN had a busy year in 2020, including the following activities:

- OWLN held several virtual social events that allowed our female legal professionals to connect, collaborate and share experiences in an informal virtual setting. These socials included breakout roundtables on various topics where attendees discussed questions such as “What is your personal definition of success?” and “What is one piece of advice you would give your younger self?”
- Throughout 2020, OWLN continued to facilitate mentoring and cross-departmental networking opportunities for female associates through its Peer-to-Peer Associate Mentorship Program, which allows associates of all stages and from different practice areas to come together and share experiences and advice. Last year’s program focused on peer mentorship groups that paired two senior associates with four junior associates.
- Each year, Osler celebrates International Women's Day (IWD) by inviting colleagues, lawyers and staff to come together for an engaging discussion on the evolving role of women in politics. Last year, the firm welcomed Stephanie MacKendrick, the author of *In Good Hands: Remarkable Female Politicians from Around the World Who Showed Up, Spoke Out and Made Change*, and Kate Graham, a past Senior Fellow at Canada 2020, who in 2019 developed, hosted and produced a podcast called *No Second Chances*, where she interviewed every living female prime minister and premier that has ever served in Canada.
- Each year, OWLN supports Osler’s firm-wide Annual Women's Event for our female legal professionals. Last year, the virtual event brought together legal professionals from across our offices and featured guest speaker Amy Shira Teitel, a Canadian author, popular science writer, spaceflight historian, YouTuber and occasional TV personality. Amy's latest book, *Fighting for Space*, tells the incredible true story of Jackie Cochran and Jerrie Cobb, two female pilots who battled each other and male-dominant 1960s America in pursuit of becoming the first woman in space. Looking closely at these two figures, Amy discussed what it takes to succeed as a female trailblazer and leader in a male-dominated industry. This year’s event also included a number of virtual workshops that allowed our legal professionals and clients to connect, including a Farm-to-Table Cooking Class, an Acrobatic Pizza Making Class, an Art of Meditation Workshop, a Resilience in the Virtual Workspace Workshop and a Mixology Workshop.





International Women's Day  
Photo Credit: Photagonist.ca

- On November 12, OWLN hosted a virtual event with Patricia Gillette, one of the country's leading experts on gender diversity and equality, who presented her research on "successful rainmakers," followed by an interactive panel discussion with Osler partners. Patricia provided practical ideas for improving skills relating to engaging with clients and making the most of business development opportunities that present themselves every day.
- OWLN hosted a book club discussion on November 17 that explored the similarities and differences between the first three female justices on the Supreme Court of Canada: Bertha Wilson, Claire L'Heureux-Dubé and Beverley McLachlin. The discussion was led by Professor Constance Backhouse, who wove together a review of their lives through a comparison of Chief Justice McLachlin's memoir, *Truth Be Told: My Journey Through Life and the Law*, and her own most recent work, *Two Firsts: Bertha Wilson and Claire L'Heureux-Dubé at the Supreme Court of Canada*.
- OWLN also held a virtual holiday social where Osler's female legal professionals were invited to participate in a family-friendly paint night.

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#### Lead



Christine Jackson

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#### Partner Support



May Cheng





OWLN brings together all of our firm's support and resources that have been created to help ensure the success of women at Osler. Personally, it has provided me with access to insight and mentorship from top women and men in the profession, including through mentorship and coaching programs and a wide range of social and professional development events. The relationships I have built through OWLN were tremendously helpful when I was transitioning back from maternity leave and learning to balance motherhood with a busy practice. As a senior associate, it allowed me to give back to more junior associates and students through the peer-to-peer mentorship program and other professional development and social events. OWLN offers a safe space to explore the unique challenges that women in the legal profession face, with the added benefit of connecting with other likeminded women and men on a social level in an inclusive and welcoming environment.



**Christine Jackson**  
OWLN Lead  
Partner, Commercial



# Industry recognition: Notable awards

Osler was named “Firm of the Year in Canada” at the 2020 *Euromoney Legal Media Group Americas Women in Business Law Awards* and was also recognized for the “Best Gender Diversity Initiative by a National Firm” and as “Best Firm for Diversity” for North America.

Sandra Abitan, the Managing Partner of Osler’s Montréal office, was recognized as a Lawdragon 500 Leading Global Restructuring and Insolvency Lawyer. This award honours top attorneys for their “remarkable skills in financing, structuring, litigating and creating a pathway forward.”



Monica Biringer, a partner and Co-Chair of the Taxation Group, was recognized as “Tax Dispute Resolution Lawyer of the Year” by the *Euromoney Legal Media Group Americas Women in Business Law Awards*. This award acknowledges Monica as a standout leader amongst her peers and as a driving force for innovative approaches in the area of Tax Dispute Resolution.



May Cheng, a partner in Osler’s Intellectual Property Group, was recognized in the *IAM Strategy 300: The World’s Leading IP Strategists* guide for 2020 and received a Gold band ranking in “enforcement and litigation” for the second year running and a Silver band ranking in “anti-counterfeiting” in the *World Trademark Review 1000: The World’s Leading Trademark Professionals*.



Jennifer Dolman, a partner in Osler’s Litigation Group, was recognized as one of *Who’s Who Legal’s Thought Leaders: Global Elite 2020* for franchise. The accolade is awarded to top lawyers who stand out internationally for their skills in managing a spectrum of corporate transactions and advising clients on an array of corporate issues.



Andraya Frith, Chair of Osler’s National Franchise and Distribution Practice Group, was also recognized as one of *Who’s Who Legal’s Thought Leaders: Global Elite 2020* for franchise.



Maureen Killoran, QC, a partner in Osler’s Litigation Group and the former Managing Partner of Osler’s Calgary office, was recognized again as one of Canada’s “Top 50 Women in Litigation” by *Benchmark Litigation* in 2020. This is the fifth consecutive year that Maureen has maintained her standing as a top woman in litigation as identified by *Benchmark Litigation*.



Pooja Mihailovich was recognized in *Benchmark Litigation's* 2020 "Under 40 Hotlist." *Benchmark Litigation* ranks the top litigation and dispute lawyers in Canada, the United States, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

Kelly Moffatt, a commercial partner and the head of the firm's Marketing and Distribution Practice Group, advanced from a Silver band in 2019 to a Gold band ranking in 2020 for "prosecution and strategy" and continues her many years of recognition for "transactions" in the *World Trademark Review 1000: The World's Leading Trademark Professionals*.

Colleen Moorehead, Osler's Chief Client Officer, was honoured by YWCA Toronto with a 2020 Women of Distinction Award. She joined six other women identified as leaders in their fields and steadfast champions for the rights of women and girls in Toronto and beyond.



Mary Paterson was also named to *Benchmark Litigation's* 2020 "Under 40 Hotlist," which recognizes the best and brightest partners who frequently handle major, high stakes or precedent-setting cases.



Tracy Sandler, a partner and past National Chair of Osler's Insolvency and Restructuring Group, was also named a top lawyer in Lawdragon's annual 500 Leading Global Bankruptcy & Restructuring Lawyers.



Donna White, the Managing Partner of Osler's Ottawa office, received a Gold band ranking in "prosecution and strategy" for the third year running in the *World Trademark Review 1000: The World's Leading Trademark Professionals*.



# Our commitment to our communities

Our commitment to diversity extends well beyond our firm. Throughout 2020, we participated in various initiatives to help create change and foster inclusion in our industry and the communities we serve. Below are just some of the ways we worked to provide support.

## Supporting our future lawyers

Part of our commitment to diversity is ensuring that our profession's future leaders have the support they need to succeed. This involves contributing to diversity efforts within our legal communities and opening doors to new opportunities for students by breaking down barriers to recruitment, retention and advancement.

### Osler Diversity Scholarship

In 2018, we established the Osler Diversity Scholarship Program for eligible second-year law students. This annual program provides up to two \$2,500 scholarships each year to law students who, like us, seek to promote diversity and inclusion. A big congratulations goes out to our 2020 Osler Diversity Scholarship recipients: Maryam Hassan and Chris Osei-Kusi.

### Supporting the Black Law Students' Association (BLSA)

Osler sponsored BLSA Canada's annual conference, which was held in Québec City, Québec, in February 2020. Associates Stella Gore and Kojo Hayward attended the conference and participated in the career fair, speaking with law students about navigating law school, networking, interviewing and the importance of diversity at Osler.

Our Vancouver office also partnered with UBC BLSA to support a program that provides financial assistance and access to LSAT study courses to students who are interested in writing the LSAT but are unable to access the study courses due to financial hardship.

### Indigenous Law Student Summer Employment Program

Facilitated by the Law Society of Alberta, this employment program helps the legal profession gain deeper insight into Indigenous culture and issues while providing law firm work experience to Indigenous law students. Osler's Calgary office has participated in this program for a number of years to help foster ongoing relationships between Indigenous students and practising lawyers.

## Three paid volunteer days for diversity and inclusion

For the first time ever and across all offices, our summer students were provided with three paid volunteer days to give back to an organization in their community that supports Osler's diversity and inclusion objectives.

## Summer Public Interest Advocacy Program (SPIAP)

Students participating in SPIAP spend the first part of the summer at the firm in Toronto and the latter part of the summer, paid by Osler, working for a firm-sponsored public interest group or other entity that is involved in diversity issues or is otherwise working on issues affecting women, racialized groups, the LGBTQ+ community or other diverse groups.

## Within the legal community and beyond

Although we couldn't extend in-person support to our communities for the majority of the year due to the pandemic, we looked for ways that we could give back virtually, participate in online events, get involved in sponsorship initiatives and pro bono activities, and work to raise funds. Below are just some of the ways we got involved.

## Contributions to organizations that combat anti-Black racism

In June 2020, the Osler community raised more than \$200,000 for organizations that combat anti-Black racism and support the Black community, including the Black Health Alliance, the Black Legal Action Centre and the Harriet Tubman Community Organization. A matching contribution of \$50,000 was also provided by the firm to these organizations. We have also started a dialogue with these organizations to learn more about their important missions within the Black community and have offered our support, including through the Osler Pro Bono/Community Law Program, with one project already underway. Osler has also offered pro bono assistance to the Ontario Black Business Law Clinic.

## BlackNorth Initiative Law Firm Pledge

Osler joined other leading law firms in signing the BlackNorth Initiative Law Firm Pledge, which is a commitment to ending anti-Black and other forms of structural racism in the legal profession. Osler is also participating in other legal industry initiatives, including through Law Leaders for Diversity and the Law Firm Diversity and Inclusion Network.

## TRIEC Mentoring Partnership

Osler participates in the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council's Mentoring Partnership, which connects recent immigrants with mentors in their professional fields. By volunteering as mentors, participating Osler staff and legal professionals connect with their communities and share their knowledge and insight about the Canadian job market to help others succeed. Osler has had more than 50 mentor-mentee pairings to date.



Osler National Co-Chair Shahir Guindi  
and Mayor Valérie Plante.  
Closed Doors Montréal

## Closed Doors Day in Montréal

In early 2020, Osler National Co-Chair Shahir Guindi and Mayor Valérie Plante helped launch a major campaign to raise awareness in the Montréal business community about the importance of the successful professional integration of newcomers to Canada. Shahir acted as co-spokesperson during the four-week “Closed Doors Day” campaign.

## Celebrating pride

In lieu of celebrating together, Osler hosted a virtual fireside chat with Osler partner Elliot Smith and Tuvia Borok, executive director and senior counsel for Goldman Sachs, who is a diversity leader both in his corporate life and through the reach of a charitable organization he co-founded, The P3 Network (more details of this event can be found on page 19). Osler members were also invited to show their pride on Osler Ensemble, a digital social tool that enables connection with colleagues, during Toronto’s Pride Month and post their pictures and messages of support.

We also supported the 30th anniversary of Calgary Pride by donating \$2,500 to two Calgary-based LGBTQIA+ organizations: Pink Flamingo and OUTLaw’s UCalgary Chapter. Pink Flamingo is a BIPOC/LGBTQQIP2SAA+ event group for inclusive fun in a great environment, ensuring respect, safety and accessibility. It also led a Black Lives Matter Mural Project, which is supported by Calgary Arts Development and the City of Calgary. OUTLaw’s UCalgary Chapter was founded in 2017 and joins OUTLaw chapters in law schools across North America, including all common law schools in Canada.

## Day of Pink

In recognition of the Day of Pink, the international day against bullying, discrimination, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and transmisogyny, Osler lawyers and staff wore pink to show their continued commitment to supporting a more inclusive and diverse world and shared photos and messages on Osler Ensemble.



Day of Pink Virtual Event





ReProm February 2020 gala

## ReProm

On February 29, Osler sponsored ReProm, a gala event for LGBTQ2S+ adults and allies alike, to re-experience prom on their own terms, in support of the Centre for Sexuality. Osler's Calgary office was represented in style by Jesse Baker, Justin Fontaine, Meg Hiles, Lindsay Hofer, Briana MacEachern, Allan Morgan, Joyce Pong and Nathan White. More than 250 people attended the event, raising over \$15,000 for the Centre for Sexuality's LGBTQ+ programs, including the GSA Network, LGBTQ+ counselling work and LGBTQ Youth Healthy Relationships Program.

## Start Proud

Osler sponsored Start Proud's Start Out 2020 Digital Conference, which was held in September 2020. The first of its kind, Start Out is a digital conference where LGBTQ+ talent comes to meet some of Canada's largest and most inclusive employers. Attendees can attend workshops, build their networks and learn about LGBTQ+ support in the workplace from employers who lead the charge.

## Osler Cares

Osler's Calgary and Vancouver offices joined forces in support of the most vulnerable citizens in their local communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lawyers and staff tapped into their peer networks to identify and support local areas of need through cash or in-kind donations or volunteering their time – and invited Osler alumni members to join in. More than \$16,000 has been raised in support of the Calgary Food Bank, the Calgary Drop-in Centre, The Mustard Seed, the Calgary Emergency Women's Shelter, the United Way, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, Backpack Buddies and the BCCDC – Emergency Response Fund.

## Wings of Hope

When Calgary-based Wings of Hope was unable to hold its annual key fundraising event due to the pandemic, our Calgary office provided financial support in lieu of this event to help ensure the not-for-profit's clients remained supported. Wings of Hope is a registered charitable organization that provides financial relief allowing breast cancer patients to focus on their recovery. Osler has been a key supporter of Wings of Hope for many years, including acting as the title sponsor at its main fundraising event.

## Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival

Osler proudly supports the Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival, which celebrates and recognizes contemporary Asian cinema and works from the Asian diaspora. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual festival was held online on November 12-19, 2020. We sponsored the Best Feature Film Award, which was awarded to the jury's selection of the best feature-length film shown at the festival. Director Yoon Dan-bi's first-time feature *Moving On* won the award. May Cheng, a partner in Osler's Intellectual Property Group, has led Osler's support for the Toronto Reel Asian International Festival over the past three years.

## Helping to end hunger

The Toronto Summer Students raised more than \$5,000 to provide hunger relief to those in need through their Lawyers Feed the Hungry Fundraiser – TikTok Dance Challenge. To raise funds in a virtual environment, the students invited participants to donate in order to cast a vote for one of 11 brave Osler partners who agreed to replicate a TikTok dance. The final three who showed off their TikTok routines were Doug Bryce (Renegade), Jeremy Fraiberg (The Floss) and Carly Fidler (Savage Love).

Osler students also raised \$7,705 for the Daily Bread Food Bank in Toronto through the Law Firm Challenge. Fundraising activities to support this cause included a Promise Auction and an Ice Bucket Challenge, which saw Osler lawyers David Jamieson, Lia Bruschetta and Alan Kenigsberg "get iced" on video.

## Pro bono

Over the past year, many of our pro bono efforts were mobilized to support individuals in need during the pandemic. Below are a just a few examples of our support.

### Pro Bono Ontario

Our Toronto summer students partnered with Pro Bono Ontario (PBO) to help prepare resources on a wide range of matters for advising small businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as preparing subject area primers for volunteers to use when supporting the PBO's Free Legal Advice Hotline. Osler associates, partners and alumni also donated their time and expertise to the hotline, which helps Ontarians with nowhere else to turn to get much needed legal support.



## Pro Bono Law Alberta

Legal professionals in our Calgary office donated their services in support of Pro Bono Law Alberta's Civil Claims Duty Counsel program, which provides brief legal assistance to self-represented litigants with civil matters in the Provincial Court in Calgary and Edmonton. Volunteer lawyers provide free 30-minute consultations that can include legal advice, information on court procedures, assistance with document preparation and review and help in preparing for trials, motions and other appearances.

## GroceryHero

A team of Osler lawyers, including Shari Cohen, Briana MacEachern and Shaun Parker (Employment and Labour), Adam LaRoche (Privacy), Craig Lockwood and Daniel Stysis (Litigation) and Connie Fullerton and Brian Gray (Corporate), provided pro bono legal services to GroceryHero, a service that connects volunteer shoppers to healthcare workers who are working long hours and can't or don't want to go grocery shopping for fear of being potentially exposed to COVID-19 or infecting others. Through GroceryHero, volunteer shoppers across Canada are matched with a medical professional in their neighbourhood by postal code and put in touch directly to arrange free grocery shopping and delivery.



## Donations and Sponsorships

Our 2020 donations and sponsorships included the following:

Black Law Students' Association of Canada Conference

Black Female Lawyers Network

Catalyst Canada Honours

Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers Ontario Conference

Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers – B.C. Behind the Curtain Event

First Generation Network

Women's Legal Action and Defence Fund (LEAF)

Osgoode Black Law Students' Association

Osgoode Indigenous Students' Association

Osgoode Society for Legal History

Osgoode Women's Network Bursary

Osgoode Women's Network – "OWN Your Career" Event

South Asian Bar Association of Toronto (SABA) Virtual Gala

Start Proud's Start Out Digital Conference

Young Women in Law Gala

Association des Femmes en Finance du Québec (AFFQ)  
Association of Quebec Women in Finance

Chez Doris

Special Olympics Québec

OUTLaw, University of Calgary chapter

Pink Flamingo YYC

Law Needs Feminism Because

UBC BLSA



# Diversity Committee

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## Toronto



**Shuli Rodal**  
Chair, Osler Diversity Committee  
Chair, Competition/Antitrust



Steven Cline



Theresa Donkor



Lori Gosling



Jennifer Jodha



Matias Milet

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## Montréal



Catherine Lambert



Julien Ranger



Storme Mckop



Joanne Vandale



Parm  
Ahuja-Robertson



Rei Jiloca

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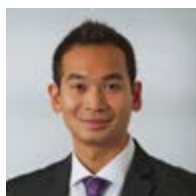
## Calgary

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## Vancouver

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## Ottawa



Barry Fong



Clark Holden



Miju Damodar



Jennifer Lee



Paul Seraganian

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## New York

# For more information on diversity at Osler

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Visit [osler.com/diversity](https://osler.com/diversity) or contact  
Shuli Rodal at [srodal@osler.com](mailto:srodal@osler.com).

We welcome feedback on our initiatives.  
We look forward to hearing from you.

## About Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP

Osler is a leading law firm with a singular focus – your business. From Toronto, Montréal, Calgary, Ottawa, Vancouver and New York, we advise our Canadian, U.S. and international clients on an array of domestic and cross-border legal issues. Our collaborative “one firm” approach draws on the expertise of over 450 lawyers to provide responsive, proactive and practical legal solutions driven by your business needs. For over 150 years, we’ve built a reputation for solving problems, removing obstacles, and providing the answers you need, when you need them.

**It’s law that works.**

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