

PCLS Board of Directors Election

Class A Slate

1. Parmbir Gill*

Parmbir is a lawyer at Ursel Phillips Fellows Hopkinson LLP. He practises in criminal defence and labour/employment law, representing the criminally accused as well as trade unions and non-unionized workers.

Parmbir is also a Parkdale resident, PCLS alumnus, and neighbourhood organizer. While working at PCLS in 2015, he helped launch a drive to unionize all 20 of its student caseworkers, producing the first bargaining unit of its kind in Ontario. He was later involved in supporting MetCap tenants during the historic 2017 rent strike, after which he and his neighbours organized a successful rent strike at their own building in 2018. Parmbir is passionate about the potential of struggles like these to change existing power relations in fundamental ways. To build this potential, he continues to support others in Parkdale who experience exploitation, oppression or displacement and decide to fight back.

Parmbir joined the Board of Directors in 2019.

2. Sarah Robicheau*

Sarah is a former PCLS student case worker and current public servant raising her young family in Parkdale. Her commitment to community involvement has led Sarah to volunteer and participate in a number of Toronto and Parkdale community organizations and initiatives over the years and she is excited for the opportunity to serve her community through the PCLS board.

With an academic and professional background in environmental law and policy, Sarah has extensive experience in community engagement strategizing, collaborative policymaking, and policy/legal education and outreach. She is passionate about enhancing public involvement in government decision making by fighting to address systemic barriers to public participation and contributing to initiatives that empower people and communities to act as strong self-advocates.

3. Samara Secter*

Samara is an associate at Addario Law Group with a broad criminal, constitutional and administrative law practice. She developed her interest in criminal and administrative law while clerking for Justice Louis LeBel at the Supreme Court of Canada. Samara earned her law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School, where she graduated with the Silver Medal. While at Osgoode, she worked at Parkdale Community Legal Services – Immigration Division. She has a B.A. in History from the University of British Columbia, where she was the valedictorian. She was called to the bar in 2014.

4. Sheryl Sarfin

Sheryl Sarfin conducts workplace investigations for Walmart Canada, focusing on harassment, discrimination and healthcare compliance matters arising from Walmart's pharmacies and vision centers throughout Canada. Prior to this, Sheryl spent 5 years in a leadership position with the Professional Conduct department of College of Nurses of Ontario, where she oversaw the investigations team.

While a student at Osgoode Hall Law School, Sheryl participated in the Poverty Law Intensive Program, spending a semester and a summer working in the Social Assistance, Violence and Health Division at PCLS. Following law school, Sheryl was the Education Chair of the Toronto branch of the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) where she planned and implemented educational programs in line with LEAF's mandate and vision.

Sheryl has an Honours B.A. in Political Science and Economics from McGill University, and a J.D. from Osgoode Hall Law School.

Class B Director (TBC)

Class C Directors

1. Bruce Ryder

Bruce Ryder is a member of the full-time faculty at Osgoode Hall Law School where he teaches and researches in the areas of constitutional law and human rights. He is Osgoode's Director of Clinical Education and the academic director of the Anti-Discrimination Intensive Program, a partnership between Osgoode and the Human Rights Legal Support Centre. He previously served on the PCLS Board from 1992-1994 and 2020-2021 and is delighted to be returning.

2. Danielle Bisnar*

Danielle is a former PCLS student caseworker and current partner with Cavalluzzo LLP. She came to law school from a background of community organizing with Filipinx migrant workers and their families in Vancouver. She practises in the areas of workers' rights, equality, health and Aboriginal law. She represents unions and other institutional clients, individual workers, regulated professionals, and First Nations in diverse contexts including labour disputes, government relations, human rights and constitutional law, pay equity, professional discipline, judicial reviews and appeals. She has particular expertise in the health care, policing and public sectors. Danielle regularly litigates before various provincial tribunals and has appeared before all levels of court in Ontario and federally, including the Supreme Court of Canada. She has litigated complex systemic discrimination claims including leading pay equity and equality cases on behalf of women, racialized and disabled workers and public interest intervenors. Outside of law, Danielle is a mom to two small chaotic beings.

Danielle joined the PCLS Board in 2021 and is delighted to support PCLS' invaluable work in building community power, promoting access to justice, and training courageous and creative advocates.

3. Trish McMahon

Professor Patricia McMahon's areas of teaching and research are civil procedure, law and equity and legal history broadly defined. She is also the Director and Lead Interviewer of the Oral History Program at the Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History and the Co-Academic Director of the Winkler Institute for Dispute Resolution. She joined the faculty in July 2022 after a number of years in private practice at three Bay Street law firms.

Professor McMahon holds a BA in history from Huron University College at Western University, and an MA and PhD in history from the University of Toronto. This was followed by an LLB (with honours) from the University of Toronto, where she served as co-editor-in-chief of the University of Toronto Faculty of Law Review and received the Dean Cecil A. Wright Key. Following a clerkship with the Honorable Justice Ian Binnie at the Supreme Court of Canada, she attended Yale Law School as a Fulbright Fellow, where she completed an LLM and JSD. Her dissertation dealt with how law reform movements influenced English civil justice reform including the fusion of law and equity under the Judicature Acts, which serves as the basis of modern civil procedure in common law systems. At Yale, she was also a student director in a clinic engaged in civil liberties litigation related to the policies of the U.S. government following the attacks of September 11, 2001. Cases involved unlawful detention, search and seizure, due process, international human rights and humanitarian law.

While in private practice, Professor McMahon focused on complex litigation, including class actions, public law and tax litigation. She appeared before all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada.

Her work with the Osgoode Society involves overseeing the oral history collection, which is the largest collection of its kind in the world. In addition to providing strategic direction for the collection, she regularly conducts interviews with lawyers and judges about their contributions to the legal profession.

*Re-election