

Celebrating Asian and South Asian Heritage Month

Thursday, May 16, 2013

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. (Panel Discussion)

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. (Reception)



The Law Society of
Upper Canada

Barreau
du Haut-Canada

The Law Society of Upper Canada, the Canadian Association of South Asian Lawyers, the Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers, and the South Asian Bar Association are pleased to hold an annual panel discussion and reception to celebrate Asian and South Asian Heritage Month in the legal profession. Members of the legal profession, students, and public are invited to attend.

PANEL DISCUSSION:

Balancing Rights in a Multicultural Society – The Impact of Cultural and Social Issues on the Law

In 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada released decisions in two important cases that attempted to address a recurring question in Canada's increasingly pluralistic and multicultural society: How do we reconcile and balance competing rights and values in situations of actual or apparent conflict? In *R. v. N.S.*, the Court considered whether the right of an accused person to make full answer and defence required a key witness to remove her niqab while testifying in court, contrary to her religious beliefs. In *Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission v. Whatcott*, the *Charter* guarantees of freedom of expression and freedom of religion were pitted against Canada's legal and political commitments to promoting equality and human dignity. While the Court set out analytical frameworks to address the balancing of rights in these circumstances, these principles remain contested and contestable in other forums. These cases force us to grapple with the tensions and difficult questions associated with fostering a pluralistic and multicultural community. A panel of legal and policy experts dealing with these issues from various perspectives will continue the discussion about these important questions.

SPEAKERS:

Ranjan Agarwal, Barrister and Solicitor, Bennett Jones

Faisal Bhabha, Assistant Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University

Reema Khawja, Counsel, Public Interest Inquiries, Ontario Human Rights Commission

Kripa Sekhar, Executive Director, South Asian Women's Centre

Sandra Yuko Nishikawa, Barrister and Solicitor and Chair of the Law Society Equity Advisory Group will moderate the discussion.

Following the panel discussion, a reception will be held featuring a keynote address by lawyer **Gary Yee**, Executive Chair (int.), Safety, Licensing Appeals and Standards Tribunals Ontario, and founding executive director of the Metro Toronto Chinese & Southeast Asian Legal Clinic.

REGISTRATION:

This program is offered **FREE OF CHARGE**. However, space is limited and registration is required by May 15, 2013. Register via email at: equityevents@lsuc.on.ca or call **416-947-3413** or **1-800-668-7380, ext 3413**.



EVENT LOCATION:

The Law Society of Upper Canada, Convocation Hall
130 Queen Street West, Toronto
(Enter at east-side doors facing Toronto City Hall.)