

KEEPING TABS



The Advocates' Society



FALL 2022

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What the TWEET is this?

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The Young Advocates' Standing Committee ("YASC") is a standing committee of The Advocates' Society with a mandate to be a voice for young advocates (advocates who are ten years of call or fewer) within the Society and within the profession. We do this through networking/mentoring events, by publishing articles by and for young advocates, and by raising issues of concern to young advocates as we work with the Society's Board of Directors. The opinions expressed by individual authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies of The Advocates' Society.



FRIENDS WHO ARGUE



Now Live! Friends Who Argue - TAS podcast is jointly hosted by our Young Advocates and 10+ Standing Committees. Segments feature dialogue with the people who get what you do, as we delve into both the serious and lighthearted aspects of life as an advocate in Canada. Know a TAS member we should talk to? Contact Christopher Horkins at chorkins@cassels.com and Karen Bernofsky at KarenB@stockwoods.ca

Friends Who Argue is sponsored by **MNP**



CHAIR CHAT



Chair Chat
Claudia Cappuccitti, *Dyer Brown LLP*

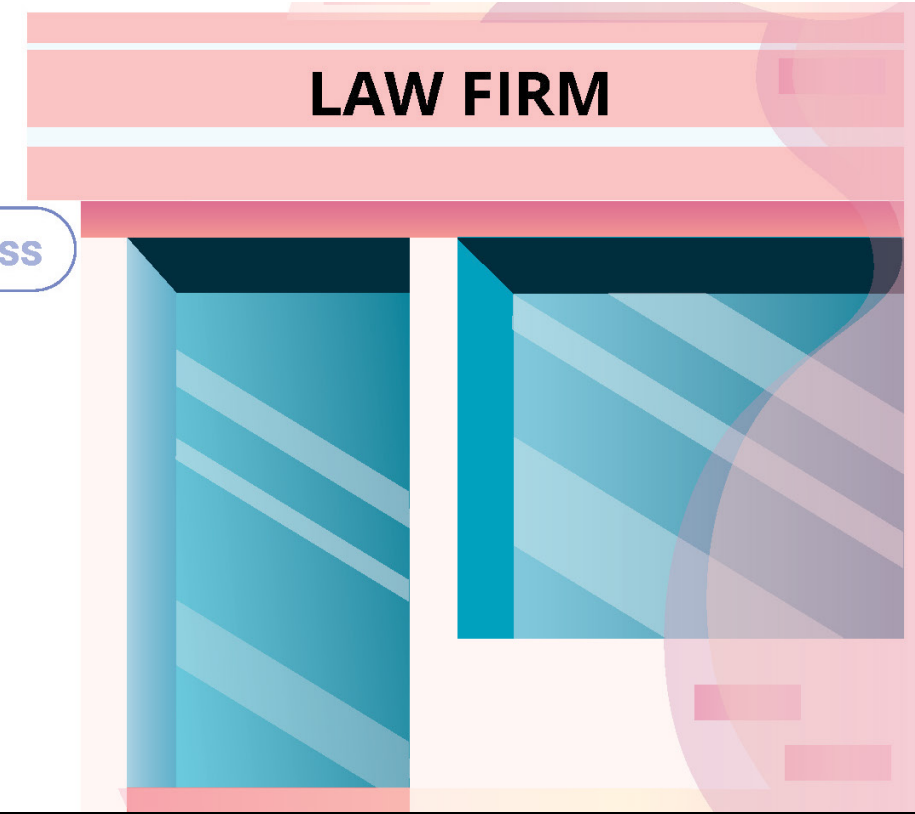
Even though your school days may be long behind you, for many, the crisp air and changing leaves bring with them a nostalgia for the excitement and renewed vigour that would come with the start of the school year-- excitement for a fresh start, to be inspired and learn something new, and to reunite with friends you haven't seen all summer. In the spirit of the season, this edition of *Keeping Tabs* is about all of these things. Farhad Shekib talks about new beginnings and lessons from starting his own firm. Nina Butz jumps back into in-person events and the benefits of being back together. We have an interview with YASC member Sania Chaudry, who was recently honoured with the Canadian Council of Muslim Women's Women Who Inspire Award 2022. And we have a run-down of our favourite podcasts of the moment.

In the same spirit, YASC has been busy with a full slate of events and programming

across Canada this fall, including: Fall Forum, a Bench and Bar event in Calgary, socials in Toronto, Thunder Bay and Windsor, the London Trivia Challenge, the Vancouver Big Mingle, Toronto Mentoring Dinner, Tips for Recruiting and Articling in Atlantic Canada, and a Fireside Chat on Advocacy with The Honourable Justice Ria Tzimas. We hope you were able to join us, and look forward to seeing you at our upcoming winter programs. Be sure to check your inboxes and follow The Advocates' Society on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#) for the latest on our events and initiatives.

If you'd like to contribute to an upcoming edition of *Keeping Tabs*, we would love to hear from you. Please email our editor, Khrystina McMillan, at kmcmillan@osc.gov.on.ca. If you're looking to get involved with YASC, you can join our Volunteer Roster by reaching out to Katrina Crocker at katrina.crocker@queensu.ca. 🐾

“As a law firm owner, you are a business-person first and a lawyer second. Every decision concerning your business must be made through this lens.”



Business of Law



So...You Want to Launch Your Own Firm?

Farhad Shekib, *Pinto Shekib LLP*

In April 2022, after spending 5 years litigating on Bay Street, I launched my litigation firm, Pinto Shekib LLP, with one of my closest friends, Sancia Pinto. I left behind a great firm, a stable salary and two amazing bosses to venture into the unknown. If you are a young lawyer who is thinking of launching your own firm, I'd like to share with you some things I've learned in my journey.

1

You Must Know Your "Why"

When I departed from my former firm, a lawyer said to me: "You must be a man who likes risk." I smiled and replied: "Define risk."

As a refugee from Afghanistan, to me risk is living in a failed state with the looming threat of violence, warfare, economic and political uncertainty. In contrast, I live a privileged life in Toronto: I have access to clean food, clothing, shelter and the opportunity to peacefully compete in the economic marketplace. Starting a law firm, in my eyes, is not risky but liberating.

My "why" is freedom: I choose the cases I want, the hours I work and the people I work with. I can co-counsel with senior lawyers on complex litigation matters, or take a case I believe in on contingency. I am solely responsible for my success or failure. And I wouldn't have it any other way.

Knowing your "why" is crucial. It defines your vision for the firm and gives you strength during the early, rocky stages of your start-up. It also shapes the lawyer – and businessperson – that you ultimately become. What is your "why"?

You Must Know Your "How"

Understanding your "why" will also dictate your "how." Opening your new law firm is straightforward: you obtain a business license and HST number; register with the LSO and LAWPRO; open your general and trust accounts; prepare a website; and secure docketing, accounting and case management software. *Operating* a law firm, however, is not so simple.

As an employee of someone else's firm, your job was to bill and to do excellent work. As a law firm owner, you are a businessperson first and a lawyer second. Every decision concerning your business must be made through this lens. You are responsible for securing clients, billing clients, accounting, IT, marketing, hiring, firing and anything else that comes up.

With respect to generating work, you need to determine your business model. For example, a firm focused on larger commercial litigation files will likely

"Regardless of the type of work your new firm does, networking should be a key aspect of your marketing plan."

spend a significant amount of resources networking with other lawyers, if your work comes in primarily through referrals. Conversely, a firm focused on high volume litigation (e.g. a plaintiff side employment law firm) may want to adopt a wider, more client-direct marketing approach, such as online advertisements.

Regardless of the type of work your new firm does, networking should be a key aspect of your marketing plan. Especially because you may not have the capital to invest into online marketing at the early stages of your business. Everyone and anyone you meet can be a potential client or a referral source. For example, I have gotten referrals from: serving as an Advisor Coach with the LSO; existing and former clients; former colleagues; mediators that I have worked with; and lawyers who practise in other areas of law (such as real estate and business lawyers). Building your community is key, so being present at professional events will keep your name and face out there.

As you start generating revenue, you will likely have to invest a healthy portion back into helping your business grow. In my case, within a few months of launching the firm, we moved into a Chambers in North York, where we have access to a nice office, receptionist, boardroom and a network of lawyers.

You Must Know Your "When"

At the early stages of your firm, cash flow becomes king. You no longer receive a stable, bi-weekly salary; your income becomes variable. You must, therefore, carefully consider when to launch your firm. Many factors will go into this very personal decision. I launched my firm now because I have relatively low overhead. Additionally, my wife is completing her residency in internal medicine and frequently works 26-hour shifts at the hospital. This gives me ample free time to network and to focus on my business. If I had children, a large mortgage and other obligations, it may have been significantly harder for me to take this path, though certainly not impossible. Despite its challenges, running my own shop has been the second-best decision of my life (the first being marrying my wife).

As you embark on your own journey of entrepreneurship, I leave you with the wise words of a famous poet named Drake: "Life can always change, you have to adjust." ■

*Farhad Shekib is a civil litigator at *Pinto Shekib LLP*, where his practice focuses on employment law, commercial litigation, real estate disputes, estates litigation and insurance matters.



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YASC In-Person Events: We're Back!

Nina Butz, *Bennett Jones LLP*

After two years of virtual events, YASC is incredibly pleased to report that the first series of in-person events and socials took place over the past few months across the country, with great success. From the Atlantic Spring Social in Halifax to the Calgary Bench and Bar Reception, young advocates have once again begun gathering face-to-face to socialize, network, learn, and mentor, with increased attendance and enthusiasm.

There has been much to learn from the past two years both for YASC event attendees and the legal community at large. The importance of accessible mentorship was highlighted more than ever. Feeling part of a supportive community became clear to many young lawyers and carrying these lessons forward is important to ensure the best of both worlds going forward - particularly when it comes to organizing and hosting events that are meaningful.

The first few YASC in-person events have been a testament to this commitment, including the Atlantic Spring Social hosted by the TAS Atlantic Regional Advisory Committee (May 19), Le Big Mingle Montréal (July 20), the Calgary Bench and Bar Reception (September 22), the

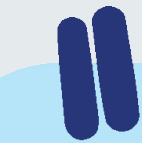
Thunder Bay Social (September 29), and the Toronto Young Advocates' Social (September 29). We were thrilled to see such an excellent turnout for each. The presence of articling students and new calls was especially encouraging. Many young advocates were meeting lawyers and their colleagues in person for the first time.

Event organizers commented on the casual, collegial, and relaxed atmosphere that came with face-to-face conversation. As Teodora Prpa, one of the organizers of the Toronto Young Advocates' Social, put it: "Unlike virtual events, where the goal was to maintain connections during a difficult time (e.g. lockdowns), the goal of this event was to foster new connections and remind attendees of the benefits of being back together with their colleagues."

Event chairs also noted that attendees stayed longer than during virtual events, where people tended to log off early or immediately at the scheduled end time, and that walk-ins were much more common in person as compared to virtual socials. Similarly, D. Bronwhyn Simmons, one of the organizers of the Calgary Bench and Bar, reflected how the in-person forum allowed attendees to interact directly with more mem-

bers of the judiciary, as opposed to listening passively to the remarks of fewer justices.

With The Advocates' Society Fall Forum right behind us (October 21-22), young advocates had another in-person opportunity to mix and mingle. We welcomed attendees from across the country, for many of whom met their TAS colleagues in person for the first time. It was also one of the first in-person Fall Forums for many of our attendees, and one of the best events for young advocates to network with and learn from leaders in our industry and members of the judiciary. Best moment or greatest success for you from the event: ▀



The greatest success was the number of articling students and junior lawyers who came to the event. New calls and students were impacted during COVID-19 because of the absence of networking and social events, so it was great to provide an opportunity for young advocates to get together and meet each other.

**Teodora Prpa, Co-Chair
Toronto Young Advocates' Social**



A lot of young advocates got to meet their colleagues who they have spoken with on the phone or over Zoom over the past two years but had never actually met in person before this event. I frequently overheard people saying 'It is nice to finally meet you in person.'

**Alice Colquhoun, Co-Chair
Thunder Bay Social**





Media Picks



Great Podcasts to Check Out

Compiled by the Keeping Tabs Team

With so much great content out there, it can be hard to know where to start. Here are just some of our favourite podcasts for your listening pleasure!



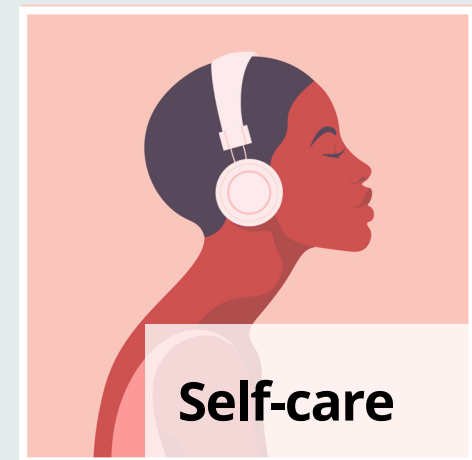
The law aficionados

- "Friends Who Argue," featuring intimate conversations with advocates from across Canada.
- "The Trauma Informed Lawyer," on a do-no-further-harm approach to the practice of law.
- "Legal Skies" looks at the future of legal services in Saskatchewan and across Canada.
- "Borderlines," a podcast about immigration, refugees and border-related issues, including niche areas like criminal inadmissibility and bias in visa officer decisions.



Current events

- "The Big Story" dives deep into the issues, culture and personalities shaping today's world.
- The Economist's "The Intelligence" gives fresh takes on current events around the world.



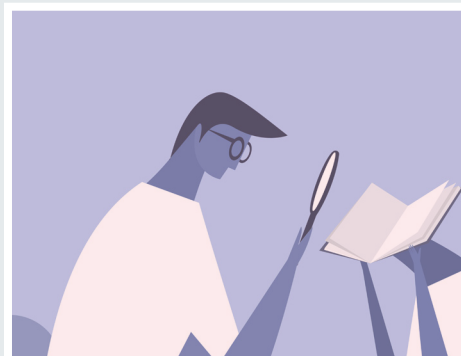
Self-care

- "Unf*ck Your Brain" with cognitive psychology-based techniques and insights from feminist theory to up-level your life.
- "Affirmation Pod," for quicker, thematic pick-me-ups right when you need them.



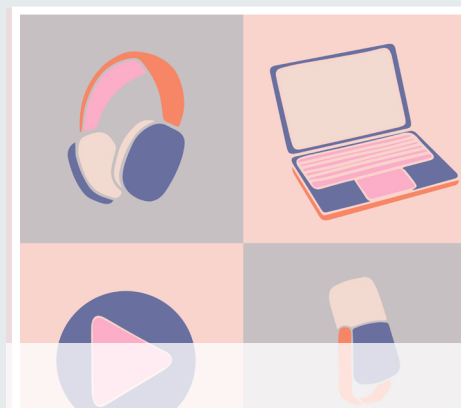
True north strong and free

- CBC's "The Secret Life of Canada," covering weird, unknown things about Canadian history and culture.
- "Canadian True Crime," an award-winning podcast exploring some of the most thought-provoking true crime cases in Canadian history.
- "The Steve Dangle Podcast," because few things are more Canadian than hockey, eh?



New perspectives

- "Revisionist History" takes us on a journey through the overlooked and misunderstood and asks whether we got things right the first time.
- "Black History for White People" educates, resources and challenges white people to actively participate in racial justice.
- "Science Vs," a podcast that fact - checks and blows up your firmly held opinions and replaces them with science



More podcasts

- "Reply All," a podcast about the internet but actually tells "painfully human" stories that happen to be about technology. Be sure to check out Episode #158, 'The Case of the Missing Hit.'
- Relive your childhood or youth with "History of the 90s."
- NYT's "The Book Review," a podcast that takes you inside the literary world.
- "Broadway Breakdown," a podcast for all those musical theatre geeks who are ok with a little profanity.
- "The Raptors Show," talking about all things Raptors. 🏀

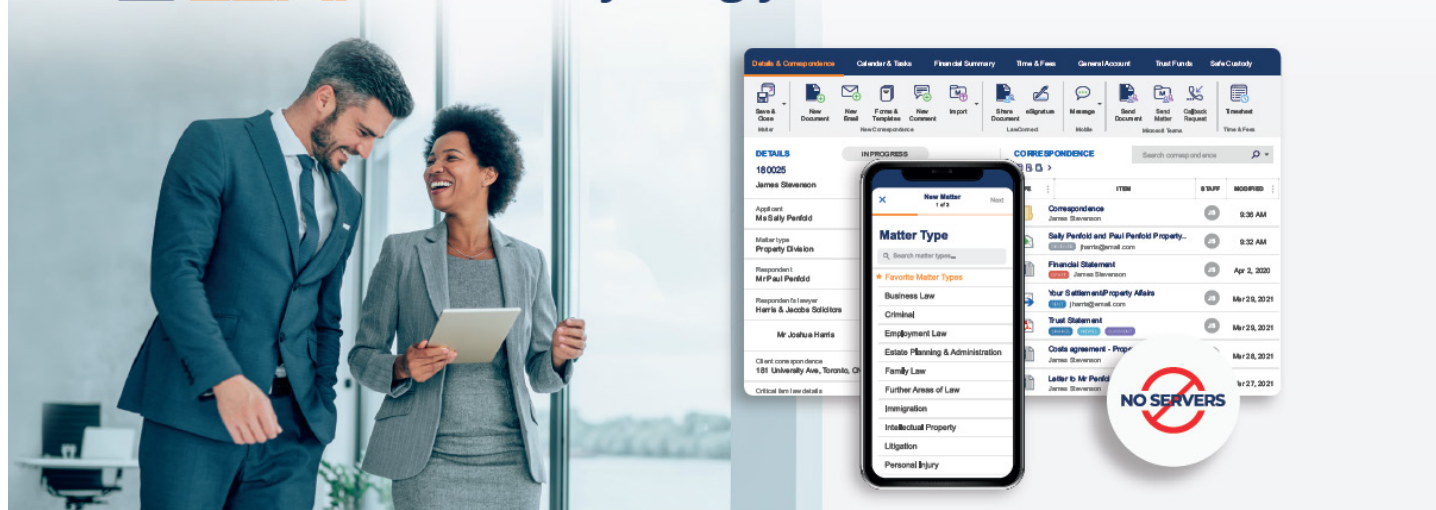


Let's keep this conversation going! Tell us about your favourite podcasts for easy listening or learning using the following hashtag!

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INTERVIEW



Interview with Sania Chaudhry, *Real Estate Council of Alberta*

Compiled by Aly Haji, *Lax O'Sullivan Lisus Gottlieb LLP*

Keeping Tabs sits down with Sania Chaudhry, Conduct Counsel for *Real Estate Council of Alberta*, YASC Alberta representative and recent recipient of the 2022 Women Who Inspire Award from the Canadian Council of Muslim Women.

Q. What drew you to become a litigator or advocate?

A. I have been passionate about law since childhood. I was born in Canada to immigrant parents, one of whom was a refugee, and faced housing and food insecurity growing up. Then, at university I helped research LGBTQ2S+ youth health policy determinants, and volunteered at a non-profit that advocated for marginalized women. These experiences led to my passion for social justice and how the law can be used to help better society and serve the intersectional needs of marginalized communities.

Q. What challenges have you faced as a young lawyer, and how did you manage them?

A. Like many young lawyers, I have wanted to take everything on, sometimes struggling to say no. I got pregnant during articles, gave birth, and then lost my mother. At first, I tried to persevere to get as much work done as possible, but I ultimately realized in my sleep-deprived state that I was taking on too much. My daughter was the most important blessing to me, and I needed to grieve the loss of my mother. I deferred whatever work I could, and took a much-needed break. Taking that break allowed me to be the best mother and the best lawyer I could be.

Q. What role has mentorship played in your career?

A. A huge role! I have experienced mental health and work-life balance struggles, while also facing racialized and gendered microaggressions including a direct Islamophobic incident. I initially found it difficult to find mentors who could truly understand my experiences given my intersectional identities as a racialized Muslim young mother, first-generation Canadian, and first-generation lawyer from a lower socioeconomic background. But I was able to find mentors through different organizations serving lawyers and people like me. I feel safe with these mentors who champion me and give me reliable personal and professional guidance.

What advice would you give young advocates who struggle to find mentorship?

A. Opposing counsel can become your best mentor. Some of the best mentoring relationships I have developed are with lawyers on opposite sides of my files. Also, you can look outside your place of employment, and take the initiative to reach out to lawyers who you think would be great mentors.

Q. What have been some memorable high points of your career so far?

A. Some of the highest points in my career were the challenging, but very rewarding, immigration law wins that bettered the lives of my clients. In one case, *Perez v Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)*¹, I successfully argued that it was a breach of procedural fairness and a denial of natural justice to take away my client's status *in absentia*, without giving him an opportunity to be heard. In another case, *Garcia v Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)*², I successfully argued it was unfair to deny my client's permanent residence application because her husband had (erroneously) been found criminally inadmissible and, again, without giving my client an opportunity to respond to the issue. Outside of client advocacy, my highest points have been furthering EDI through my volunteer work, and promoting awareness and training on bias, anti-racism, bystander intervention, power dynamics, mental health, and allyship. ■

1 2020 FC 1171.

2 2021 FC 141.



Calgary Bench and Bar

Calgary Bench and Bar



Fall Forum 2022:
The Connected Advocate



Keynote Address at Fall Forum from The Hon. George R. Strathy, Retired Chief Justice of Ontario



Alexandra Shelley, *Torys LLP* (Secretary), Claudia Cappuccitti, *Dyer Brown LLP* (Chair) and, Chris Kinnear Hunter, *Torys LLP* (Vice-Chair)



Fall Forum
Cocktail Reception



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