

WeirFoulds Partner Raj Anand Works to Assist Law Firms to Combat Racism and Discrimination

December 20, 2016



Raj Anand, a senior civil litigation and human rights partner at WeirFoulds, and a bencher of the Law Society of Upper Canada (LSUC), has added to his long list of accomplishments in working toward making the legal and paralegal professions reflective of the diverse Canadian population by acting as the Chair of the Challenges Faced by Racialized Licensees Working Group. Since 2012, the Group has done extensive research, consulted with the professions, and formulated a combination of mandatory, voluntary and educational recommendations to break down barriers to the entry and advancement of racialized lawyers and paralegals. Raj presented the Group's final report, [Working Together for Change: Strategies to Address Issues of Systemic Racism in the Legal Professions](#) to Convocation on December 2, 2016, and obtained the approval of the Law Society of Upper Canada.

The 13 recommendations detailed in the report are designed to assist the professions in combatting systemic racism and discrimination. Any firm with at least 10 lawyers and paralegals will have a designated person responsible for implementing a policy that addresses issues such as fair recruitment, retention and advancement. Organizations of at least 25 lawyers or paralegals will need to assess their internal systems and their demographic makeup to ensure that systemic barriers to the full participation of racialized applicants and licensees are removed. In addition, the law society will create a specialized and trained team to address complaints of discrimination.

According to Raj, "It is gratifying that we now can move forward to implement these important recommendations, which reinforce the special responsibility of lawyers and paralegals to promote human rights in their own workplaces — and in their relationships with the justice system and the public."

This is the latest achievement for Raj in a long career full of activities aimed at the advancement of human rights in the legal profession, and in Canada as a whole. His past positions include Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, member of the Equity Advisory Group of the Law Society, Board member at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and Founding Chair of the Human Rights Legal Support Centre, amongst many others.

The December 2 report provides a blueprint for culture change across the Canadian legal profession. It is intended to serve as a catalyst to enable firms and in house and government legal departments to benefit from the increased participation of racialized lawyers.

[Please click here to read the report.](#)

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