

WeirFoulds congratulates Raj Anand on being named one of Canadian Lawyer's Top 25 Most Influential Lawyers for 2017

August 8, 2017

WeirFoulds is pleased to announce that Raj Anand, a senior partner and Bencher of the Law Society of Upper Canada, has been named as one of *Canadian Lawyer's* Top 25 Most Influential Lawyers for 2017 in the Human Rights, Advocacy and Criminal law category.

Raj has championed the advancement of human rights in Canada over the last 30 years. He served as a former Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission and founding Chair of the Ontario Human Rights Legal Support Centre. Most recently, he was appointed by the Law Society to chair a major research and policy initiative, aimed at confronting issues of systemic racism in the legal and paralegal professions and advancing the public interest.

From 2012 to 2016, the Challenges Faced by Racialized Licensees Working Group issued several studies and reports, consulted with the professions, and formulated a combination of mandatory, voluntary and educational measures to achieve lasting culture change and break down barriers to the entry and advancement of racialized lawyers and paralegals. Raj presented the 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.

Over the previous year, Raj also acted as Constitutional Litigator in Residence at the David Asper Centre for Constitutional Freedoms. In that capacity, he represented the Centre as an intervener in the Supreme Court of Canada in the constitutional test case of *Jessica Ernst v. Alberta Energy Regulator*. The case asked whether the general immunity in s. 43 of the *Energy Resources Conservation Act* (ERCA) is constitutionally inapplicable, or inoperative, to the extent that it bars claims for personal damages for free speech violations of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. In 2016, he was also retained to represent national disability rights groups in challenges to Bill C-14, the legislation post-*Carter* concerning Medical Assistance in Dying.

Being listed as one of the Top 25 Most Influential Lawyers in Canada is the latest achievement for Raj in a career full of activities aimed at promoting human rights and access to justice in Canada. He has represented many equality-seeking organizations and individuals and the legal clinic system in litigation before tribunals and courts up to the Supreme Court of Canada. Raj was the first recipient of the Advocates' Society's Award of Justice, and subsequently received the Law Society Medal and other awards.

In addition to his work as a Bencher, Raj's community and professional involvement has included membership on the Equity Advisory Group of the Law Society, the Equality Rights Panel and board of the Court Challenges Program of Canada, the boards of directors of two community legal clinics, Legal Aid Ontario, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the Advocates' Society and the Law Commission of Ontario, and President of the University of Toronto Law Alumni Association, Pro Bono Ontario, and the Minority Advocacy and Rights Council.

We congratulate our friend and colleague on his much deserved recognition.

[Please click here to review the article on the Canadian Lawyer website.](#)

[Please click here to read the *Working Together for Change: Strategies to Address Issues of Systemic Racism in the Legal Professions* report](#)

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