



## The Polar Barristers Page 5



### A Conversation with the Nunavut Law Foundation's new Chair

#### Cindy Kieu shares her vision for the upcoming year

By Gloria Song

On August 25, 2015, Cindy Kieu was appointed as the Chair of the Board of Directors serving the Nunavut Law Foundation (Foundation). Ms. Kieu brings with her years of experience, having served as a director of the Foundation since 2012. Ms. Kieu worked as legal counsel for the Government of Nunavut's Department of Justice before her current position as an associate for Edmonton-based Shores Jardine LLP. Last year, she successfully co-chaired the massively successful Canadian Bar Association's (CBA) National Aboriginal Law Conference held in Iqaluit.

Other Directors of the Foundation Board include legal counsel for the Kivalliq Inuit Association, Mandy Sammurtok, Public Prosecution Service of Canada, Tom Lemon, and legal counsel for Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Marie Belleau. Nalini Vaddapalli serves as the Foundation's administrator.

"Individually, each Board Member brings to the table different perspectives, backgrounds, knowledge, skills, and expertise," Ms. Kieu commented. "Our diversity in perspectives and backgrounds has contributed to the Board's collective knowledge and deep insights in the legal needs of the Nunavummiut and the territory."

The Foundation's statutory mandates are broad, including contributing to research and recommendations on the reform of law and the administration of justice, contributing to the establishment, maintenance and operation of law libraries, contributing to the legal education and knowledge of members and Nunavummiut, and providing assistances to legal aid programs, restorative justice programs and programs of a similar nature.

In addition, the Foundation offers grants, including in the Lucien Ukaliannuk Awards for students pursuing law-related studies who can demonstrate financial need and a commitment to Nunavut, and the Upinnatuq Awards for youth in Nunavut communities to reward their commitment to leadership, peacemaking or rehabilitation, in honour of Justice Beverley Browne. The Foundation also gives out other general grants, including to a PhD candidate's research on mental health in Nunavut.

#### Small budget, broad mandate

Ms. Kieu noted that in other jurisdictions, law foundations receive funding through interest accrued on monies held in trust by lawyers carrying on the practice of law, which can add up to millions of dollars. Conversely, this has not been an available source of funding in Nunavut. Since the creation of the Nunavut Law Foundation in 2001, the Foundation has received remittance of interest earned from a trust fund from less than five Nunavut practitioners. Consequently, the Foundation relies on funding that comes from a levy of a minimal amount that is collected from all members (except members with a trust account in Nunavut) of the Law Society of Nunavut (LSN). That means that the Foundation has a significantly smaller budget than law foundations in all other jurisdictions.

Despite this limitation, the Foundation has worked hard and carried out its broad mandate proactively by providing support for numerous community-based initiatives and projects, such as professional development programs provided by the CBA NU Branch and the LSN. Other examples include supporting access to justice community-based events in Pangnirtung and Iqaluit this past year. The Foundation provided grants to support public legal education initiatives including the development of materials by the LSN and community organizations as the Qulliit Nunavut Status of Women and the Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society.

The Foundation was a co-sponsor of the *Understanding the Nunavut Court Process Video* for victims, complainants, and other witnesses, and is supporting once again the efforts of the Association des francophones du Nunavut's newspaper, *Le Nunavoix*, to offer public legal information in French.

### Kieu's vision

As the newly appointed chair, Ms. Kieu shared her aspirations for the upcoming year, which are to maintain and improve the Foundation's finances, to continue supporting grants, to support access to justice research and initiatives in Nunavut, to increase access to public legal education, and to assist libraries and other resource centers to maintain a basic legal materials section that is accessible by the legal profession and members of the public.

"It is important that we carry out our work in keeping with our guiding principles," she commented. "A very important principle is that we must continue to look for ways to advance awareness of the law and promoting access to justice through creative partnerships and community involvement.

"At the same time, the emphasis of our work must be to support community based initiatives, promote respect for Inuit values and knowledge, and encourage creative solutions to access to justice issues. As a Foundation, we are developing valuable expertise in identifying and supporting community based initiatives that promote access to justice and legal education to all Nunavummiut. We expect to continue our hard work, proactive outreach, and strategic approach in carrying out our mandates as the Nunavut Law Foundation. We also expect to see positive impact from the grants and financial assistance that we provide in the coming year."

The Nunavut Law Foundation is looking to fill a vacant position for a member of the public, and strongly encourages interested persons to consider applying for this position by contacting the Administrator at [administrator@nulf.ca](mailto:administrator@nulf.ca).

*NOTE: Gloria Song is a recipient of a Lucien Ukaliannuk Award for her graduate study work.*

Learn more about the Nunavut Law Foundation : <http://lawsociety.nu.ca/law-foundation-of-nunavut/>.



LSN May 2015 AGM - The Law Society of Nunavut and the Nunavut Law Foundation recognizes Mandy Sammurtok (left) for her leadership and contributions as Chair of the Foundation. In particular, the Foundation drafted its first ever Strategic Plan under her leadership. Ms. Sammurtok will continue on as a Director. Right: Marie Belleau, Director of the Foundation.

