

DEAR BETH ... A WOMEN IN LAW PODCAST



NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2024

Dear Listener,

The three of us enjoyed working together on *Creating a Seat at the Table: Reflections from Women in Law* and decided over lunch last summer that we didn't want it to end. Since the book was published in October 2023, we also obtained funding, started, and finished Season 1 of "Dear Beth... A Women in Law Podcast". For those who haven't listened, we have provided a sneak peek of podcast episode summaries and guests on the reverse. Most episodes feature one of the contributors to the book and a letters segment in which Beth responds to messages sent in by listeners. You can read more about the podcast here (Beth Bilson, [Life on the Airwaves](#) (January 16, 2024)).

We have heard directly from young women lawyers, who have shared the impact the podcast has had on them and how they have used it, both in conversations with one another discussing challenges they are facing, and as a source of encouragement.

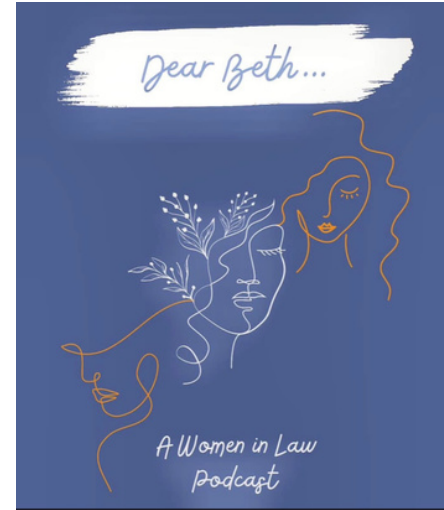
Our goal in creating this podcast was to create space for brave and honest conversations. In our view, the guests on the podcast have done just that – but we would like to hear from you! We will be sending out a survey soon – we invite your thoughts through the survey on whether the podcast has had an impact on your personal or professional life. We also invite your suggestions for content on Season 2.

If Dear Beth listeners would like to hear a second season of the podcast, we are up for it! We are now seeking support to fund a second season. Please contact createjustice@usask.ca to get involved.

We hope to hear from you!

Beth, Brea, Leah

PS Brea and Leah here to confess the obvious - that we came up with the name of the podcast in a meeting with our podcast producers (the absolutely incredible [Cascade Communication team](#)) that Beth wasn't able to attend. We were delighted that after some debate (and with some encouragement from her daughter Kate who was a moderator to the debate) she acquiesced to our suggested podcast name.



Give yourself permission and make room in your life to think about those bigger things that you really do want for yourself.

-Justice Michelle Hollins, Alberta Court of King's Bench, Episode 6

I still have days where I feel totally overwhelmed. I've just come to a place [of acknowledging] that is going to happen - I'm not a perfect person and I don't have to pretend that everything is okay all the time. Those are the incremental steps that I am trying to help myself make, but also [encouraging] other women around me to say, "You know what? We're going to have hard days, and that's okay, and it doesn't make us any less good at what we do - it just makes us a human being."

-Kate Bilson, Chief Privacy Officer & Office Manager, TC Energy, Episode 2

If there's an area that you're interested in, if there's a cause that you're committed to, if there is an organization you want to help, go for it. I think the world needs lawyers. They need good, humane, compassionate, articulate, committed lawyers everywhere.

-Justice Rosalie Abella, former Supreme Court of Canada Justice, Episode 5



SEASON 1 RECAP



Episode 1: It's never too late to be who you might have been

This episode features guest Adrienne Forgeron. Co-hosts Jen Quesnel and Leah sit down with Adrienne and explore the motivation that draws women towards the legal profession, and in some cases, what ultimately drives them away. Through a thoughtful and reflective conversation, they'll also talk about the importance of ensuring one's career aligns with one's values, and not the other way around, how the most important marker of success is not what one has or has not accomplished, but rather, how our accomplishments make us feel, and lastly why we need to shift away from contorting ourselves to fit into the "box" that we so often associate with law and being a lawyer. In the letters segment, Beth, a fellow co-editor of the book, responds to a student who has concerns about ethical practice clashing with professional responsibilities.



Episode 2: Never Use Others for Kindling

This episode explores what covert forms of silencing are used against women in the law, and how sometimes, these efforts may be undertaken by other women. Hosts Brea and Jen are joined by Brooke Johnson Isaak, a criminal lawyer. Brooke shares some of her own experiences with overt and subtle forms of silencing including having her workwear criticized. We get some insight into why incivility in the workplace happens in the first place, some advice on countering it, as well as trauma-informed lawyering and how caring for our mental health and well-being, creates healthy workplaces for everyone. In the letters segment, Beth is joined by her daughter Kate Bilson who discusses effective ways to raise up women colleagues. The Bilsons answer listener mail about how the "boys' club" nature may infiltrate the legal profession, and the fine balancing act of lawyering and parenting.



Episode 3: The Other Side: What Does Being an Accomplice Look Like?

This episode explores what it means to be an accomplice: someone willing to take risks (personally and professionally) in order to stand up for (and stand with) people from marginalized and underrepresented groups. Special co-host Lauren Trotchie, a Métis lawyer, joins Leah and Jen in the studio. Feature guest is Courtenay Phillips, a Cree lawyer who practices privacy law. Courtenay and Lauren describe their experiences moving through both law school and the legal profession as Indigenous women lawyers and how having strong allies and accomplices made a difference in their lives. In the letters segment, Beth explores the challenges students from underrepresented groups encounter when attending law school. She is joined by law students Jordan Calladine and Fakeha Jamil who speak candidly about their encountering prejudice and discrimination in and outside the law school, and the type of future they envision for themselves as practicing lawyers.



Episode 4: Creating A Seat at the Table: Roundtable Discussion

In this special episode of Dear Beth, we share a recording of the official student book launch of *Creating a Seat at the Table*, which took place in 2023 at the University of Saskatchewan College of Law. This live recording features hosts Beth and Jen in conversation with five dynamic women all working in diverse areas of law and or academia. Sharing their insights and experiences were Amelia Lowe-Muller, Adrienne Forgeron, Christine Glazer, Jaime Lavallee, and Rachel Loewen-Walker; each of whom share their personal insights and reflections about women working in law, encountering discrimination, and working to make the legal profession more inclusive of all people.



Episode 5: Sweeping Away the Cobwebs: Justice Rosalie Abella on Justice Advocacy and Social Change

In this special episode of Dear Beth, host Beth sits down with Justice Abella. For Justice Abella, justice advocacy isn't limited to the confines of a courtroom. It is about channeling one's skills, knowledge and passion toward creating system-wide change that benefits all people – and sometimes that work happens in one's off hours. Leah and Brea also interview Beth about why lawyers ought to push for positive change in the justice system. In the letters segment, Beth is joined by Professor Jamey Patrick of the College of Law who discusses why lawyers should be involved in systemic reform.



Episode 6: Think Much Bigger

In this episode, Justice Hollins reflects on her experiences and why she now advocates for greater awareness about mental health in the legal profession. We also hear her speak more broadly about what it means to think and dream much bigger and why this too is an integral part of wellness and well-being. And in the letters segment, Beth and Jen sit down with Dr. Judy Jaunzems-Fernuk, Well-being Coordinator in the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan who explains that law is actually a caregiving profession and that it is essential every lawyer pay close attention to self-care, mental health, and wellness.



Episode 7: You Can't Self-Help Your Way Out of Inequality, Oppression, or Exhaustion

The team at Dear Beth welcomes acclaimed, award-winning author and activist Soraya Chemaly. Chemaly's book, *Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger* poses a simple, yet provocative question: Why do we not appreciate women's anger as a catalyst for social change? Chemaly encourages listeners to consider how the emotion of anger can be viewed in a different light: as an emotion that can be channeled for personal growth and a powerful tool to fight against injustice.



LISTEN HERE:

