Bencher Election: Getting to Know You Questionnaire

1. What is your favourite song, movie or book & why?

Come on. Just one? That's a near impossible question to answer. I LOVE music and I have a number of favourite songs. It depends on the mood or where you want the music to take you. Do you want to drown in sorrow? Do you want to get pumped up to go into battle? Do you want to breathe and ground yourself? Are you looking for song that is all about the poetry or all about the beat. Some of my favourite songs are:

- favourite love song: Maps by the Yeah Yeah Yeahs
- favourite sad dance song: Dancing on my Own by Robyn
- favourite song that relaxes/grounds me: Rip Tide by Beirut
- favourite angry song: Bloody Mother F******A****** by Martha Wainright
- favourite song that I heard for the first time at a live show and it made me burst into tears: Basket by Dan Mangan

But if I had to pick an overall best song – maybe it would be Someone Great by LCD Soundsystem because it has a great beat and a challenging lyrics that make you think and it always evokes an emotional response from me and makes me think of something or someone from my past, but not necessarily the same something or someone from my past.

2. What was the most inspiring or rewarding volunteer activity you have performed?

I have been volunteering for CLG for many years going back to the early days of my career. Every evening clinic I've done, I've left feeling like a superhero because the clients I've had the good fortune of helping have been genuinely grateful for the time I've taken with them. I am very interested in mental health law and was able to study in the area while I was doing my LLM and to learn about and think about all of the issues that come up within the civil commitment process and patient rights, which vary widely across Canada. When I returned to Calgary after my LLM, I was able to reconnect with CLG and get on their roster specific to clients with issues arising under Alberta's *Mental Health Act*. Helping clients in this area is even more rewarding to me because often I find these clients actually just need someone to listen to them and what they are going through or have gone through, and they often tell me that they feel less overwhelmed at the end of our calls. Helping people feel less burdened is extremely rewarding for me.

3. How do you deal with stress?

I know stress (and particularly anxiety). There have been times in my professional life when I have genuinely wondered if I was going to crumble under the weight of it. So, I have had to learn how to deal with it meaningfully, comprehensively and with the assistance of health care professionals. Physical activity, sleep and healthy eating is a crucial part of my stress management regime. I relieve stress on the ice playing hockey and I work out regularly with a trainer because even if I feel like I'm too busy with work to go, I know that I will feel exponentially better and more productive at the end of the session.

4. What does lawyer well-being mean to you?

Realistically, the legal profession is a very high stress profession and that has to be acknowledged head on and we need to educate and make tools available to our membership so that they can identify and proactively mitigate the effects of stressors (recognizing that the stressors are not just in the workplace, but also arise from trying to balance work demands with family and other demands outside of work). To me, well-being is directly tied to quality of life, including physical, emotional and mental health. And lawyer well-being to me means being able to function sustainably in your professional and personal life. Not just

surviving (i.e., not being in a mental health crisis) but thriving so that you are able to feel purpose and satisfaction in your work and maintain positive relationships in your life.

5. Do you believe mental health should be a priority?

Yes. 100%. No doubt. We literally cannot do our work if we don't have our mental health and too frequently lawyers are quietly trying to soldier on when they are suffering and nearing a breaking point that we, collectively, should not have allowed them to get to in the first place.