

## **Independent Civilian Review into Missing Persons Investigations Announces its Community Advisor and Community Advisory Group Members**

TORONTO. January 8, 2019. The Hon. Gloria J. Epstein, who is conducting an independent civilian review of how Toronto police conduct missing persons investigations, today announced a Community Advisor and Community Advisory Group.

The Review's Terms of Reference contemplate these appointments to assist the Review in its outreach to the Toronto community, including members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and those who are members of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Judge Epstein stated that "the Community Advisor and Community Advisory Group represent one important way in which I can get community feedback on potential recommendations I might make for change. They will also assist me in ensuring that everyone who wants to be heard is indeed heard."

### **The appointments include:**

- **Ron Rosenes** (Community Advisor). Ron is a highly respected community leader, health advocate, researcher and consultant, working primarily in the HIV and the LGBTQ community. In 2015, he was awarded the Order of Canada for his voluntarism and advocacy on behalf of the HIV community.
- **Haran Vijayanathan** (Coordinator). Haran is the Executive Director of the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, and has performed volunteer work for a number of organizations addressing diversity and inclusivity. In 2018, he served as Grand Marshal of Pride Toronto, and has provided much needed support to grieving families of deceased community members named in this systemic review's Terms of Reference.
- **Christa Big Canoe**. Christa is an Indigenous lawyer and member of Georgina Island First Nation, known for her work as Legal Advocacy Director for Aboriginal Legal Services and as an advocate for Indigenous women and

children. She is currently lead commission counsel for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

- **Monica Forrester.** Monica is a transgender woman of colour who is the program coordinator at Maggie's Toronto Sex Workers Action Project. She was a member of the initial working group that recommended the creation of this systemic review.
- **Brian Lennox.** Justice Lennox was Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice from 1999 to 2007 and executive director of the National Judicial Institute from 2007 to 2014. He obtained his LL.B from the University of Toronto, a graduate degree in criminal law from the University of Paris and an LL.D. (Hon.) from the Law Society of Upper Canada.
- **Michele Lent.** Michele spent 26 years as a member of the New York Police Department. She is a lifetime member of the Gay Officers Action League and marched in the New York City Pride parade both as a lieutenant and captain. She has trained thousands of officers in the United States and around the world on emergency management and investigative techniques.
- **Andrew Pinto.** Andrew has been recognized as one of Canada's leading lawyers in administrative and public law and workplace human rights. He currently serves as Chair of the Law Commission of Ontario's Board of Governors. In 2011, he was appointed by the Attorney General to conduct an independent review of recent changes to the Ontario human rights system, tabling his report in November 2012.
- **Angela Robertson.** Angela is the Executive Director of Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre. She is dedicated to people and communities facing discrimination, poverty and marginalization. She formerly served as Executor Director of Sistering – A Woman's Place, providing support and services for homeless and at risk women, many of whom are racialized. She is a founding member of Blockorama, focusing on forging a space for racialized people at Pride.

Mark Sandler, Lead Counsel for the Review, observed that “this group is truly diverse in so many ways. Its members collectively bring a wide range of cultural identities, lived experiences, competencies, and expertise to our work.”

The Review website also contains additional biographical information on the Review team, its Community Advisor and Community Advisory Group members.

**The Review will soon announce ways in which members of the community and organizations can make their views known to the Review. These ways will include the opportunity to address the Review at a public forum, in confidential sessions and/or through written submissions.** Please stay updated on the work of the Review by going to our website:

[www.missingpersonsreview.ca](http://www.missingpersonsreview.ca)

Anyone wishing to contact the Review can do so in the following ways:

1. Email Address: [info@missingpersonsreview.ca](mailto:info@missingpersonsreview.ca)
2. Phone Nazampal (Naz) Jaswal at 416-585-1706
3. Fax # 416-408-2372
4. Mailing address: Independent Civilian Review of Missing Persons Investigations.

439 University Ave.  
Suite 1900,  
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1Y8.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Independent Civilian Review into Missing Persons Investigations commenced its work in September 2018. It was created by the Toronto Police Services Board to externally review and report on how Toronto police conduct missing persons investigations. It was triggered by concerns expressed by the LGBTQ2S+ community about how such investigations are being conducted, particularly in relation to vulnerable and marginalized individuals.

The Review will focus both on policies and procedures governing missing persons investigations generally and on how Toronto police officers investigated the disappearance of identified members of the community who tragically died. The Review is mandated not to prejudice ongoing criminal proceedings.

The Review is currently collecting and analyzing documents relevant to its mandate from a variety of sources. The Review will be consulting with members of the public, organizations, experts in and outside Canada, and interviewing many individuals to advance its mandate.

---

Source: Independent Civilian Review into Missing Persons Investigations

For further information and media inquiries please contact Peter Rehak, at: [prehak@missingpersonsreview.ca](mailto:prehak@missingpersonsreview.ca) or 416 992-0679 or Mark Sandler, Lead Counsel, at [msandler@missingpersonsreview.ca](mailto:msandler@missingpersonsreview.ca) or 416-585-9191