

Call for Submissions: Symposium on "Law as a Terrain for Advancing Social Justice"

On the occasion of the retirement of Martha Jackman from the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa, a Symposium honoring her work [[MJackman CV](#)] will be held at the University on May 23, 2024. The Symposium will center on the legal commitments that have animated Professor Jackman's career pursuing social justice through teaching, scholarship, test case litigation and feminist activism.

Martha Jackman graduated from law school in 1985. While she was a law student, Canadian feminists fought for and secured broadly framed equality guarantees in the text of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the *Charter* came into force. Professor Jackman's professional life as a feminist legal activist was shaped by these events. For 35 years, her work has been dedicated to insisting that Canada's new constitutional rights, particularly sections 7 and 15, be interpreted expansively and that Canadian governments be held accountable for failures to conform to these constitutional mandates.

Throughout her career, Professor Jackman has pressed for interpretation of s. 7 as substantive guarantee of positive social and economic rights, not just as a guarantee of procedural protections or civil liberties. She has demanded a substantive approach to s.15 in line with its language and legal history. She has been a fierce advocate for dispossessed groups, especially people living in poverty, and has pursued their constitutional rights to a humane standard of living, to housing, to secure and adequately funded safety nets, and to the social and economic determinants of good health, including universally accessible public health care. She has advocated for *Charter* protections for undocumented migrants, refugees and applicants for immigration. As a teacher and advocate, Professor Jackman has also created tools to equip new generations of feminists as substantive rights advocates, notably as a co-creator for the National Association of Women and the Law of the on-line Feminist Law Reform 101 course.

Despite the resistance of courts and legislators to substantive interpretations of sections 7 and 15 of the *Charter*, and the complacency of lawmakers to growing systemic inequality, the Symposium seeks to gather scholars, lawyers and equality activists who continue to see meaning in pursuing social justice through legal - including constitutional - change. We encourage submissions on the topics that have defined Professor Jackman's vision of a just society:

- Access to constitutional justice, participation and effective remedies for dispossessed communities
- Holding governments accountable for action and inaction that sustains or worsens systemic inequality
- The constitutional imperative of socio-economic rights
- The *Charter* as a guarantee of substantive equality
- The *Charter*, federalism, social policy and substantive equality
- The constitutional right to the determinants of good health and to universally accessible public health care
- Feminist legal activism, strategic litigation and law reform

The Symposium is expected to feature four moderated panels of four presenters, each speaking for 15 minutes.

Submissions: Please send an abstract of no more than 200 words and a short bio addressed to Sheila.McIntyre@uottawa.ca. Please indicate whether you wish to participate in person or virtually if your proposal is accepted. Travel and accommodation support will be provided for those who cannot access travel funds from their institutions or research funding. Symposium presenters will be encouraged to submit their presentations as papers for publication. The *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*/

Revue Femmes et Droit has expressed interest in peer reviewing and publishing articles in a special issue that arise out of the Symposium.

Deadline for submissions is September 26, 2023.