



First-year law student from Long Lake #58 plans to make a difference

[Print Friendly](#) | [Contact the Editor](#) | [Email This Page](#)

Posted on September 15, 2016 In [Anishinabek](#), [Education](#), [News](#)



Long Lake #58's Hannah Fisher, second from left, met with Law Society of Upper Canada Treasurer Paul Schabas (left), Bora Laskin Dean Angelique EagleWoman (right), and court officials and lawyers during the law students' August 1, 2016, tour and reception at the Thunder Bay Courthouse.

By Rick Garrick

LONG LAKE #58 FIRST NATION—Hannah Fisher, a member from Long Lake #58 First Nation, is looking forward to studying law at Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of

Law. She was one of this year's first-year Bora Laskin law students who toured the Thunder Bay Courthouse during a September 1 reception with Bora Laskin Dean Angelique EagleWoman and Law Society of Upper Canada treasurer Paul Schabas.

"There needs to be more access to justice, especially in our northern communities and even in Thunder Bay," Fisher says. "We need more people here that will help them."

Fisher appreciated seeing the Eagle Staff in a courtroom during the law students' tour of the courthouse.

"It was really neat and it was really good to see the population being more diversified as well in the legal profession," Fisher says. "More culture is being brought into the courtroom, which is a good thing. I really believe in restorative justice and the fact that we need to have more people represented on the other side of the justice system."

Senior Justice of the Peace Marcel Donio, a Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek citizen, smudged the Eagle Staff prior to the law student's tour.

"I am now the caretaker of the staff while I am here at this courthouse in Thunder Bay," says Donio, administrator of the Ontario Native Justice of the Peace Program. "We placed it in the courtroom so when the dean and her entourage arrived and the judicial officers came in, the Eagle Staff is in place there before all the people for them to see that portion of our heritage."

Donio says the law students are a "remarkable, vibrant young" group of people. This was the second year that the law students toured the Thunder Bay Courthouse.

"They are curious, they are eager to learn," Donio says. "They want to know how the courts function and you can see their enthusiasm."

Julian Falconer, principal of Falconers LLP in Toronto, recently hired two of the graduating law students from the charter class, including Fort William's Elysia Petrone Reitberger.

"We end up on the winning side of getting very intelligent, energetic passionate lawyers," Falconer says. "They did placements with me and I know them very well and they are excellent."

Rene Larson, president of the Thunder Bay Law Association, says the Bora Laskin Law School was the "greatest thing to happen to the legal profession in Thunder Bay."

"Now we have the opportunity as lawyers to interact with students and teach them about the ways of the profession," Larson says, noting that the Thunder Bay Law Association used to

attend student articling fairs in Toronto to encourage graduating students to practice in Thunder Bay. “We were worried that there were going to be a lot of retirements and we needed replacements. Now we’ve got this great supply of people and I think it is going to be important for northwestern Ontario because we can get some of these students going out into the small towns that aren’t serviced right now by lawyers, except on visitation type of practice.”

The law students began their first day of orientation on August 30, 2016, with a welcome from EagleWoman and Lakehead University President and Vice-Chancellor Brian Stevenson, a presentation by EagleWoman on Expectations for the Legal Profession, an introduction to faculty members, instructors, and staff, and speeches by Larson and Fort William Chief Peter Collins.

Fisher plans to stay in the north once she completes her studies at law school.

“I’d love to work in town and help out wherever I can; hopefully travel to some northern communities as well that need help,” Fisher says.