



Fempower

.....
OECTA'S INAUGURAL WOMEN
IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
.....

November
22 and 23, 2018

PROGRAM

Intercontinental Toronto
Centre Hotel

ONTARIO ENGLISH
Catholic
Teachers
ASSOCIATION

catholicteachers.ca

THIS CONFERENCE IS OPEN TO ALL OECTA
MEMBERS WHO IDENTIFY AS FEMALE

Message from the President



When the #MeToo movement began in October 2017, it propelled a cultural shift for women around the world. As the hashtag spread virally in an attempt to demonstrate widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace, women – and some men – began sharing stories of harassment, assault, and inequality. Within 24 hours, #MeToo had been tweeted more than 500,000 times, and was used by more than 4.7 million people on Facebook.

Collective anger spurred, gathering strength with every retweet and story of injustice and abuse, quickly evolving into a revolution of refusal. A refusal to accept a culture of violence and abuse against women; gender-based power structures; inequity of any kind. As Nigerian author and feminist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie says, “Gender as it functions today is a grave injustice. I am angry. We should all be angry. Anger has a

long history of bringing about positive change. But I am also hopeful, because I believe deeply in the ability of human beings to remake themselves for the better.”

As part of our hope for a gender-equal future, including that of the leadership within our own Association, a resolution was passed at the January 2018 Provincial Executive meeting that set-in motion OEFTA’s inaugural Women’s Leadership Conference. This decision was in direct response to pent up demand for a women-centric leadership opportunity within OEFTA, especially in the #MeToo era. The purpose of this conference is to give women the opportunity to meet and share concerns and experiences that are particular to women in the workplace, and to build capacity in a positive, safe space.

As a woman holding the highest office in this Association, and after attending a series of women’s symposia within the education sector this past year, I can’t stress enough the importance of women supporting one another in a collective effort to educate and empower. OEFTA’s *Fempower* conference is about creating a positive space where women can do just that; where we can feel empowered to find and use our voice.

Thank you to my fellow female executive members, Barb Dobrowolski, Second Vice-president; and Ann Hawkins, Past President; together, we comprise the three female members of the 11-person Provincial Executive. Thank you to the female staff at our Provincial Office for designing and developing this first-ever conference from the ground up. Thank you to the many presenters, panelists, and delegates who will share their stories and experiences over the course of this conference.

As *Time* magazine Editor-in-Chief Edward Felsenthal said in honour of all of the “silence breakers” who have come forward and continue to come forward as part of the #MeToo movement, “It became a hashtag, a movement, a reckoning. But it began, as great social change nearly always does, with individual acts of courage.”

Thank you all for your courage to be here today and for being a part of our own *Fempower* movement.

In sisterhood,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Liz Stuart".

Liz Stuart
President

Message from the Conference Organizer

The year was 1989. I don't remember the joke, but I certainly remember the punchline, "Tune in Tokyo." A senior colleague, a man I had worked with for only a few months, reached out and touched my chest pretending he was turning radio dials. He got such a great laugh (from me as well) that he told the joke again during afternoon recess and he repeated the "tuning."

It wasn't okay!

It was my first year of teaching, my first staff room. I was young, naïve, and very determined to fit in and be a good sport. Back then there was no workplace harassment policy. Heck, we were still smoking in the staff room. We didn't call this kind of behaviour sexual harassment, we just called it life.



Fast forward almost 30 years and things are very different – or at least so I thought. While that kind of horseplay would not be considered acceptable (let alone funny) today, after watching the media circus surrounding the Supreme Court nomination hearings for Brett Kavanaugh in the United States, I am not so certain we have really progressed all that much. An article in the *Globe and Mail*, penned by Dr. Samantha Nutt, summed up what I and so many others felt in the aftermath of Kavanaugh's confirmation:

As girls we learn that:
To have opinions is to be angry;
To be angry is to be unattractive;
To be smart is to be threatening;
To speak up is to be shut down;
To have confidence is to be demeaned;
To have strength is to be intimidated;
To be difficult is to be lonely;
To be ambitious is to be obnoxious;
To tell the truth is to be accused of lying;
To have expertise is to be dismissed.

I hadn't spent much time thinking about the behaviours that I have tolerated over the course of my 52 years of life, but I am acutely aware! I don't know a single woman who has not experienced some form of sexual harassment or been subjected to inappropriate behaviour at some point in her life. This is an unacceptable reality.

And it is not okay.

It is time for this conference. It is time for us to talk to each other. We cannot build alliances with our brothers until we have figured out who we are and what we need to thrive in positions of leadership. We need to have the discussion about what we have to do to support one another. We need to have many conversations, starting here, but not ending here. And some of them will be very difficult.

We have 24 hours together and the Provincial Office staff and the members of the Status of Women Committee have put their collective hearts and souls into making sure that every minute of this conference provides us with an opportunity for reflection and growth. This will be an enlightening, educational, soul-filling journey into empowerment. YOUR empowerment – OUR empowerment.

I hope you enjoy this conference as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to you. And I challenge you to make the most of your time at this conference; to think differently and to get out of your comfort zone. Use your time here to meet someone new, to share your truth, to open your mind to new ideas, and to renew your strength, your courage and your faith.

Then take what you learn and pay it forward to another fabulous woman.

I dedicate my contributions to this conference to my magnificent step-daughter, Talia. It's like yesterday that she was wrapped around my waist clinging to me as I brushed my teeth. Now she towers over me and strides confidently through the halls of Guelph University. I remain cautiously optimistic about her future. May her journey be just a little bit kinder than my own.

In solidarity and sisterhood,

Katrina Wheaton
Staff Officer, Bargaining and Contract Services Department, OECTA Provincial Office

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22

5:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Registration and Sign in

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Dinner (provided)

6:30 p.m.

Welcome, President Liz Stuart

Opening Reflection, Shannon Hogan

7:00 p.m.

Keynote Address – Reflections on 30 Years of Fighting Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Kate Hughes, *Cavalluzzo LLP*

7:30 p.m.

Fireside Chat Panel Discussion

The Advancement of Women in Leadership and the #MeToo Movement

Participants will share their perspectives on the #MeToo movement and their respective journeys to leadership.

Participants:

Liz Stuart, *President OECTA*

Tesa Fiddler, *Indigenous Education Resource Teacher*

Marie Clarke Walker, *Secretary–Treasurer, Canadian Labour Congress*

Nicole vanWoudenberg, *Chairperson, Ontario College of Teachers*

Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo, *United Church of Canada*

Moderator: Shannon Hogan, *Staff Officer, Counselling and Member Services Department, OECTA Provincial Office*

8:30 - 10:00 p.m.

Wine and Cheese Social

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23

6:15 - 7:00 a.m.

Yoga and Meditation – Yvonne Runstedler, *Chairperson, OECTA Status of Women Committee*
Breakfast (on your own)

8:00 a.m.

Registration and Sign in

8:30 a.m.

Opening Remarks, President Liz Stuart

8:45 a.m.

Keynote Address – We Rise by Lifting Others
Farrah Khan, *Consent Culture Educator and Activist*

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Workshop A

11:15 - 12:15 p.m.

Workshop B

12:15 - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch (provided)

1:00 - 1:45 p.m.

Coffee Talk Panel Discussion

The Power of the Sisterhood

Participants will engage in a frank discussion on "sisterhood" and the reality of women supporting women.

Participants:

Barb Dobrowolski, *Second Vice–President, OECTA*

Carley Desjardins, *Communications Specialist/Writer, Administration Department, OECTA Provincial Office*

Katrina Wheaton, *Staff Officer, Bargaining and Contract Services Department, OECTA Provincial Office*

Charlene Theodore, *In–house Legal Counsel, OECTA Provincial Office*

Yvonne Runstedler, *Chairperson, OECTA Status of Women Committee*

Moderator: Ann Hawkins, *Past President of OECTA*

2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Workshop C

3:15 - 3:45 p.m.

Conference Wrap up and Prizes

Unless otherwise indicated, all workshops will be offered for selection during sections A, B, and C.

■ ANOTHER WAY OF SEEING

BY SHANNON HOGAN

The primary call of all people of faith is to tend to, and nurture our relationship with the God of our lives, and to accept God's invitation to remain in that relationship throughout our lives. We stand before that God as Catholic teachers, and as women, with a certain strength and integrity that comes from meeting the challenges of simply being a woman in the world. That said, we need an honest, informed conversation about our place in the Church, in our schools, and in the world. This session will draw on history and humour to discover how elements of our faith can support and encourage us to remain the leaders we are called to be – for our schools and for the world.

■ KNOWLEDGE IS POWER - PART 1

BY SUSAN PERRY AND BELINDA RUSSO

Join the women leading OECTA's Professional Development department in a dialogue centered on the importance of knowledge in attaining your professional goals and aspirations. Beginning with an exercise in self-reflection, this session will unveil how self-knowledge is the starting point. From there, journey to discover your leadership path and begin to develop a plan to attain your goals.

THIS WORKSHOP IS ONLY OFFERED DURING SECTION A.

■ KNOWLEDGE IS POWER - PART 2

BY CLAIRE LAUGHLIN AND SUSAN PERRY

Continue to build on your leadership plan by digging deeper. This session will focus on the characteristics and skills of effective leaders, including: leadership development, team building, and change management. The session will provide practical tips and techniques that can be implemented across various leadership roles and settings.

Completion of Part 1 is recommended, but not necessary.

THIS WORKSHOP IS ONLY OFFERED DURING SECTIONS B AND C.

■ LIVING THE DREAM THE PATH TO WORLD DOMINATION!!

BY BARB DOBROWOLSKI AND LIZ STUART

(For delegates already in local leadership positions)

A candid conversation about the barriers and challenges faced by women in leadership. In this session, Liz and Barb will share their experiences, as well as some of the strategies they have used to navigate, or in some cases charge right through, obstacles! Participants will also be asked to share their own stories, goals, and successes.

SHE WORKS HARD FOR THE MONEY

BY ROSANNA ARDUINI AND BELINDA RUSSO

Have you ever wondered why your paycheque fluctuates throughout the year? What are all those deductions and what do the acronyms mean? How do you get ahead, financially? Rosanna and Belinda will explore various financial aspects related to your employment. Topics will include practical advice about total compensation, savings, budgeting, and retirement. Take control by taking charge of your finances. *You work hard for it, Honey!*

THIS WORKSHOP IS ONLY OFFERED DURING SECTIONS B AND C.

STRESSED TO KILL

BY SYLVIA MARUSYK

Sylvia takes an in-depth look at the effects of stress, powerful tools to reduce stress, as well as personal strategies for becoming the “boss” of your stress. Discover better health and a dramatically improved quality of life. Discover:

- The powerful biochemical impact stress has, as well as its strong and indisputable link to illness.
- How to identify all the components of stress – physical, cognitive, emotional, and environmental – and how to avoid or modify many of these.
- The mind-body connection to stress and how you can stop it in its tracks with these techniques.

THIS WORKSHOP IS ONLY OFFERED DURING SECTIONS A AND B.

TEACHERS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

BY CHARLENE THEODORE

Many professions in Ontario are subject to third party regulation. This workshop will present a unique look at the regulation of teaching and teachers. What constitutes too much or too little regulation? We will also discuss how the governance of a historically female dominated workforce affects the nature and scope of discipline.

THE ASSERTIVE PROFESSIONAL

BY MALISA MEZENBERG

Professionals at all levels need the ability to project their thoughts and ideas with an assertive communication style. Effective communication requires us to be clear about our own thoughts and ideas, and also to be responsive to the ideas of others. Malisa will share strategies on how to express ideas and feelings in transparent, open, and direct ways. Participants will build an awareness of their communication patterns and improve the skills and confidence necessary for holding crucial conversations. *Keep Calm and Stay Strong!*

THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP

BY CARLEY DESJARDINS

Words carry enormous weight; they influence our perceptions of people and leadership potential. This session aims to examine women's communications, the bias embedded in our language and lexicon, and depictions of female leaders in social, professional, and digital settings, in an effort to create an understanding of our own communications in various leadership capacities.

WIN - WOMEN IN NEGOTIATIONS

BY CARLA HOSSEINI-TONEKABONI AND KATRINA WHEATON

A woman involved in negotiations brings a unique perspective and voice to bargaining priorities. Carla and Katrina will discuss how to break down barriers that may prevent women from leading in the bargaining process, as well as gains made in OEFTA because women brought their voice and expertise to the table.

X MARKS THE SPOT

BY ANN HAWKINS AND MARY LACHAPPELLE

Local elections can be quite intimidating. It is a challenge to overcome barriers and to put your name forward for an elected position. Research has identified three significant barriers to women candidates:

- women see themselves as significantly less qualified to run for office;
- women are encouraged to run for office significantly less by political activists, family members, and friends than are men;
- women disproportionately bear most of the household and childcare responsibilities in the family and see themselves as unable to run for political office.

Ann and Mary will share their extensive experience as political candidates and will explore the unique challenges women face while seeking elected office. Learn how to overcome barriers, and get motivated to run from "She announces..." to "Getting out the vote on election day..." to "Congratulations on your new position!"

YOU ARE A BADASS! STOP DOUBTING YOUR WORTH AND START LIVING AN AMAZING LIFE!

BY MICHELLE DESPAULT

Participants in this workshop will engage in a frank discussion about what holds us back from having the things we want, doing the things we love, and being the fullest expression of ourselves. We will explore strategies to help identify and overcome our limiting beliefs and fears and learn to love ourselves just as we are.

WARNING: Participants in this workshop may become empowered to dream big, stop apologizing, and live a life they love.

SESSION A OPTIONS

- ANOTHER WAY OF SEEING
- KNOWLEDGE IS POWER - PART 1
- LIVING THE DREAM
- STRESSED TO KILL
- TEACHERS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
- THE ASSERTIVE PROFESSIONAL
- THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP
- WIN - WOMEN IN NEGOTIATIONS
- X MARKS THE SPOT
- YOU ARE A BADASS!

SESSION B OPTIONS

- ANOTHER WAY OF SEEING
- KNOWLEDGE IS POWER - PART 2
- LIVING THE DREAM
- SHE WORKS HARD FOR THE MONEY
- STRESSED TO KILL
- TEACHERS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
- THE ASSERTIVE PROFESSIONAL
- THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP
- WIN - WOMEN IN NEGOTIATIONS
- X MARKS THE SPOT
- YOU ARE A BADASS!

SESSION C OPTIONS

- ANOTHER WAY OF SEEING
- KNOWLEDGE IS POWER - PART 2
- LIVING THE DREAM
- SHE WORKS HARD FOR THE MONEY
- TEACHERS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
- THE ASSERTIVE PROFESSIONAL
- THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP
- WIN - WOMEN IN NEGOTIATIONS
- X MARKS THE SPOT
- YOU ARE A BADASS!



Rosanna Arduini, Chief Financial Officer, OECTA Provincial Office

Rosanna is immensely grateful for the teachers who impacted her life growing up. In fact, she became a chartered professional accountant (CPA) because her Grade 12 teacher said she could do it and encouraged her to pursue that career path. She followed his advice by getting her Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Toronto, and then her CPA designation. She has not looked back.

Today, Rosanna has more than 30 years of experience behind her, in many different industries. She is currently the Chief Financial Officer at the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, having previously held the position of Vice-President Finance and Comptroller at Nobel Biocare Canada Inc. Since joining OECTA, she has given many workshops on financial literacy to unit presidents and local treasurers, converted all OECTA units to one accounting platform, and become the Association's own internal unit auditor. Rosanna believes in paying forward her knowledge and experience; she has mentored four of her department members in the successful attainment of their own CPA designations.

Marie Clarke Walker, Secretary-Treasurer, Canadian Labour Congress

Marie started her career working in a home for the elderly, later with adults and children with developmental disabilities, as a counsellor and family-support worker in Toronto, and once again at the school board as an early childhood educator working with children with disabilities.

She rose rapidly through the ranks of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), eventually becoming CUPE Ontario's Equity Vice-President and her union's first-ever National Diversity Vice-President. Marie made history in 2002 when she was elected as the first racialized woman, and the youngest person ever, to be elected to the position of Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). She served in that position for five terms before once again making history in May 2017, being elected the first-ever racialized woman to serve as CLC Secretary-Treasurer.

Marie is the mother of two sons and a mentor/femtor to many. She has served as a board member for a variety of organizations, including the Canadian Peace Alliance, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Adventure Place, the Scarborough National Malvern Soccer Club and Scarborough Basketball Association, Juliette's Place, a shelter for abused women and children, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, and as an executive member of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Her passion is just as fervent now as it was when she first became involved in social movements. She continues to fight injustice everywhere, and looks forward to the day when Canada is truly a country that celebrates and respects equally all of its diverse and vibrant communities.



Carley Desjardins, Communications Specialist/Writer, Administration Department, OECTA Provincial Office



Carley is a communications specialist with a Master of Professional Communication degree, and a background in branding, communication strategy, leadership and crisis communications. After beginning her career at OECTA on the same day as her last undergraduate exam, Carley pursued every administrative position possible, while attaining her editing certification in the evenings, interning remotely for a Fortune 200 company out of Boston, and working voluntarily for various media publications. Carley went on to be the youngest Associate Director and eventually Director at Advocis, The Financial Advisors Association of Canada, where she was responsible for matters related to policy, governance, marketing, and communications of the organization's designation-granting wing, before returning to OECTA as a member of the senior resource staff in 2014.

In her current role at OECTA, Carley is responsible for all messaging from the President's office; she is also the lead on the 75th anniversary project. With more than a decade of experience working in various communications capacities, and now the mother of two young boys, Carley is an advocate for working mothers and the recognition that women with children are an asset to the workforce.

Michelle Despault, Director of Communications, OECTA Provincial Office

Mom, professional, entrepreneur, athlete, and lover of life and chocolate. This is Michelle in a nutshell.

Michelle is currently the Director of Communications at the Provincial Office. Prior to joining the Association, she was the Director of Communications for the Minister of Education. Michelle holds a Master of Arts in international relations and foreign policy, and worked in a variety of government ministries before finding her home in the education portfolio, where she has spent the past 15 years of her career.

Michelle is a lifelong unionist and public servant. She took her first union job at the age of 16 and has since been a member of four different unions. Throughout her career, she has sought out opportunities that enable her to contribute meaningfully to the improvement of people's lives. Her passion is sharing her hard earned knowledge and insights with others, hoping to make a difference in their experience of life. To this end, she authors the Insight column in each issue of *Catholic Teacher* magazine.



By far, Michelle's most important and proudest role is that of mom to her four-year-old son, Liam. More than any other professional role, it is her role as mom that has pushed her beyond what she knew she was capable of, forcing her to get comfortable with being uncomfortable and surrender to the journey that is life.

Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo, United Church of Canada Minister and former MPP

As Member of Provincial Parliament for Parkdale High Park for more than 11 years, Cheri passed more Private Member Bills than anyone in Ontario's history, and more pro-LGBTQ legislation than anyone in Canadian history. Among her achievements: including gender identity and expression in the Ontario Human Rights Code; advocating for trans rights; banning conversion therapy for youth; championing parental equity for LGBTQ parents; and the Trans Day of Remembrance.

She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Lambda Literary Award for her book *Qu(e)rying Evangelism*. Other awards include the Diamond Jubilee award, Ukraine's Medal of Honour, and awards from Bnai Brith, Tibetan, Inspire, Rainbow Health, PFLAG, the Canadian Psychological Association, and others.

She performed the first legalized same sex marriage in North America in 2001, and in 1971 was the only woman to sign on to "We Demand," Canada's first call for gay rights.

Currently she is the Minister at Trinity St. Paul's Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts.



Barb Dobrowolski, Second Vice-President, OECTA Provincial Executive

After finishing two degrees, one in biochemistry nutrition and another in English, Barb Dobrowolski went on to teachers' college, where she finally found her calling – as a Catholic teacher.

In her early years as an elementary teacher, witnessing hard-working colleagues being maltreated by school board administration, Barb felt compelled to advocate on behalf of her colleagues. She became involved in OECTA in her first year of teaching, on a work-to-rule during the Rae Days. She was asked to chair the Communications Committee and she never looked back, becoming heavily involved in the Eastern Unit and eventually as a member of the Provincial Executive.

Barb has been a tremendous advocate for women's rights since the beginning of her career. She currently serves on the Ontario Federation of Labour Women's Committee, and as the Provincial Executive liaison to the OECTA Status of Women Committee.

Tesa Fiddler, Indigenous Education Resource Teacher, Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board

Tesa has been involved with Indigenous education for nearly 20 years. She is committed to bridging families and schools. Her work has included supporting families directly as well as providing teacher capacity-building opportunities through co-teaching and professional development workshops. Tesa's graduate studies focused on supporting Indigenous student success by creating culturally responsive and relevant learning environments.

More recently, Tesa has been exploring how Indigenous education correlates to social justice, anti-racist, and equity education. Addressing equity issues or racism specific to Indigenous people in schools and communities requires learning about topics that might seem difficult for some, such as the Indigenous residential school system.



Ann Hawkins, Past President, OECTA Provincial Executive

Ann has been a Catholic teacher since 1975, most recently teaching social science. "Teaching is the best job in the world," she says. "I got into my first classroom and figured, 'Why would anybody want to do anything else other than this?'"

Shortly after her teaching career began, Ann became involved in the fight for Bill 100, which finally laid the groundwork for teachers in Ontario to have the legal right to strike. Her participation further increased in the 1990s, as teachers fought the anti-teacher, anti-union agenda of Mike Harris.

Ann has served the Association in a number of different ways, including working her way up the Provincial Executive, from Councillor to President. She is passionate about promoting human rights and women's issues, and has represented OECTA at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the Canadian Teachers' Federation Advisory Commission on Women's Issues, the Canadian Labour Congress Women's Committee, and the Ontario Federation of Labour Women's Leadership Summit.



Shannon Hogan, Staff Officer, Counselling and Member Services Department, OECTA Provincial Office

For more than 30 years, Shannon has contributed to Catholic education in many capacities: as a secondary teacher in English and theology for 18 years, head of a theology department, Chair of the Religious Education Department Heads Association, school chaplain, religious education consultant, Adult Faith Animator for the Toronto Catholic District School Board, and professor in the Pre-service Religious Education Program at York University. As a Staff Officer in the Professional Development department at the Provincial Office, she had oversight over the religious education Additional Qualifications (AQ) courses, and eventually over all AQ courses offered by the Association across the province. She is currently a Staff Officer in the Counselling and Member Services department.

Shannon has been a contributing writer and reviewer for publications of the Institute for Catholic Education. She was lead writer of the provincially mandated renewal of Roman Catholic religious education courses, and for the World Religions course in the secular system. She has also been a contributing writer for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Shannon has a specialist in religious education and guidance counselling. She has primary/junior-intermediate/senior qualifications, and her Principal Qualification designation. She has advanced degrees in both theology and counselling psychology, and has completed the requisites for her doctoral work in theology.

Carla Hosseini-Tonekaboni, Staff Officer, Bargaining and Contract Services Department, OECTA Provincial Office

Carla began her teaching career in 1987, teaching secondary French with the Halton Catholic District School Board. She became actively involved with OECTA in 1993 as a Councillor on the local unit executive and served as Grievance Officer from 2007 to 2013, after which she was hired to the Provincial Office as a Staff Officer in the Bargaining and Contract Services department.

As a member of the BCS department, she assists local units in developing initial proposals and bargaining local collective agreement terms, and she serves as a resource to the Provincial Executive during the provincial bargaining process. She also provides support to local units on all matters related to grievances. Carla has delivered workshops on collective bargaining for the OECTA Leadership Training Program, and a workshop titled, “Learning to Say ‘No’ - Knowing Your Rights and Responsibilities,” for the Beginning Teachers Conference.



Kate Hughes, Cavalluzzo LLP

Kate’s practice covers a wide range of areas including labour arbitration, judicial reviews and appeals, court injunctions, advice regarding strikes and lockouts, labour board proceedings, professional regulation and discipline, education law and health law, inquests, civil litigation, and human rights matters.

Kate has successfully argued two leading Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) cases. She was counsel in the ground-breaking discrimination case known as *Meiorin*, or the “female firefighter case,” where the SCC accepted her argument and used it to establish the new test for discrimination.

Kate is well known for her work in human rights. She is counsel on the leading case dealing with systemic human rights remedies, *McKinnon v. the Ministry of Corrections*, which has been upheld by the Court of Appeal.

Over the last two decades, Kate has represented many professionals, including nurses, midwives, and other health professionals governed by the *Regulated Health Professions Act*. She has also represented teachers in discipline matters, arbitrations, interest arbitrations, inquests, injunctions, human rights proceedings, civil litigation, and judicial reviews and appeals at all levels.

Farrah Khan, Consent Culture Educator and Activist

Farrah Khan has spent two decades raising awareness about the intersections of gender-based violence and equity through art creation, education, and advocacy. Her innovative research, passion, and sense of humour create an engaging dialogue that highlights pleasure and fun while addressing the realities of gender-based violence prevention.

Recognized as a leader in her field, she has been appointed to the G7 Gender Equality Council, the Government of Canada’s Advisory Council on the Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender Based Violence, and was and is co-chair of Ontario’s Roundtable on Violence Against Women. Farrah is also host of the upcoming podcast, “Pleasure Principle,” and works with grassroots feminist groups including *femifesto*.

Farrah holds a Master of Social Work from the University of Toronto and is the Sexual Violence Support and Education Co-ordinator at Ryerson University. She regularly contributes her expertise in addressing violence against women to national media, including CBC’s “The National,” the *Toronto Star*, and the *Globe and Mail*.



Mary Lachapelle, Staff Officer, Counselling and Member Services Department, OECTA Provincial Office

Mary Lachapelle has been a teacher for 30 years. She holds qualifications at both the elementary and secondary levels, and was a teacher-librarian. She is currently working at the OECTA Provincial Office in the Counselling and Member Services department. Apart from general counselling and advice to members on employment-related matters, the department provides legal advice and representation to members facing Children's Aid Society, police, and Ontario College of Teachers investigations, as well as in long-term disability appeals. Mary is also OECTA's Pension Officer Shadow.

Prior to working at the Provincial Office, Mary advocated on behalf of teachers as President and Chief Negotiator for the OECTA Hamilton-Wentworth Unit. She has had many experiences helping teachers deal with difficult circumstances surrounding their relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators.



Claire Laughlin, Staff Officer, Professional Development Department, OECTA Provincial Office

Claire strongly supports the belief that you can go anywhere when you believe in yourself. This inspires others to believe in you! Every effort to lead is simply a series of small steps. Whether contemplating teaching, or leading in OECTA, or both, just take one step forward.

As she grew from a beginning teacher, to a consultant, and then to a co-ordinator with two school boards, she also grew in her commitment to the Association – from local executive member, local and provincial committee member and chair, to release officer, and President of the Elementary Branch Affiliate and Chief Negotiator for the OECTA York Unit. The concluding role of her career will be as Staff Officer in the Professional Development department at the Provincial Office.

“I cannot believe my career is now done,” says Claire. “I look forward to seeing where your steps lead as you are empowered through this landmark experience.”

Sylvia Marusyk, Owner, MindBody Works

Sylvia is the owner and innovative mind behind MindBody Works, a Canadian company focusing on creating and maintaining health and wellness in the workplace. As an occupational therapist with almost 30 years of experience and expertise in the field of health and safety, Sylvia emphasizes that prevention is the key to creating happy, healthy individuals, employees, and businesses. The former host of the “Happy Hour With Sylvia!” radio show, international keynote speaker, “activational” mentor and industry expert has proven that the way we look at corporate health, safety and wellness is due for a change of perspective; and Sylvia is leading the charge.

Her entertaining presentations focus on a proactive approach to building healthy lives and workplaces. Through the use of humour and her dynamic presentation style, Sylvia leaves audiences laughing, learning, and going home with the tools and confidence to change their lives for the better.



Malisa Mezenberg, Staff Officer, Counselling and Member Services Department, OECTA Provincial Office

Malisa enjoyed teaching high school sciences, math, and co-operative education with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board for more than 20 years. Developing a keen interest in the professional learning of teachers, Malisa co-ordinated a variety of professional learning programs in her position in the Professional Development department at OECTA Provincial Office, and as Project Manager of the Ontario Teachers' Federation Professional Learning Project. She has had the opportunity to work with international teacher education programs in the Caribbean and Africa.

Malisa is currently working at the Provincial Office in the Counselling and Member Services department. In addition to general counselling and advice to members on employment-related matters, she liaises with the Ontario College of Teachers and co-ordinates OECTA's Leadership Training Program.



Susan Perry, Department Head, Professional Development Department, OECTA Provincial Office

Susan is currently Department Head of the Professional Development department at the Provincial Office. Within the department, Susan leads the Association's collaborations with the teaching community, including the Ministry of Education (Teacher Learning and Leadership Program, new initiatives, etc.), faculties of education (teacher candidates), other teacher affiliates across the country, and the Canadian Teachers' Federation. She also sits on numerous committees that discuss and address the current issues affecting Catholic education.

Susan comes from a strong union background, dating back to one of the first unions in Canada - the coal miners, where her great-grandfather was the recording secretary. Her involvement came early as she lodged her first complaint in her first year of teaching as an occasional teacher! She has not backed down since, as social justice is at the core of who she is.

Susan's experience includes teaching both elementary and secondary. She began her teaching career in Newfoundland, moved on to Nova Scotia, and eventually to Ontario, where she taught for the Durham Catholic District School Board and served as an elementary consultant.

She holds a Master of Education in adult education, a program that focused on team building, conflict management, and most importantly, leadership development. She has also taught Reading Part 1, 2, and 3 at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, primary and junior basic for Queen's University, and an adult certification course at Durham College.

Yvonne Runstedler, Chair, OECTA Status of Women Committee

Yvonne Runstedler is a yoga practitioner, teacher, and general lover of the complexity of the human experience. This has led her to teach in China, to study yoga, to complete a Master's degree in theology from Wilfrid Laurier University, and to walk 800 kilometres on Spain's Camino de Santiago.

Yvonne has had many teaching roles, and on her local OECTA unit she has served as Vice-President, Secondary, and as Councillor. She currently works as a curriculum co-ordinator with responsibilities in religious education, equity and inclusion, and the Family Life program. She also teaches Additional Qualification courses in the area of religious education, while working on her doctorate in human relationships.



When not bending over backward in a yoga class or teaching and learning in a classroom, Yvonne can be found laughing with one of her 11 nieces and nephews over her favourite food group: ice cream.



Belinda Russo Kieffer, Staff Officer, Professional Development Department, OECTA Provincial Office

Belinda believes teaching is the BEST job in the world! The advice that "knowledge is power," given by her host teacher while in teachers' college, motivated her to take on the role of staff representative as a first-year teacher. Since then, she has been involved with many aspects of union work, both locally and provincially.

Belinda served on the executive of the OECTA Dufferin-Peel Elementary Unit for nearly a decade, including as First Vice-President, where she advocated for the rights and working conditions of more than 3,000 members. Belinda has also worked on three local negotiating teams, and countless other work groups and committees. Currently she is a Staff Officer in the Professional Development department at Provincial Office, where she continues to advocate for Catholic teachers at Ministry of Education tables and among various other education stakeholders. She also works alongside her department colleagues to bring differentiated professional development opportunities to OECTA

members across the province.

Belinda believes strongly in the work of unions, yet ironically describes herself as "not that political." She is passionate about learning, loves to collaborate with others, and believes that a sense of humour is a requirement for any job.

Belinda is most proud of the title she holds of "Best Mom," given by her 8-year-old son, Logan.

Liz Stuart, President, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

Liz grew up just outside of Manchester and did a four-year honours degree in education in the United Kingdom, where she majored in special education and English. She became a Catholic teacher in Ontario in 1992.

Liz's union involvement began during the Rae Days, when she was frozen on a salary grid for three years. She then became active during the Mike Harris era, serving as Strike Captain at her school in York Unit. This led to 25 years of being active in OECTA. She joined the Collective Bargaining Committee in 1999 and has gone on to sit on numerous other committees and fill a variety of roles at the unit and provincial levels, including as Unit President from 2009 to 2014. Liz was elected President of OECTA in 2017.

As OECTA President, Liz has been involved in a number of issues that disproportionately affect women, including precarious work, pay equity, child care, and gender-based violence. She has also attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, and sits on the Canadian Teachers' Federation Status of Women Committee.



Charlene Theodore, In-house Legal Counsel, OECTA Provincial Office

A graduate of the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University, Charlene is a lawyer with a background in public policy and government relations. Charlene has devoted her career to the protection of people in the workplace and in society. She started her career with the African Canadian Legal Clinic, advocating against racism before the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, as well as federal and provincial legislative committees. She then went on to represent unions, acting as Counsel to the Ontario Nurses' Association, and then the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA). At OECTA, she advises management and staff on the impact of legislative and regulatory changes in the education sector, and provides legal assistance to teachers who are disabled or injured at work. Charlene also advises on issues related to benefits and pensions.

Charlene was recently elected as Second Vice-President of the Ontario Bar Association. In accordance with the organization's governing structure, she will become President in two years, making her only the tenth woman, and the first woman of colour, to hold that position. She speaks frequently on issues related to race, diversity, and gender.

Nicole vanWoudenberg, Chair, Ontario College of Teachers

Nicole is a special education co-ordinator with the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board. Her role requires her to liaise with Ministry of Education staff, collaborate with colleagues from regional boards, and develop special education protocols and resources to support new and experienced teachers. She has taught elementary grades and worked as a teacher-librarian, Kindergarten through Grade 8 prep teacher, special education resource teacher, and consultant. She has taught English as a Second Language in Europe during the summer, face-to-face and online Additional Qualification courses, and delivered professional development to teachers in Africa and the Caribbean.

Nicole is a frequent conference presenter and guest lecturer for university-level courses and an active member of her local OECTA unit. She is dedicated to social justice causes, specifically access to free, high-quality education. Most recently, Nicole was elected Chair of the Ontario College of Teachers.



Katrina Wheaton, Staff Officer, Bargaining and Contract Services Department, OECTA Provincial Office

Katrina is a proud Nova Scotian who holds a Bachelor of Science from St. Francis Xavier University and a Bachelor of Education from Lakehead University. She began her teaching career in Red Lake, Ontario where she served as a steward for the Federation of Women's Teachers' Associations of Ontario during the protest against the Mike Harris government and Bill 160. A union activist was born!

After relocating to Sault Ste. Marie, Katrina became passionately involved in OECTA. She served in a variety of roles with the Huron Superior Unit, including: Co-chair of the Joint Professional Development Committee, Co-chair of the Joint Health and Safety Committee, Chief Negotiator, First Vice-President, and President. Provincially, she has served on the Discipline Review Task Force, Finance Review Work Group, and Chair of the Educational Aid Committee. She was hired to the Provincial Office as a Staff Officer in the Bargaining and Contract Services department, and has recently been named Assistant Department Head.

Co-ordinating the inaugural OECTA *Fempower* Conference has been a labour of love for Katrina. She is an unapologetic feminist and credits her mother for teaching her that life begins outside your comfort zone.

Additional thanks to:

David Church, Dianna David, Cheryl Fullerton, Liisa Hypponen, Marshall Jarvis, Tuula Katsios, Gary Low, Fernanda Monteiro, Margaret O'Brien, Theodore Steiner, Mark Tagliaferri, and Garmen Tsao who were all instrumental in helping to bring this conference to life.

OECTA's Status of Women Committee

MEMBERS

Yvonne Runstedler
CHAIRPERSON
Wellington

Lisa Diessel
Simcoe Muskoka Elementary

Ashley Kenny
Niagara Elementary

Honorata Lukiewicz
Dufferin-Peel Secondary

Annice O'Rourke
Renfrew

Barb Dobrowolski
Provincial Executive

Katrina Wheaton
Staff Officer

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- to advise the provincial executive on ways to enhance the status of women in society both nationally and internationally;
- to develop recommendations for the provincial executive to assist units to establish programs to educate members about international women's issues;
- to make recommendations to the provincial executive for possible action related to the status of women;
- to make recommendations to the provincial executive on outreach to community-based women's organizations;
- to inform all members of the current trends, issues and problems as they pertain to the status of women internationally.



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Build
Inspire
Create
Educate
Awaken
Collaborate
Share

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