

Margaret Sasges, Chair, The Law Foundation of British Columbia

Remarks at the Opening Ceremony for Allard Hall Faculty of Law, The University of British Columbia

September 23, 2011

Dean Bobinski, Chief Justice McLachlin, Your Honour, members of the Official Party and distinguished guests, it is very much my pleasure to be here today. This is such an inspiring building. I know that lots of great things are going to come out of it – soon and for a long time into the future.

The Law Foundation in particular is delighted to be here today to celebrate with you the opening of UBC's Faculty of Law at Allard Hall. The Law Foundation of British Columbia is the oldest law foundation on the continent. We receive interest on lawyer's pooled trust accounts and we then use that money to fund legal aid, legal education, law reform, legal research and law library activities in the province. At this point we are giving annual grants to 95 continuing programs and a variety of time-limited projects. The Foundation is working through all these programs to promote access to justice for people throughout British Columbia.

Central to the notion of access to justice are well trained lawyers. Through the Law Foundation's \$12 million grant to UBC for this building the Governors of the Foundation are convinced that this is now ensured for generations to come. We are delighted to see that the Law Foundation has been fully matched from contributions by members of the bar and Mr. Allard and others we particularly thank you. As was mentioned earlier, we took a step of faith by offering this money but there were conditions attached and the condition that was attached was that the community also step forward and match those grants. We were delighted to see that the community believed in this new school as much as the Law Foundation did.

We are equally delighted that in the new building there is also space for other valuable programs which the Law Foundation funds. This includes the Law Student's Legal Advice Program, the British Columbia Law Institute, the International Centre for Criminal Law Research and Reform and Pro Bono Students Canada. These are all important organizations which the Law Foundation funds and we are certain that them being at the law school can only enrich the learning environment here.

There are several former Governors of the Law Foundation who are also present here today and who were instrumental in making this grant a reality. I get to take the glory because I'm the current Chair but we have two former Chairs here, Warren Wilson, QC and Mary Mouat, who were both Chairs of the Law Foundation during the years when we were making the decisions to make these grants. Liaison Governor Madam Justice Pamela Kirkpatrick of the British Columbia Court of Appeal had hoped to be here but unfortunately other duties required that she be elsewhere this morning. I do want to acknowledge the contribution that the two past Chairs and all our Governors have made in making the decisions that brought us here today.

The mission of the Law Foundation is to advance and promote a just society governed by the rule of law through leadership, innovation and collaboration. We believe we have advanced this mission through our contribution to this incredible building and to the rich potential that it represents.

In closing I want to acknowledge the energy and inspiration of Dean Bobinski without whom this could not have happened. Congratulations.