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LEAF's 25th Anniversary

Be a part of LEAF's 25th
Anniversary in 2010.
Join the planning committee
and make this historical
occasion unforgettable

[More information](#)

Congratulations Shelagh Day

Vancouver's Shelagh Day,
An international authority on
women's rights, has been
honoured at a special
ceremony in Ottawa for her
outstanding contributions to
the advancement of women
in Canada.

[Media Release](#)

WEF ANALYSIS: CANADA PLUMMETS IN GENDER GAP

According to a recent report by the Geneva based World Economic Forum - WEF, Canada has plunged 13 spots in a global "gender gap index," slipping behind the United States in the latest annual analysis. Canada is now placed 31st out of 130 countries analyzed by WEF. The U.S. moved up four spots to 27th place, marking the first time it has ranked ahead of Canada. [Link to WEF analysis](#)

DIRECTOR OF LITIGATION

LEAF National

LEAF welcomes Joanna Birenbaum, who has been hired as the Director of Litigation effective November 17, 2008. Joanna has over 10 years of diverse litigation and human rights advocacy experience. Joanna was called to the bar in 1998; completed her LL.B. at the University of Toronto and has a B.A. in philosophy and English literature also from the U of T.



We take this opportunity to thank Carissima Mathen who finishes her term with us as Acting Director of Litigation on December 1st, for her commitment and stellar work during the past six months. We wish her well in her continuing career as Associate Professor of Law at the University of New Brunswick. [News Release](#)



2008 PERSONS DAY BREAKFAST

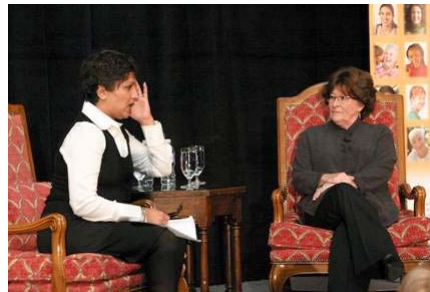
TORONTO

October 16th 2008 - To mark the 1929 Persons Case ruling which stated that "yes, women are persons", LEAF held its 23rd Annual Persons Day Breakfast at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel. Award winning CBC Newsworld host Suhana Meharchand and keynote guest, the Honourable Madam Louise Arbour shared centre stage for a compelling one-on-one interview. The illustrious Mrs. Arbour, the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and recent Order of Canada recipient, spoke of her childhood in Quebec, her experiences throughout her academic and professional career and the integral role LEAF plays in bringing about substantive equality for women and girls across Canada.

More than 800 people gathered in the early hours to celebrate with LEAF. The event was presented by TD Bank Financial Group and advocate sponsors C.A. Delaney Capital Management, OPSEU and Gowlings.



Fairmont Royal York Hotel



Suhana Meharchand and Madam Louise Arbour

[Watch the video of Louise Arbour and Suhana Meharchand - Persons Day Breakfast](#)



LEAF and OJEN reach out to students at the 23rd Annual Persons Day Breakfast



LEAF E.D. Audrey Johnson



Louise Arbour with sponsored youth at PD Breakfast

Understanding the importance of engaging youth, LEAF as part of this year's Persons Day Breakfast, partnered with the Ontario Justice Education Network (OJEN) to host a mentorship program for high school students. One hundred young women selected by their teachers attended courtesy of various table sponsors who donated seats. In addition to the breakfast the young women were part of a closed session with Madam Arbour, and visited a courthouse and participating law offices to discuss cases. They also connected with female professionals from the sponsoring law firms in a day filled with mentoring, advice and career building. The program was a success for all participants. LEAF and OJEN hope to continue this venture in the future.

Quotes from our participating students:

"I had an amazing day, and waking up at 4 a.m. was worth it all! I would love to be a part of it

again next year. Thank you so much for everything."

"Thank you so much for giving us the amazing opportunity. It was a fun-filled day and I found it very worthwhile. I hope I will be able to participate in future events like this. Thank you very much."

PERSONS DAY BREAKFASTS ACROSS CANADA

FREDERICTON:

To mark Persons Day, Fredericton hosted a breakfast to celebrate the five Alberta women who fought a legal and political battle to have women recognized as persons and to foster interest in a future local LEAF branch. Professor Sanda Rodgers from the University of Ottawa spoke to a captivated audience on the issues surrounding reproductive rights. In an engaging discussion, Ms. Rodgers highlighted the disparities in access to abortion across the country. Forty lawyers, law students, and interested community members attended the breakfast at Racine's Restaurant downtown.



Persons Day Breakfast - Fredericton

HALIFAX:

LEAF Halifax hosted a breakfast at The Univeristy Club at Dalhousie University and were grateful to sponsors Leonard Preyra, MLA Halifax-Citadel-Sable Island, and to the law firm Stewart McKelvey for their sponsorship of seats for unwaged persons. Halifax celebrated not only the achievements of women in the 79 years since the Persons Case, but also their first breakfast as a modern formal branch of LEAF. For the main event, Professor Sanda Rodgers of the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law addressed issues on reproductive rights and access in Canada today.

MANITOBA: LEAF MB held another successful PDB with an attendance of 900 supporters.

Once again the spirit was one of celebration and renewal of commitment. The messages of our two distinguished guest speakers were received with acclaim.

Sally Armstrong, award-winning journalist and author, said inequality of women in our own and other countries is usually brought to the attention of the public through the media with input from women in the community. She urged the crowd to come together to take a "page out of the LEAF book" and work for positive change.

Charles S. Coffey, recognized advocate for children, First Nations Peoples, innovative family policies and initiatives in the workplace, spoke of his support for women's equality at LEAF Manitoba's Persons Day Breakfast. Coffey emphasized that men and women must work together in trust and partnership. "If the journey of women's equality is to continue", he declared, "men should play a more active role in pushing the envelope on achieving and sustaining results. This is not a matter of choice but a matter of necessity in Canada and around the world." Following the breakfast a round table discussion was held with students from local schools.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND:

LEAF PEI and the PEI Status of Women Advisory Council invited members of the community to drop in for a federal election post-mortem and brown-bag lunch. The event was held in honour of Persons Day, where lively conversation was the main course on the menu.

SUDBURY:

Former CBC arts producer and Ryerson professor Suanne Kelman spoke at LEAF Sudbury's Persons Day Breakfast held on October 24th in Sudbury. Kelman highlighted the work and accomplishments of early feminists in the media, and stressed the importance of continuing the fight for equality with our new generation of feminists.

Carissima Mathen, a University of New Brunswick law professor, and Acting Director of Litigation for LEAF National, delivered an hour-long lecture to about 115 students about the Persons Case and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Ms Mathen hoped her lecture encouraged students to talk about why the *Charter* is important, as well as how they can get involved in the broader Canadian community.

[The Sudbury Star](#)

WOLFVILLE:

Wolfville held an event marking the occasion of Persons Day by having speakers address the following topics: Women in poverty, women in leadership and the changing women's role in Canada.

WIN A TRIP FOR 2 TO MONTPELLIER, FRANCE

Become A Monthly Donor!

For less than a cup of coffee a day -- you can help support equality rights through the work of LEAF. We have litigated in 150 cases that have set precedents in real equality issues for women in Canada. Issues such as employment, reproductive freedoms, freedom of expression, racism, support payments, violence against women, sexual orientation and many other equality concerns. Help us invest in equal rights!



Fax or mail us the Monthly Donor Form found on our [website](#) before January 5th, 2009 to be eligible.

Villa donated by generous LEAF member, airfare donated by Air Transat

* * *

LEAF - the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund - is a national charitable organization that works toward ensuring the law guarantees substantive equality for all women in Canada

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