

The Lawyer's Daily reports on feminist advocacy event at WeirFoulds

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On November 26, 2019, WeirFoulds Women partnered with the University of Toronto's International Human Rights Program to host a seminar on feminist advocacy and the law. The event was held at the WeirFoulds LLP office in Toronto and opening remarks were provided by Associate Ada Keon. Amanda Jerome from *The Lawyer's Daily* reported on the event:

A panel of lawyers who have incorporated feminist advocacy into their practices has highlighted the need for diverse voices to be heard in the legal system, education on sexual assault and pushing back on social norms as key aspects of advancing feminism in law.

The "Feminist Advocacy and the Law" event, held at WeirFoulds LLP in Toronto, included speakers Megan Stephens, the executive director and general counsel of the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF); Gillian Hnatiw, principal of Gillian Hnatiw & Co.; Deepa Mattoo, executive director of the Barbra Schlifer Clinic; and Ashley Major, a research associate at the International Human Rights Program (IHRP). Petra Molnar, the acting director of the IHRP, moderated the event.

Major stressed that feminist advocacy is a discussion that needs to involve everyone, including "women of colour, trans women, marginalized communities in general." She said these discussions, and education of sexual assault, need to start in law school.

"We need to understand Aboriginal law; we need to understand colonialism; we need to understand why it is that Indigenous women are going missing and murdered at the rates that they are compared to other women in this country. There needs to be that gender analysis and that understanding because when I look at some of the Issues, to tie it back to international law, there are so many instances where you just want to bang your head against the wall," she said, noting there's often a misunderstanding, or lack of knowledge, when it comes to sexual assault or gender-based violence.

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