

# CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

## Conference to Mark the Retirement of the Honourable Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella from the Supreme Court of Canada

University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, Spring 2022

To mark the retirement of the Honourable Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella from the Supreme Court of Canada on July 1, 2021, the [uOttawa Public Law Centre](#), the [Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice](#), the [Human Rights Research and Education Centre](#), and [The Advocates' Society](#) will hold a two-day conference examining her influence on law and society.

Justice Silberman Abella was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada in 2004, the first Jewish woman appointed to Canada's top court. Her remarkable life has been a series of firsts. Born in a displaced persons camp in Stuttgart, Germany, she had a storied career before joining Canada's top court - as a practicing lawyer, a family court judge (the first pregnant person and first refugee appointed to the judiciary in Canada), law reformer (Chair of the Ontario Law Reform Commission), labor adjudicator (Chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board), law professor (McGill Faculty of Law), appeal court justice and commission of inquiry head (her 1984 federal Royal Commission on Equality in Employment created the term and concept of "employment equity.") She was elected to the Royal Society of Canada in 1997, to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2007, and to the American Philosophical Society in 2018 and in 2020, she was awarded the Knight Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit by the President of Germany. She is a graduate of the Royal Conservatory of Music, has judged the Giller Literary Prize, moderated a Prime Ministerial Leader's Debate and spellbound audiences around the globe with her oratory. She has left her imprint on the Supreme Court of Canada, the law in Canada and around the world and on Canada as a nation and as a global ambassador for Canadian values and jurisprudence.

For further information please contact Vanessa MacDonnell ([vmacdonn@uottawa.ca](mailto:vmacdonn@uottawa.ca)) or Stephen Bindman ([sbindman@uottawa.ca](mailto:sbindman@uottawa.ca)).

The conference will be held in spring 2022, hopefully in person.

### *Conference Co-Chairs:*

- Mr. Gerald Chan, Stockwoods LLP, former law clerk to Justice Abella
- Mr. Stephen Bindman, Visiting Fellow, Faculty of Law (Common Law Section), University of Ottawa
- Professor Vanessa MacDonnell, Co-Director, uOttawa Public Law Centre, University of Ottawa Faculty of Law



Université d'Ottawa  
**CENTRE DE DROIT PUBLIC**  
**PUBLIC LAW CENTRE**  
University of Ottawa

**CIAJ**

Canadian Institute  
for the Administration  
of Justice



Human Rights  
Research and  
Education Centre



**The Advocates' Society**  
La Société des plaideurs