



pro bono | réseau national
students | d'étudiant(e)s
canada | pro bono



“ Pro Bono Students Canada is one of the most important undertakings I have seen in my years at the bar. Today, because of the efforts of the PBSC students, thousands of Canadians are better off, and believe in justice. ”

PBSC is fortunate to count Madam Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella as a longstanding supporter of the program, benefiting immensely from Justice Abella's unabating drive to promote the value of pro bono and public service among law students. Speaking at PBSC's 15th Anniversary celebration in 2011, she described PBSC as “one of the most visionary undertakings I've seen in my 40 years at the bar.”

Since that time, Justice Abella has continued to serve as a prominent ambassador for the program. In the last two years alone she has visited five PBSC chapters across the country, meeting with volunteers and sharing her wisdom, with more visits in the works for 2016-17.

Justice Abella's ability to connect with students is palpable, and they give her a “rock-star” reception wherever she goes. Using humour and colourful anecdotes, she implores students to use their law degrees to serve those in need. As she remarked at the University of British Columbia in 2014, “pro bono introduces you to the humanity and dignity of people who deserve justice, but don't always get it.”

Justice and dignity are two themes that are woven through the fabric of Justice Abella's life. Born to concentration camp survivors in a displaced person's camp in Germany, Justice Abella grew up to blaze a trail in every aspect of her career. Her fierce commitment to justice led her to attend law school when few women did. She was the first pregnant lawyer to be appointed to a court and the first Jewish woman to sit on the Supreme Court of Canada. She is the architect of employment equity in Canada, which in turn led to the Canadian understanding of substantive equality.

For Justice Abella, “the status quo has always been merely the beginning of a conversation.” PBSC is extremely lucky to count Justice Abella amongst our friends. She, in turn, lauds the contributions of our student volunteers, and has told our students: “Because of your time, your commitment, your generosity, and your tenacity, thousands of Canadians are better off, and believe in justice.”

The Honourable Madam Justice Rosalie Silberman z,
Supreme Court of Canada