

Reva and I managed to persuade lawyer Stuart Rush to act for AUCE at the hearing on a *pro bono* basis. One day, while sitting beside Stuart, at what turned out to be one of many hearings at the Labour Board, I knew what I wanted to do when I grew up—I wanted to be a lawyer.

“I studied for my undergraduate degree at UBC part-time, at night. It took me a few years to finish. I majored in history. I had started my studies in 1967 and graduated in 1982. When I applied to law school, I was in my middle 30s.”

When asked if she had a mentor, Heather said that UBC Professors Christopher and Rhoda Friedrichs were very good to her. And there were others along the way.

I’m Aboriginal. When I graduated law school, there weren’t many Aboriginal people in law school.

“I’m Aboriginal. When I graduated law school, there weren’t many Aboriginal people in law school. Four of us graduated the same year, in 1985. We were Aboriginal persons and proud of our heritage, yet could not get jobs with private law firms that did Aboriginal work. We ended up at various places. Only one fellow—now a Judge—got a job with a law firm that did Aboriginal work.

“The other three of us ended up in government. I did my articles and filled in for someone on leave at Justice Canada for a total of 18 months. After that I did labour law in the Lower Mainland for five years before joining UVIC in 1992.”

Heather was the Director of Academic and Cultural Support at the Faculty of Law at UVic and taught courses in Aboriginal Law, Employment Law, Legal Mooting, and Legal Process from 1992 to June 2004. In July 2004, she became the Diversity Advisor to the Provost and a Senior Instructor on a half-time basis for both positions.

Heather says of UVic, “The population of BC is diverse and I see that diversity

in our own organization. We are working more and more toward diversifying our faculty and staff complement and courses, to reflect the realities of modern day British Columbia. The students are marvellous. We welcome and encourage students of all ages and stages and races. It’s really great.”

She was also responsible for recruitment and advising Aboriginal applicants, advising band and tribal council education officers and advising faculty on Aboriginal course content and instruction methods. The Notary Foundation of BC contributed \$100,000 toward the funding for establishing the Law Foundation Chair in Aboriginal Justice and Governance, currently held by Professor John Borrows. The Law Foundation of BC also contributed.

As Director of the Academic and Cultural Support Program, Heather designed and delivered a comprehensive academic support program for all students and a cultural support program for Aboriginal students. She served as community liaison with Aboriginal communities in British Columbia; coordinated university and faculty cultural activities, intercultural communications and intercultural seminars; and presented papers at workshops and conferences.

Among her many accomplishments, Heather is the first Aboriginal person ever to be appointed to the British Columbia Police Commission.

Her literary efforts include the following.

- *U’Mista Cultural Society, Field Study on Repatriation of Cultural Property*, with Catherine Bell and Robert Paterson, Protection and Repatriation of First Nation Cultural Heritage, a work in progress
- “Membership Codes” in L. Gilbert, *Entitlement to Indian Status and Membership Codes in Canada* (Toronto: Carswell, 1996)
- Book Review of *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada’s Pacific Coast Fisheries*, by Dianne Newell (1993), 7:2 Int. J. of Maritime History 202 (1993) ▲

**Voice: 250 721-8185
hraven@uvic.ca**

Grad Class

Heather Raven

In 1999, when Nunavut Territory was created, only one Inuit lawyer resided in the territory, the Premier of Nunavut, Paul Okalik.

Leaders in the Inuit, legal, government, and judicial communities established an informal working group to address the situation.

They approached all of Canada’s law schools, asking for proposals aimed at increasing the number of Inuit lawyers. The University of Victoria responded to the call and negotiations with the Territory and the Federal Department of Justice resulted in the establishment of a University of Victoria Faculty of Law class in Iqaluit.

In the Spring and Summer of 2001, 15 Inuit students were selected to begin their law. The program was designed to alternate study and work terms so the students were able to use their legal knowledge and skills for the benefit of Nunavut and its peoples from the very beginning of the program.

Legal scholars of national and international prominence have travelled to Iqaluit to teach the classes. The Inuit students have been required to take a full law program of studies and meet the same competency standards as their peers in the south.

As a member of the Admissions Committee and as an Instructor in the program, I am looking forward to attending the graduation ceremonies in Iqaluit on June 21, 2005. It’s been a tremendous opportunity for me to be a part of this program. I am sure the Inuit students taught me much more than I taught them. ▲