‘A FORUM FOR DISCUSSION’ AND A PLACE OF RESPITE: JEWISH LAWYERS AND TORONTO’S READING LAW CLUB

Sophia Sperdakos*

This article considers the history of the Reading Law Club, which Toronto’s Jewish lawyers established in 1947 in response to the exclusion of Jews from membership in the Lawyers Club of Toronto. It also discusses the Lady Reading Club, an association of the wives of Jewish lawyers that continued after the men’s club disbanded in the mid-1960s. The article explores the social and legal context in which the Clubs were established and the perseverance of Jewish lawyers in the face of Canadian society’s and the “elite” legal community’s efforts to exclude and marginalize them. The author also highlights the importance of community to Jewish lawyers’ success.

Dans le présent article, l’auteure se penche sur l’histoire du Reading Law Club, que les avocats juifs de Toronto ont fondé en 1947 après avoir été exclus du Lawyers Club de Toronto. L’auteure discute en outre du Lady Reading Club, l’association des épouses des avocats juifs, qui a poursuivi ses activités après la dissolution du club masculin au milieu des années 60. L’article aborde les contextes juridique et social dans lesquels ces clubs ont vu le jour et la persévérance des avocats juifs face aux tentatives de la société canadienne et de l’« élite » de la communauté juridique de les exclure et de les marginaliser. L’auteure fait également ressortir l’importance de la collectivité dans le succès des avocats juifs.

I. INTRODUCTION

In September 2009 a group of men and women came together for an afternoon of remembrances and dinner at the Law Society of Upper Canada’s premises at Osgoode Hall in Toronto.¹ Many of the men who participated have been lawyers

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¹ In 2009, the Law Society of Upper Canada’s Heritage Committee undertook a project entitled, “Diversifying the Bar: Ontario Lawyers Make History.” The goal of the project is to celebrate the stories of early lawyers from diverse cultural, ethnic, religious, Aboriginal, and francophone

for fifty or more years. They are well-respected and successful practitioners, judges, and academics, representing a generation of Jewish lawyers who came of age when anti-Semitism was rampant in Canadian society, including in their chosen profession. Some are accompanied by their wives who, though not lawyers themselves, have been deeply involved with the life of the law and their husbands' careers, as well as having made their own mark on their community.²

These men and women are former members of the now vanished Reading Law Club³ and the Lady Reading Club and are part of Ontario's legal history. Many of the hundreds of members of the Reading Law Club are dead, and most of those still living are in their 70s and 80s. The majority of them were born in the 1910s, 20s and 30s and called to the bar in the 1940s and 50s.

Like much of the history of Ontario's legal profession, theirs is a piece of the mosaic that has remained untold. Why did the Reading Law Club come into existence? Why did it disband in the early 1960s while Montreal's Reading Law Society continues today? Does its existence matter to the legal profession's history in Ontario? Do the stories and reminiscences of one generation of lawyers have anything to impart to the generations that follow?

To address some of these questions, this article draws on the limited documentary information still available on the two Clubs, individual interviews with members of the Reading Law Club, the Law Society meeting that took place on September 10, 2009 ("the September meeting") and a meeting with three members of the Lady Reading Club.⁴ While the evidence suggests that at its heart the Club was more social and educational than political, it nonetheless served as an important community support for Jewish lawyers at a time when they faced myriad challenges to their acceptance within the profession. Although the Toronto Club's history differs in a number of ways from its Montreal equivalent, each is a product of its particular context, to be considered and evaluated in that light.

communities within Ontario. In the course of the Heritage Committee's preliminary discussions about the project one of the members, Bob Aaron, mentioned the Reading Law Club to which his father, Irving Aaron, had belonged. Preliminary inquiries led to the view that bringing together former members could generate more information about the Club's history. The then Treasurer of the Law Society, Derry Millar, and the Chair of the Heritage Committee, Professor Constance Backhouse, suggested a dinner for members. The roundtable meeting with members provided the opportunity to capture more of the Club's history at the same time.

² The members of the Reading Law Club who participated in the September meeting and/or dinner were Professor Harry Arthurs, Donald Carr, Murray Chusid, Irwin Cooper, Bernard Dales, Lloyd Fogler, Sydney Gangbar, John Geller, Joe Goldenberg, Benjamin Levinter, Carl Orbach, Hartley Robins, the Honourable Sydney L. Robins, Albert Strauss, and John Weingust. The members of the Lady Reading Club who participated were Helen Aaron, Anna Gangbar, Sybil Geller and Lila Orbach. Other attendees at the meeting were Bob Aaron, Dorothy Aaron, Gary L. Gottlieb, Alena Strauss and Professor Fred Zemans. Sadly, just over two months after the meeting and dinner Carl Orbach died, on November 19, 2009.

³ Named for Lord Reading (Rufus Daniel Isaacs), who became the first Jewish Lord Chief Justice of England in 1913. See pages 178-179 below for more on this.

⁴ Individual meetings and interviews were also held with Albert Strauss (6 January 2009); Donald Carr (21 January 2009 and 24 November 2010); Austin Cooper (22 July 2009); the Honourable Sydney L. Robins (undated 2009) briefly; Fred Zemans (24 June 2009) by telephone; Harry Arthurs (9 July 2009); Carl Orbach (18 August 2009) by telephone and three members of the Lady Reading Club (Helen Aaron, Sybil Geller and Lila Orbach) (30 June 2010). The memories of all the interviewees were textured and rich, their capacity to laugh infectious and their sense of irony razor sharp. I am very grateful to them for sharing their time so generously. [Notes of the meetings are on file with the author.]

Moreover, the Club's history provides a snapshot of the practice of law in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, offering insight into the profession's past, the reality of ethnic and racial divisions within the profession and the resiliency of community.

Part II of the article discusses the historical context in which the Club was born, drawing on existing literature describing anti-Semitism in Canada and in the legal profession. Part III discusses the history of the Club, examining its activities and timeline. Part IV profiles the Lady Reading Club. The article concludes by remarking on the symbolic relevance of the Clubs' histories to other groups who continue to seek acceptance within the profession.

II. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

On June 8, 1948 Percy Shulman, Q.C.,⁵ President of the Reading Law Club of Toronto, wrote to the Secretary of the Law Society of Upper Canada requesting permission to hold the Club's meetings in the Great Hall of Osgoode Hall. Shulman advised that the Club had existed for about a year and comprised approximately 100 members. He listed the Club's objects, which included promoting "the best interest of the legal profession and of its members in their relations with each other and with the public," maintaining "goodwill, understanding and friendship" amongst members of the legal profession and furnishing "a forum for discussion and debate on problems affecting its members." He concluded by naming some of the prominent lawyers and judges who had addressed the dinner meetings in the previous year.⁶

Nothing about the letter distinguishes the Reading Law Club from other lawyers' groups. The objects could be those of any lawyers' association, whether established over 60 years ago or today. The letter does not reveal one of the main reasons for the Club's establishment: its members were excluded from the Lawyers Club of Toronto ("the Lawyers Club") because they were Jewish. The Reading Law Club's formation was at least in part a response to exclusion.

The Lawyers Club, established in 1922, changed its rules in 1929 to require that no applications or nominations for membership be considered unless the applicant or nominee was "under forty years of age, male, white and of the Christian religion."⁷ The exclusions reflected prejudices that existed during this and subsequent years at all levels of the profession, including respecting the hiring of articling students and associates, entry into law firm partnerships and appointments to the bench. Jewish lawyers and others who were considered outside the acceptable ranks encountered myriad systemic barriers in their pursuit of a career in the legal profession.

⁵ Called to the bar in 1916, Shulman was one of Ontario's first Jewish lawyers. He practised with Samuel Factor, who in 1930 became the first Jewish MP from Ontario and subsequently a County Court Judge. Factor was the Reading Law Club's Honourary President.

⁶ "Hon. Mr. Justice Mackay, His Honour Judge Factor, Hon. Salter A. Hayden, John Robinette K.C., John Cartwright K.C., Prof. J. Finkleman, Mr. R. J. Cudney, and Mr. Stewart Thom." In a letter dated June 22, 1948, the Law Society's Secretary gave the Reading Law Club permission to meet at Osgoode Hall. Law Society of Upper Canada Archives, Office of the Secretary fonds, "Reading Law Club," 1-11-41 [Secretary].

⁷ Law Society of Upper Canada Archives, The Lawyers Club fonds, "Trustees' Minutes 1929-1947," 994099-10-2. There does not appear to be a record of what specifically prompted the change [Lawyers Club Minutes 1929-1947].

Although the Lawyers Club formally removed the words “white” and “Christian” from its exclusions in 1952, de facto exclusion continued into the 1960s. Most of the members of the Reading Law Club who attended the September meeting had no recollection of the 1952 change. The Honourable Sydney L Robins, the one member who did recall being invited to join the Lawyers Club at that time declined to do so because the environment continued to be an unwelcoming one. It was his impression that he was to be a “token” Jewish member and he felt it was not “an accommodating place for him to be.”⁸ With anti-Semitism still rampant within the legal community⁹ it would take more than a resolution voted on by less than one-third of the Lawyers Club membership, to wipe out the attitudes that had allowed the 1929 resolution to pass.¹⁰ The pro forma nature of the 1952 vote would be evidenced more than a decade later when the Lawyers Club actively sought to bring Reading Law Club members into its ranks.¹¹

The fact that discriminatory policies could flourish in the legal community illustrates how acceptable and accepted anti-Semitic attitudes and behaviour were during most of the first six decades of the 20th century. Indeed, anti-Semitism had a strong hold in Canada generally, beginning with the increase in the Jewish population between 1880 and 1914¹² and continuing until well after World War II.

⁸ Law Society of Upper Canada Archives, Heritage Committee fonds, “Round-table discussion,” 2009036-01 V.

⁹ At the September meeting, Donald Carr, a long-time member of the Reading Law Club and its President in 1963, recalled attending the year-end National Trust reception in the early 1950s. A prominent Toronto counsel, making no effort to avoid being overheard, remarked to another man within Carr’s hearing that the event wasn’t “the way it used to be - Look at all the Jews who are here.” *Ibid.*

¹⁰ The 1952 proposal to remove the Lawyers Club membership restrictions attracted significant press reporting, including in the *Toronto Daily Star*, *The Telegram*, *St. Catharine’s Standard*, *Canadian Observer* (Sarnia), *Windsor Daily Star*, the *Kitchener Waterloo Record*, *Owen Sound Daily Sun Times*, *The News Chronicle* (Port Arthur), the *Stratford Beacon*, and the *Sault Daily Star*. The *Telegram* reported on 16 April 1952:

The hottest perennial issue of Toronto Lawyers Club is coming to a boil in a vote to determine whether the club should stop discriminating against Negro, Hebrew and Oriental lawyers. In any case, women lawyers will still be left out. It was made public for the first time today that the closed annual meetings of the club, largest lawyers’ club in Canada, for the past four years have been the scene of torrid debates about a clause in the constitution which demands that members be white, Christian. Every year, the matter has been shelved or otherwise dismissed.

“Will Fight Law Club Color Ban,” *Telegram* (16 April 1952) 1. The annual meeting on April 17, 1952 approved the by-law change by a vote of 115 to 39. Overall Club membership at that time was 600. A motion to remove the words “white and Christian” had been before the 1948 annual meeting, but did not proceed due to an earlier motion passed at the 1945 annual meeting that the issue should be deferred until the first annual meeting following the Canadian Government’s proclamation of the cessation of hostilities of the Second World War. See Law Society of Upper Canada Archives, Lawyers Club fonds, PF1 [Lawyers Club].

¹¹ It is not clear how significant the Lawyers Club was to those male, Christian lawyers under 40 who would have been eligible for membership. Like the Reading Law Club, it was primarily a Toronto club. The membership information that is available for the 1930s to early 1950s shows between 260 (at the low end) and 570 (at the high end) members per year. This would have been at a time when the overall size of the profession ranged from 2900 lawyers in 1936 to 3881 lawyers in 1951. Information received from Paul Leatherdale, Archivist, Law Society of Upper Canada. April 19, 2011.

¹² It mattered little that a significant percentage of all Jewish males of military age had fought for Canada in World War I. Irving Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in*

Anti-Semitic patterns of exclusion, discriminatory policies and in some cases violence occurred across the country.

Literature on anti-Semitism in Canada points to particularly virulent attitudes in Québec. For much of the nineteenth and early twentieth century nearly half of all Jews in Canada lived in Québec, particularly Montreal.¹³ Historically, the Church in Québec fostered the view that the province was for French Catholics. Anyone else was viewed as a threat to that homogeneity, even more so if they were not Christian. In the later nineteenth and early twentieth century, Jews were labelled by many as political radicals and often vilified in the French language press and by others as a threat to religion and the economic prosperity of the francophone. As the Jewish community grew in size, so did the animosity toward it.¹⁴ Attempts were made to disenfranchise Jewish voters in Montreal. There were periodic physical attacks on Jewish stores and movements to boycott Jewish establishments.¹⁵ But anti-Semitism extended beyond the francophone community, coming to a head in the Montreal school system, where Jewish children attended Protestant schools.¹⁶ Montreal Jews became radicalized and led the Zionist movement among Canadian Jewry.

The 1930s saw an increase in anti-Semitic incidents, including street violence, breaking of windows in Jewish homes and attacks on synagogues. In 1933 a Jewish doctor was forced to give up an internship at a Montreal Catholic hospital when 14 other interns refused to work with him. They were soon joined in protest by interns from five other Catholic hospitals and by clergy. Such events further galvanized the Jewish community in the city.

The rest of the country was by no means immune to anti-Semitism. By the 1930s a number of fascist organizations, including "swastika clubs," had established themselves in Canada. The infamous Christie Pits riot in Toronto in August 1933 was sparked by the display of swastikas at a baseball game between a

Canada (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1990) at 165 estimates that close to 38%, higher than the national average, fought. He also notes that three Jews achieved the rank of lieutenant-colonel and almost 100 others served as majors, captains or lieutenants. Arthur D Hart estimates World War I military service somewhat lower at 25%, but his calculations are admittedly based on rough estimates. Arthur D Hart, *The Jew in Canada*, ed. (Toronto and Montreal: Jewish publications, 1926); Abridged Facsimile Edition (Toronto: Now and Then Books, 2010) 505.

¹³ Gerald Tulchinsky, *Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Lester Publishing Limited, 1992) at xvi [Tulchinsky, *Root*]. In 1921 the Jewish population in Toronto was 34,770; in Montreal it was 52,287. In 1941 the Jewish population in Toronto was 49,046; in Montreal it was 63,721. Gerald Tulchinsky, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co, 1998) at 17 and 22 [Tulchinsky, *Branching*].

¹⁴ Tulchinsky, *Root*, *ibid* at xviii. By 1920 the Jewish district of Montreal ran from the waterfront north to lower Outremont and east and west for several blocks, an area that was conspicuously part of the city centre.

¹⁵ The "Achat Chez Nous" boycott of Jewish businesses was initiated in 1924 in *La Croix*, a religious French Catholic weekly in Québec "to get rid of them either by elimination or by annihilation." Tulchinsky, *Branching*, *supra* note 13 at 173.

¹⁶ Tulchinsky noted, "Whether these children had a right to go to school was a testy legal and political question which was resolved in stages over nearly thirty years of struggle...Minor victories in the courts and in the legislative assembly after 1903 were the result of a galvanization of the Jewish community on a massive scale, which led to the emergence of a collective consciousness noteworthy for its major spokesmen, newspaper development, intense intracommunal debate, and greatly heightened awareness of the Jewish place in the legal political, and social context of the province of Quebec." Tulchinsky, *Root*, *supra* note 14 at xvi-xvii.

club whose members were part of a swastika club and a predominantly Jewish team. The Canadian Union of Fascists, inspired by British politician Oswald Mosley, had a following in Ontario and western Canada.¹⁷ By 1938 a Canadian Jewish Congress study into the status of Jews in English Canada reported that quotas and restrictions had become a way of life.¹⁸ Perhaps most significantly, Prime Minister Mackenzie King's government entrenched a relentless policy of restricting Jewish immigration to Canada. This would have its most devastating effect when the government refused entry to Jews fleeing Nazi Europe, even in the face of overwhelming evidence of the fatal consequences of such refusals.

Notwithstanding the stark horror of the Holocaust, for years after the war Jews in Canada continued to face discrimination and marginalization. Jews from elsewhere who sought entry to Canada faced exclusion. For at least a decade after 1945 and in some cases longer, it was common to find restrictions against the admission of Jews to hotels, universities, clubs, residential areas and many institutions, including the professions.¹⁹

In his autobiography, writer and journalist Pierre Berton described his findings in an investigation into anti-Semitism he did for *Maclean's* in 1948:

The results of my research were far more devastating than I had suspected. All the major professions – engineering, the judiciary, higher education, brokerage, banking – were virtually closed to Jews. The banks, for instance, employed 27,193 men and women, but only 27 were Jewish. In all of Canada there were only eighteen Jewish high-school principals and university professors. Of the 578 Jews in the legal profession, only one had been raised to the bench.²⁰

¹⁷ See Multicultural Canada, *InterGroup Relations*, online: Multicultural Canada <<http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z/j3/11>>.

¹⁸ Abella, *supra* note 12 at 181, in which he comments that what the CJC report discovered “was so profoundly unsettling - though hardly surprising to Canadian Jewry – that the report was never released.” He goes on to describe restrictions against employment of Jews in schools, universities, banks, insurance companies, large industrial and commercial interests, department stores, hospitals, law firms, the judiciary, the civil service and architectural and engineering firms. Some Jews succeeded only when they adopted Christian surnames and then only as long as the truth was not discovered.

¹⁹ In 1951 the Supreme Court of Canada decided one of the more important cases against such discrimination in *Noble et al v Alley* [1951] SCR 61 (known as the “Beach O’Pines” case). It overturned the judgment of the Ontario Court of Appeal, which had upheld the judgment of Schroeder J. on a motion under s 3 of *The Vendors and Purchasers Act*, RSO 1937, c 68. The sale of land forming part of a summer resort development known as Beach O’Pines on Lake Huron was subject to a covenant that ostensibly ran with the land prohibiting transfer, rental or alienation to or occupation by “any person of the Jewish, Hebrew, Semitic, Negro or coloured race or blood.” The court determined that the clause was void for uncertainty and that the covenant did not, in fact, run with the land and was therefore not enforceable. Although the court did not strike down the covenant on the basis of the public policy argument the appellants made against racial restrictions, the decision remains an important one, signalling to the lower courts and society at large that, perhaps, times were changing. See James W St G Walker, “Race,” *Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada* (Toronto: The Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History and Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997) 182.

²⁰ Pierre Berton, *My Times* (Toronto: Random House - Seal Books, 1996) at 27. Berton discusses the additional research he did on anti-Semitic employment and accommodation practices in Toronto. He also notes *Maclean's* own anti-Semitic hiring practices. The piece he wrote appeared in

In absolute terms the number of Jewish lawyers in Canada and in Ontario remained low for decades, but despite the barriers there was a steady, if slow, increase. In his 1939 study of Canada's Jews, Louis Rosenberg suggested why Jews were attracted to certain professions:

Examination of the statistics and the actual situation in various cities leads one to the conclusion that the motivating factor which attracts Jews to certain professions rather than to others is not prestige, higher income, preference or hereditary tendency, but the necessity of training for a profession in which they will not be dependent upon a public or private employer for a position, and will not be faced with the danger of initial exclusion or subsequent dismissal as a result of racial, social, or religious prejudice.²¹

Although Jewish candidates for admission still depended on employers to hire them to article, those who vaulted that initial hurdle and were called to the bar could hang up a shingle and practise on their own, which many Jewish lawyers did. In his interview for the Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History's oral history project, the late Fred Catzman, who was called to the bar in 1929 and went on to become a respected member of the profession, noted,

As I was growing up it was recognized that there would be no opportunities for employment in banks, trust companies, WASP institutions, and things of that sort if you were Jewish. So that necessarily Jewish boys with advanced education would gravitate to professions where they could be self-employed rather than dependent upon opportunities with established concerns. So that meant my contemporaries went in pretty well for medicine, dentistry and law.²²

In 1921 there were 104 Jewish lawyers out of a total of 7,209 lawyers in Canada.²³ Ten years later this figure had trebled to 351, including at least four

Maclean's on November 1, 1948. Berton describes it as a plea for the enactment of fair employment practice legislation along the lines of that adopted in New York in 1945 (*ibid* at 26-29.)

²¹ Louis Rosenberg, *Canada's Jews: A Social & Economic Study of Jews in Canada* (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1939) at 192.

²² See The Osgoode Society, Christine Kates, "Oral History Transcript of Fred Catzman" (16 March 1990) at 11 [Osgoode Society transcript]. Catzman is an example of how Jewish lawyers persevered despite obstacles. A graduate and Silver Medal award recipient of Osgoode Hall Law School (1929), he practised law at Catzman & Wahl. He was Vice Chairman of the Canadian Bar Association (Ontario Commercial Law Section) (1949-1974). He authored the *Bulk Sales Act of Ontario*, and co-authored the *Personal Property Security Law of Ontario* in 1976 and the *Personal Property Security Act* in 1989. He received the Law Society of Upper Canada Medal in 1986 and the Order of Ontario in 2002.

²³ The first Jewish lawyer in Ontario is usually identified as Samuel King who was called to the bar in 1891, although Isadore Helmuth, called to the bar in 1877, was half-Jewish through his father who converted to Christianity and became an Anglican bishop. Helmuth was elected a bencher of the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1911.

Jewish women in Ontario,²⁴ out of a total number of 8,058 lawyers in Canada. These lawyers formed 0.57% of all Jews gainfully employed in Canada in 1931. Of the 351 Jewish lawyers, 171 of them, or 48.7%, were Canadian born. Most of the rest had settled in Canada before 1910 and their families tended to be from England. A few were trained in England; the rest received their legal education in Canada.²⁵ This profile was in sharp contrast to the Jewish immigrants of the 1930s and postwar period who were largely from Eastern Europe and stood out in terms of language, culture and class from their Anglo-Jewish counterparts, as well as from non-Jewish Canadians.

In his history of the Law Society of Upper Canada, Christopher Moore recounts the steadily increasing hostility of the profession's establishment to the entry of Jewish lawyers whose background differed from that of earlier Jewish lawyers:

The experience of early Jewish lawyers in Ontario also suggests how important social standing was in overcoming ethnic and racial prejudice. Early Jewish lawyers were Canadian-born and highly educated, and they tended to article in establishment firms...the first Jews, entering the profession when the Jewish population in Canada was still very small, were assisted by their membership in an assimilated elite and probably also by the self-conscious liberalism of some elite practitioners.

The entry into the profession of these comparatively assimilated, educated, and well-to-do Jews did not provoke the resistance that the children of Yiddish-speaking, Eastern European rag dealers and scrap merchants would later have to contend against. Jews of that class did not become lawyers at all in the decades before the First World War, and they would face enormous difficulties in subsequent decades.²⁶

In 1931 the Jewish population of Toronto was 46,751. According to the Toronto Jewish Directory, a compilation of listings of Jewish businesses, services

²⁴ Annie Epstein Baker and Helen Grossman were called to the bar in 1929 and Edna Sanders (Ferguson) and Lily Sherizen were called in 1930.

²⁵ Rosenberg, *supra* note 21 at 196.

²⁶ Christopher Moore, *The Law Society of Upper Canada and Ontario's Lawyers, 1797-1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 180 [Moore, *Law Society*]. As late as the early 1950s (and possibly later) applicants to the Law Society of Upper Canada had to demonstrate proficiency in Latin as a prerequisite to admission, a clear indication of the kind of educational and social background it was assumed candidates for the law had. Eastern and southern European immigrants and their children were unlikely to have had such education. Jews who became lawyers in the earlier part of the century may have had greater opportunities to become part of the mainstream. The 1908 gold medalist at Osgoode Hall, for example, was Gabriel Herman Levy who had been born and lived in Hamilton, Ontario. In 1921 he became the first Jewish K.C. in Canada. His law firm was integrated. His biography in Hart, *supra* note 12 at 380 states, "his family has always been prominent in communal and philanthropic undertakings, and his activities are not confined to any one creed. Mr. Levy occupies an outstanding position in the social life of Hamilton and is regarded as one of the most progressive residents of that city." Among the many groups to which he belonged was the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for the Dominion of Canada. Levy was "the only Jew in Canada to hold this honor."

and professionals, there were approximately 100 listings that year under "Barristers."²⁷ According to one Reading Law Club estimate, by 1957 the number of Jewish lawyers in Toronto alone had climbed to approximately 330.²⁸ By 1971, Jews made up 25% of all lawyers in Toronto.²⁹

Whatever the actual number of Jewish lawyers during the first half of the twentieth century in Ontario, with only some exceptions Jews who insisted on pursuing membership in the Law Society of Upper Canada had to confront the Protestant elite's efforts to keep them out or relegate them to the fringes of the profession.

In a 1989 article, Jerome E. Bickenbach describes how Jewish lawyers had to accept the reality of pervasive anti-Semitism in early twentieth century Toronto. In writing about the experiences of Bora Laskin, who ultimately became the first Jewish lawyer appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada and then its first Jewish Chief Justice, Bickenbach writes,

Reading through private letters and other documents concerning the young Bora Laskin...one gets a fairly clear sense of a current of anti-Semitism in Toronto in the 1920s and 1930s...The primary material on Laskin suggests that anti-Semitism in Toronto was a given, a feature of the landscape, an obstacle one had of necessity to steer around rather than confront."³⁰

Philip Girard's 2005 biography of Bora Laskin discusses the fine line Jews were obliged to walk between retaining and respecting their Jewish identity and steering clear of Jewish stereotypes that Canadian society perpetuated to justify excluding them from mainstream pursuits. Referring to Laskin he notes,

In Toronto, he had to confront a number of often contradictory stereotypes of Jewish males: they could be pushy and loud, but also too passive, too sensitive, too effete and bookish. Laskin had ambitions beyond the established networks of Jewish

²⁷ The directories were not produced after the 1930s. For more on the Directories see UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, *Directory*, online: Ontario Jewish Archives <<http://www.ontariojewisharchives.org/directory.html>>.

²⁸ In a letter dated August 13, 1957, Donald Carr wrote to His Excellency Abba Eban, Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, inviting him to address the Reading Law Club. He described the Club as "an organization composed of ninety percent of the Jewish lawyers in this City, with a membership of approximately 300." Law Society of Upper Canada Archives, Donald Carr fonds, "correspondence," 2009011-001 [Carr, "correspondence"].

²⁹ HW Arthurs, J Willms & L Taman, "The Toronto Legal Profession: An Exploratory Survey" (1971) 21 UTJL 498 at 520. The study was conducted through telephone interviews with 100 Toronto lawyers. They noted that the number of Jewish lawyers was still rising. In 1971 Jews made up 25% of all the lawyers (significantly higher than their percentage of the population.) They comprised 31.2% of lawyers 25-35 years old, 23.7% of lawyers 36-45 years old, 14.3% of lawyers 46-55 years old, 33.3% of lawyers between 56-65 and 14.3% of lawyers 65 and older.

³⁰ Jerome E Bickenbach, "Lawyers, Law Professors, and Racism in Ontario" (1989) 96 Queen's Quarterly 585. In discussing Bora Laskin's close relationship with Caesar Wright, Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto, who assisted Laskin to find a place in the legal academic community, Bickenbach comments at 595 "...Wright, who never lacked for energy and determination when it came to pursuing causes he believed in, at no point seemed to consider anti-Semitism to be an evil that should be challenged rather than reluctantly accommodated."

fraternities, law firms, and social clubs, but gaining acceptance in the Gentile world was not an easy task in the 1930s and '40s. By adopting a confident demeanour of North American Anglo masculinity, oriented around sports, emotional reserve, and hard work, Laskin was able to negotiate the obstacles to successful integration.³¹

In whatever way Jews sought to navigate their way through Ontario society, the effort must have been exhausting, obliging them to confront illogical and shifting prejudices. During this period Jewish law students struggled to find articling positions, usually having to depend upon Jewish members of the bar and open-minded non-Jewish lawyers for the job that was a prerequisite for call to the bar. The problem was even worse for Jewish women.³²

If the challenge of finding an articling position was met, once called to the bar Jewish lawyers were almost universally slotted into a particular practice profile that remained a constant for decades. Those listed in the 1931 Toronto Jewish Directory were mostly sole practitioners. A few were in firms of two or three lawyers. Not one of those listed was practising in one of Toronto's establishment firms. Indeed some of these early Jewish lawyers struggled to make a living and found their problems exacerbated in the 1930s by the Depression.³³ In 1931 Jewish lawyers were also under-represented among those employed in the civil service.³⁴

Twenty-five years later not much appeared to have changed in terms of practice profile. An examination of a 1958 membership list of the Reading Law Club³⁵ reveals that most Jewish lawyers in Toronto continued to work as sole practitioners or in small firms of two or three. While many lawyers regardless of background tended to work in sole or small firms in these decades, to the extent Jewish lawyers were in firms all the members were Jewish. Almost no Jewish lawyers were invited into larger Bay Street or "elite" firms.³⁶

³¹ Philip Girard, *Bora Laskin: Bringing Law to Life* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) at 9.

³² Celia Morgan, "An Embarrassingly and Severely Masculine Atmosphere: Women, Gender and the Legal Profession at Osgoode Hall, 1920s -1960s," (1996) 11 CJWL19 at 33, quoted in Mary Jane Mossman, *The First Women Lawyers*, (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2006) at 111. She quotes a female law student's account of discrimination, "Oh yes, you never walked inside a non-Jewish place, you just didn't. It was as if there was a big sign outside. I couldn't get a job when I graduated, I went into practice on my own because I couldn't get a job anywhere. I was Jewish and I was a woman." In her article on Gretta Grant, the first woman of Chinese heritage to become a lawyer in Canada, Constance Backhouse notes that Grant believes that Jewish students experienced much greater adversity than she did. "Anti-Semitism was rife among the Osgoode Hall student body, and Jewish students who wished to find articling positions outside of Jewish firms had an almost impossible task." Constance Backhouse, "Gretta Wong Grant: Canada's First Chinese-Canadian Female Lawyer" (1996) 15 Windsor YB Access Just 3 at 33.

³³ One of the members of the Reading Law Club recalled how painful it was for him as a young lawyer to observe some of the older Jewish lawyers trying to earn a living, perpetually underemployed. Another recalled that a number of these lawyers spent afternoons playing pinochle because there was not enough work.

³⁴ Abella, *supra* note 12 at 181.

³⁵ Carr, "correspondence," *supra* note 28. Reference number: 2009011-005 at 9.

³⁶ In their study Arthurs, Willms and Taman noted,

Both Protestants and Roman Catholics are underrepresented amongst those lawyers who practise by themselves. In fact, the percentage of Jewish

This sole and small firm practice profile of Jewish lawyers is not coincidental. The Lawyers Club's 1929 conditions of eligibility for membership epitomized the "preferred" profile for lawyers in Toronto. To the extent lawyers did not fit the male, white and Christian image they would be unlikely to be invited to join the city's non-Jewish firms, whether as articling students, associates or partners. If elite firms were dismayed that the number of Jewish lawyers was increasing, the ghettoizing of them into certain types of practices would have been comforting. Sole and small firm lawyers did not typically attract institutional or wealthy clients, nor did they pose a threat to the power of the bar's elite.³⁷

While there do not appear to have been formal quotas on the entry of Jewish law students to Osgoode Hall,³⁸ the Law Society did little to address or redress other issues of discrimination. The late Fred Catzman recalled having difficulty finding the benchers sponsor that a candidate in that period required as a condition of call to the bar:

We had a tough time finding benchers that would even talk to us. Until somebody discovered one fellow that was quite friendly and amenable and we would all flock down to him and he was the only one that was presenting us for call to the bar.³⁹

lawyers in solo practice is twice that of the over-all sample. In 2 to 5 man firms both Jewish and Roman Catholic lawyers are over-represented. Firms in the 16 to 25 and 25 plus ranges are very largely Protestant. There are no Catholic members at all in firms over 25, while only 8 per cent of the Jewish lawyers are members of such firms. The importance of this pattern is underlined by the fact that 38 per cent of all lawyers practise in firms of over 16 members, and that these firms are responsible for a disproportionate share of corporate and commercial law.

Supra note 29 at 517. The continuation of the sole and small firm practice profile well into the 1970s is even more significant than the data from the 1930s to the 1950s, because there were fewer large firms overall in those earlier decades. The change in the practice profiles of Jewish lawyers finally becomes noteworthy in the 1980s. A 1988 study of Toronto lawyers states that of lawyers hired in the 1980s an equal proportion of Jews and Protestants worked for large (33.4% and 33.5 %) and elite firms (15.7% and 18.9%) respectively. J Hagan, M Huxter & P Parker, "Class Structure and Legal Practice: Inequality and Mobility among Toronto Lawyers" (1988) 22 L & Soc Rev 9 at 39.

³⁷ Arthurs, Willms & Taman *supra* note 30 at 523 reported that in their study "42% of the solo practitioners were Polish Jews as compared with 11% over-all. 58 per cent of the solo practitioners were Jewish as opposed to 25% over-all."

³⁸ The somewhat inconsistent use of quotas is discussed in Mario Nigro & Clare Mauro, "The Jewish Immigrant Experience and the Practice of Law in Montreal, 1830 to 1990," (1999) 44 McGill LJ 999 at 1012 and 1013. The article quotes former Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Québec, the late Honourable Alan B Gold, who said that the fact that he was Jewish did not hinder his application to McGill University's Faculty of Law in 1938. Gold ultimately chose to attend the Université de Montréal where he also felt that the fact that he was Jewish did not impede his admission. But see Tuchinsky, *Branching supra* note 13 at 190-191 in which the author states that McGill's arts and science undergraduate faculties began the system of quotas in the 1930s, and other faculties, including law, followed. RA MacKay, the Dean of Arts convinced the administration to limit Jewish enrollment in the Arts faculty to 20% and to require Jewish applicants to have high-school averages of 75% (60% for Christians). Data from the office of the registrar of McGill's Faculty of Law supports this progression to quotas in law in the late 30s. In 1924-25 41% of students in the faculty were Jewish, 39% in 1925-26, 44% in 1926-1927, and 40% in 1930-31. In 1935-36, however, only 5% of the students in the law faculty were Jewish.

³⁹ Osgoode Society transcript, *supra* note 22 at 66.

Given that most benchers were themselves members of elite firms, many of which looked distastefully on the admission of Jews to the profession, it is not surprising that the Law Society remained passive at best on the issue of anti-Semitism.⁴⁰

This attitude was in keeping with previous examples of the Society's resistance to change, as evidenced by its unwillingness to accommodate Delos Rogest Davis, Ontario's second black lawyer, in the 1880s when he could not find an articling position, and its virulent opposition over a seven year period from 1891-1897 to Clara Brett Martin's admission as the province's first woman lawyer.⁴¹ Bora Laskin's appointment as the first Jewish faculty member at Osgoode Hall in 1945 was significant, but hardly the sign of a collective shift in attitude.⁴²

But if discriminatory practices were intended to defeat Jewish candidates and lawyers they often had the reverse effect. Sole and small firm practice bred a sense of independence that strengthened Jewish lawyers' resolve to survive and become a force within the legal profession.⁴³ The increasing number of Jewish sole practices and small law firms also enabled the generation of Jewish lawyers that followed the first and second to find articling positions and jobs as juniors, associates or partners within Jewish firms.⁴⁴ With this mentoring came loyalty and

⁴⁰ One of the members of the Reading Law Club recalled with bitterness the hypocrisy of benchers and law firm partners who went to church on Sundays, considered themselves moral men and then excluded Jews and other groups systematically and relentlessly from all social and professional advancement.

⁴¹ Moore, *Law Society*, *supra* note 26 at 177-79 (re Davis) and at 181-84 (re Martin). See also Constance Backhouse, "Gender and Race in the Construction of 'Legal Professionalism': Historical Perspectives" (Paper delivered at the colloquia on Ontario's Advisory Committee on Professionalism, Law Society of Upper Canada, 20 October 2003) online: Law Society of Upper Canada <http://www.lsuc.on.ca/media/constance_backhouse_gender_and_race.pdf>. Law Society members also appear to have been reluctant to embrace Jewish lawyers as members of the Law Society's Board of Governors (Convocation). It took a concerted effort to have Isadore Levinter elected as a bencher in 1956. Even if the Reading Law Club did not overtly lobby for Jewish representation at various levels of the legal profession, it is nonetheless likely that Club members would have been a useful network to tap during bencher elections. Interestingly, however, Levinter was a prominent practitioner in the negligence bar and its members also assisted in his election, across religious and ethnic lines.

⁴² Girard, *supra* note 31 at 146.

⁴³ The Law Society of Upper Canada, "Final Report of the Law Society of Upper Canada's Sole Practitioner and Small Firm Task Force," (24 March 2005) at 37 online: Law Society of Upper Canada <<http://www.lsuc.on.ca/media/convmar05solepractitioner.pdf>> noted that one of the benefits of sole and small firm practice that lawyers identified is, the ability to control one's practice environment. Lawyers expressed satisfaction with a professional environment in which they can choose their areas of practice, their clients, and the number of hours they work... Although Jewish lawyers may have had little choice but to enter sole and small firm practice, some of these benefits would have accrued to them. Jewish lawyers remained over-represented in sole practice at least as late as the 1970s. Arthurs, Willms & Taman, *supra* note 29 at 517 noted that the percentage of Jewish lawyers in sole practice in Toronto was double the number of non-Jewish lawyers (27% versus 12%). The same appears to have been the experience of Montreal's Jewish lawyers.

⁴⁴ There is also evidence of Jewish lawyers acting as articling principals for women and black lawyers who could not otherwise find jobs. In the ceremony to mark her retirement from the Supreme Court of Canada the Honourable Claire L'Heureux-Dubé praised Sam Bard for hiring and mentoring her "at a time when law was not a woman's profession." She was his law partner for 18 years before her appointment to the bench. Supreme Court of Canada, "Remarks of the Honourable Claire L'Heureux-Dubé At the Ceremony to mark her Retirement June 10, 2002," online: Supreme Court of Canada <<http://www.scc-csc.gc.ca/court-cour/ju/spe-dis/cld02-06-10->

camaraderie that made it possible for Jewish lawyers to persevere despite slights, insults and exclusion from influential positions within the profession.

As the larger Jewish community became more prosperous and established in business, its need for lawyers who specialized in a variety of practice areas grew. These lawyers were inextricably tied to the success of their community, both professionally and personally. In addition, specialization made Jewish lawyers attractive to non-Jewish clients. Christopher Moore notes,

In Toronto, specialization became an unintended effect of discrimination, for some Jewish lawyers found in it a way to expand their opportunities. As their expertise gradually attracted non-Jewish clients, they broke out of some of the restrictions imposed upon them.⁴⁵

It is true, however, that for decades as Jewish lawyers rose to prominence, they did so seemingly one at a time.⁴⁶ "Firsts" often stood alone for years, particularly in judicial appointments. These solo achievements were important as the faces that personalized the Jewish community's ability to participate at the centre of the profession.⁴⁷ Even as late as 1971, Sydney L Robins' election as the first Jewish

eng.asp>. In the early 1950s Lincoln Alexander articulated for a Jewish lawyer. Samuel Gotfrid offered Alexander an articling position over the telephone after Alexander "warned" Gotfrid that he was a "Negro." Gotfrid later noted, "It bothered me that a fellow had to demean himself in that way to apply for a job." Gotfrid also acted as Bora Laskin's articling principal for a period of time. Girard, *supra* note 31 at 61.

⁴⁵ Moore, *Law Society*, *supra* note 26 at 201.

⁴⁶ It is not within the scope of this article to compare the Canadian and American experiences respecting judicial appointments. It is interesting to note, however, that by the 1930s three Jewish lawyers, Louis Brandeis (1916), Benjamin Cardozo (1932) and Felix Frankfurter (1939) had already been appointed Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. Louis Rosenberg's 1939 study did provide one possible explanation. "The rarity of Jews in judicial positions in Canada is all the more notable in view of the fact that Jews have held very prominent positions in the judiciary and administration of justice in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the Crown Colonies, where Jews form a much smaller proportion of the population than in Canada.... The comparative absence of Jewish members of the judiciary in Canada...is certainly not due to the lack of suitable candidates but may be attributed to the fact that the presence of two major and rival ethnic groups... has brought about a situation where appointments are carefully balanced between English and French in Canada." Rosenberg, *supra* note 21 at 196.

⁴⁷ Along with GH Levy, see note 26 and accompanying text, Louis Michael Singer was one of the first Jewish lawyers in Toronto. He was the Gold Medalist at Osgoode Hall in 1908 and was the second Jewish Alderman for the City of Toronto (1914-1918). David Goldstick was elected to Toronto City Council in the 1940s. The first Jewish judge in Canada was Samuel Shultz of Vancouver, appointed in 1914. The next appointment was not until 1945 when Samuel Factor was appointed a County Court Judge in Ontario. Factor was also one of three Jewish members of Parliament throughout the 1930s. Factor had been the Silver Medalist at Osgoode Hall in 1915. David Croll became the first Jewish mayor in Windsor in 1930, an MLA in 1934, the first Jewish cabinet minister in Ontario, and a MP in 1945. Anti-Semitism appears to have blocked his appointment to the federal cabinet. He became Canada's first Jewish senator in 1955. Nathan Phillips became the first Jewish mayor of Toronto in 1955. Previous to this he practised law in Toronto, was the youngest King's Counsel appointment and the President of the County of York Law Association. Abraham Lieff became the first Jewish appointee to the Superior Court of Ontario in 1963. Lieff was the first Ontario judge to be sworn in wearing a yarmulke and took the oath of his office on a silver-clad "Jerusalem Bible" that Donald Carr had presented to him on behalf of the Reading Law Club on the occasion of his appointment. For several years after, the Reading Law Club continued this tradition for each Jewish appointment to the bench. The Québec Superior Court had two Jewish appointees before 1963; Harry Batshaw in 1950 and Benjamin

Treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada resonated deeply with Jewish lawyers as a symbol of their achievements in the profession.⁴⁸ But “firsts” must also have highlighted the sometimes glacial rate of change and the extent of the divide that separated Jews from their non-Jewish colleagues.

III. THE READING LAW CLUB: A PLACE OF RESPITE

It was in this social, political and professional context that the Reading Law Club was formed in 1947 and continued for approximately 19 years. What did the Club’s establishment actually signify? There does not appear to have been a precipitating event that catapulted Toronto’s Jewish lawyers into forming the Club. This is in contrast to the establishment of Montreal’s Reading Law Society, originally the Reading Society, a year later.

In the fall of 1948 the Québec Bar Association decided to hold its annual conference at the Mont Tremblant Lodge in the Laurentian Mountains outside of Montreal. The lodge, owned by Joseph Ryan, had a policy like many other hotels of “no Jews and dogs.” The Batonnier of the Montreal bar, Gustave Monette, K.C.,⁴⁹ had not been aware of the policy. Learning of it he asked to speak to a

Robinson in 1961. (The Montreal Reading Law Society has noted that in 1967 there were 19 judges of the Jewish faith in Canada, five of whom were in Québec.) David Vanek was appointed to the Provincial Court in Ontario in 1968. Norman Borins became the first Jewish Crown Attorney in Ontario. He was a founding member of the Advocates’ Society in 1963. Bora Laskin was appointed a Justice of the Ontario Court of Appeal in 1965 (Fred Kaufman was the Québec Court of Appeals’ first Jewish appointment in 1973). In 1970 Laskin became the first Jewish Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and was appointed in 1973 as the first Jewish Chief Justice of the Court. Charles Dubin was appointed to the Ontario Court of Appeal in 1973 and became the first Jewish Chief Justice of Ontario in 1990. Rosalie Abella became the first Jewish female judge with her appointment to the Ontario Provincial Court, Family Division in 1976. She was appointed to the Ontario Court of Appeal in 1992 and in 2004 became the first Jewish female Justice appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada. In 1960 John Geller became the first Jewish lawyer in more than 50 years to be invited into partnership in a prominent non-Jewish Bay Street firm. The firm was Arnoldi, Parry & Campbell. Among many other accomplishments, Geller was lead counsel for Upper Lakes Shipping during the Royal Commission on the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1961. He helped open the doors of the National Club when he became the first Jewish member. Geller later brought the motion to admit women members. In 1956, 1961 and 1962, Isadore Levinter, Sydney L Robins and Nathan Strauss, respectively, became the first Jewish lawyers elected as benchers of the Law Society of Upper Canada and Robins became the first Jewish Treasurer in 1971. Isadore Levinter was a founding director of the Advocates’ Society in 1963 and Chair of the Civil Liberties Committee of the Canadian Bar Association. Robins was appointed to the Supreme Court of Ontario in 1976 and to the Court of Appeal of Ontario in 1981. Strauss was the second President of the Reading Law Club. In 1968 Daniel Soberman became the first Jewish Dean of an Ontario Law Faculty and was the Dean at Queen’s until 1977. Four years earlier Max Cohen became the first Jewish Dean of a Law School in Canada as Dean of McGill’s Law Faculty. In 1972, Harry Arthurs, appointed as the Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School, and Martin Friedland, appointed as the Dean of the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, were the first Jewish Deans at those schools. For further names and biographies of early and exceptional Jewish lawyers see Law Society of Upper Canada, “Diversifying the Bar: Lawyer’s Make History” online: Law Society of Upper Canada <<http://www.lsuc.on.ca/diversifying-the-bar-lawyers-make-history>>.

⁴⁸ Robins received many letters from lawyers expressing their delight and pride at his election.

⁴⁹ Conversation with Honourable Sydney L Robins (May 2011).

⁴⁹ Gustave Monette co-founded a Montreal law firm in 1912. One of his most famous cases was his defence, which he undertook with his cousin, Philippe Monette, as co-counsel, of Adéland Delorme, a Roman Catholic priest accused of killing his stepbrother. In 1959 Gustave Monette was appointed to the Senate where he remained until his death in 1969.

meeting of Jewish lawyers at the Montefiore Club⁵⁰ to apologize. He regretted it was too late to change the venue and asked Jewish lawyers to attend. Ryan had indicated that he would make an exception to the policy on the basis that "it being off-season, there would not likely be many gentile guests around to be offended by a Jewish presence."

After holding a meeting to discuss the issue, Montreal's Jewish lawyers boycotted the event and determined to unite to advance their own objectives. Given that Toronto's Reading Law Club had been established the year before, it may have convinced the Montreal lawyers that such a collective approach was feasible. In any event, the Reading Society was established "to lobby for fair representation of Jews in the Bar and on the Bench." Like the Toronto branch it was also a social and educational club, but unlike the Toronto Club its stated objectives included increasing and enhancing the Jewish presence in the legal profession. Batonnier Monette also assured Jewish lawyers that the constitution of the Bar of Montreal would be amended to ensure that one member of the Council would be of the Jewish faith.⁵¹

The Lawyers Club's exclusion of Jews, though a significant event and according to Reading Law Club members an important reason behind the Club's establishment, cannot strictly speaking be viewed as a catalyst, since exclusion occurred 18 years before the Reading Law Club was formed.⁵² In the 1930s, given that the few Jewish lawyers who were practising in Toronto appear to have been struggling to survive, it is perhaps not surprising that they did not start a club. It also appears that in the 1920s and 1930s Toronto's Jewish legal community had its own divisions. As discussed earlier, early Jewish lawyers tended to be more assimilated into the Toronto elite community, in part because in many cases their ancestors came from Great Britain. They may have been uncomfortable associating with Jewish lawyers whose families came from Eastern Europe.⁵³

⁵⁰ The Montefiore Club was founded as a social club for young Jewish people in 1880. Named after Sir Moses Montefiore, a leading British Jewish philanthropist, the Club was an important part of the Jewish Community for decades. In 2010, however, with membership declining, it announced it would close its doors. In reporting on the Club's decision the Canadian Jewish News noted, "As a Jewish club in Montreal, the Montefiore had additional challenges. The community was not growing, many of the old families are not here anymore, and Jews can belong to just about any club nowadays", "Montefiore Club Closing Doors after 130 Years", *The Canadian Jewish News* (12 August 2010) online: The Canadian Jewish News <<http://www.cjnews.com/>>.

⁵¹ See the Lord Reading Law Society, "History", online: <<http://www.lordreading.org/site/en/history>>. It is not clear from the narration of these events whether Monette's assurance was made before or after the Society was formed.

⁵² The Manitoba equivalent of the Toronto and Montreal Clubs also appears to have been inspired by a precipitating event. Harry Walsh, called to the Manitoba bar in 1937, helped establish the Jessel Club for Jewish lawyers in Manitoba when he learned that the Blackstone Club, to which he had once been invited as guest speaker, did not allow Jewish membership. Jessel (1824-1883) had been a respected Jewish lawyer in England and Master of the Rolls. Harry Walsh, *Jewish Foundation of Manitoba – The Endowment Book of Life* online: Jewish Foundation <<http://www.jewishfoundation.org/bookoflife3.cfm?id=574>>. For information on Sir George Jessel see, online: Jewish Virtual Library <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>>.

⁵³ The internal divisions within the Jewish community based on place of origins are discussed in Abella, *supra* note 12 at 116. "By 1914 the acculturated Anglo-Jewish community had all but disappeared; gone was their serene, comfortable, stable world. In its place had emerged a new world of Canadian Jewry, the seething, crowded, chaotic, noisy, Yiddish world of Eastern European newcomers. Leadership still remained in the hands of the old guard; their wealth,

Although the number of Jewish lawyers increased during the 1940s, preoccupation with the war may have focused energies away from professional issues. Following the war, however, its consequences to European Jewry may have brought on a sense of purpose in the Jewish community to unite, rather than dwell on internal differences. Furthermore, as increasingly more Jewish lawyers were Canadian-born the different origins of their parents and grandparents would have become less important. Perhaps the post-war Jewish community of lawyers was sufficiently different from its pre-war counterpart that establishing its own Club was a way to assert its collective presence and its rightful place in the profession.

The Reading Law Club had an additional purpose as a forum to meet. As professionals, lawyers have always sought occasions and opportunities to network, socialize and participate in continuing education. But in a professional world that could often be hostile, or at least unwelcoming, establishing the Reading Law Club would have provided a place of respite where its members could simply be lawyers, without having to be on their guard.

The Reading Law Club's 1948 request to begin holding its meetings at Osgoode Hall reflected a common use that law associations and clubs made of the space. The Law Society readily approved the initial request and each annual request thereafter, but it also permitted the Lawyers Club to use the premises, despite that Club's restrictive membership rules. The Law Society does not appear to have questioned the appropriateness of the regulator of the entire profession permitting its premises to be used by an association that was overtly, formally discriminatory.⁵⁴

There is no evidence and no recollection by any of the participants at the September meeting that the Reading Law Club or any individual lawyers challenged the Law Society on issues related to anti-Semitism. Although battles against discrimination were fought at many levels and eventually brought about change, participants at the September meeting suggested that at least to some degree and in some settings members of the Jewish community and other "excluded" groups steered around exclusions and overt bigotry, got on with their lives, and persevered for incremental change that they believed their presence and competence would bring about.

At the same time, however, a number of members of the Reading Law Club belonged to other Jewish organizations with more activist mandates such as the Jewish Labour Committee of Canada and the Joint Public Relations Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai Brith. The implication of the Reading Law Club's low key and largely apolitical approach is that a choice had been made, whether by design or not, for the Club to pursue professional activities, rather than to focus on social justice or reform initiatives.

Although the Toronto and Montreal Clubs would follow different paths, the decision of both groups to use Lord Reading's name was an affirmation of their Jewish identity. It may also have illustrated their founders' identification with

influence, contacts and ability to speak English assured that. But they were losing their control over the Jewish community."

⁵⁴ Another anecdotal example of the Law Society permitting anti-Semitic activities on its premises was provided at the September meeting. According to one participant the Phi Delta Phi International Legal Fraternity that established its first Canadian chapter at Osgoode Hall in 1896 excluded Jews. On one occasion, having admitted a new member, it rescinded the invitation upon learning that he was Jewish. Round table discussion, *supra*, note 8.

British Jewry, rather than with the later immigrants of Eastern European origins. Rufus Daniel Isaacs was born in 1860 in England. He was the son of a Jewish fruit broker. Until his mid-twenties he worked in a variety of jobs including ship's boy, employee in his father's business and in the stock exchange. In 1884 he decided to study the law. He entered the Middle Temple in 1885 and was called to the bar at 27 years old. He was a successful barrister, arguing a number of important and varied cases, but entered politics in 1904 as a Liberal Party member of the House of Commons for Reading, a town in south east England. He held the seat until 1913 and was at various times Solicitor General and Attorney General, becoming the first Attorney-General to be part of the Cabinet. In 1913 he was appointed Lord Chief Justice, the first Jewish person to hold the position.

In 1918, while still Lord Chief Justice, Isaacs was appointed Ambassador to the United States, a position he held until 1919. In 1921 he resigned as Lord Chief Justice to become the Viceroy of India, serving from April 2 of that year until April 3, 1926. His tenure came at a time of unrest in India and was not uncontroversial, including among other things his order to imprison Mahatma Gandhi in 1922. In 1931 he was, briefly, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and played a role in the Round Table Conferences that sought to resolve problems in India. He died in 1935.

Isaacs was elevated to the peerage first as Baron Reading in 1914, Viscount Reading of Erleigh in 1916, Earl of Reading in 1917 and Marquess of Reading in 1926, making him the highest ranking Jewish member of the peerage in British history.

In a 1934 article in the *Canadian Bar Review* reference is made to the impact of his Jewish background on Lord Reading's life:

Lord Reading is a Jew; a Jew by birth, temperament, and preference. Throughout his life he has been devotedly proud of the race from which he springs, and unswervingly loyal to it. His qualities, too, are those of his race; and no account of him can be complete, or even comprehensible, which does not take into consideration the racial factor.⁵⁵

Although the tone of the article has an undercurrent of stereotyping, it does demonstrate that Isaacs' rise to prominence was accomplished without any attempt or necessity to down play the fact that he was Jewish. Lord Reading may not be generally well known in 2012, but it is likely that his accomplishments were more widely celebrated in 1947 and 1948 when the Toronto Reading Law Club and Montreal Reading Law Society were formed. In any event, naming the Clubs after him provided a message. A Jewish lawyer could rise to the top of his profession, become a member of the judiciary and a political leader and be celebrated by both his own community and society at large. For the Toronto Club, using the name was its members' acknowledgement and celebration of the Jewish achievements Lord Reading symbolized.

⁵⁵ H Carl Goldenberg, "Lord Reading: Lawyer and Diplomat" (1935) *Can Bar Rev* 634 at 638.

A. The Structure of the Reading Law Club

All of the members of the Reading Law Club who were interviewed or attended the September meeting credit Leon Arthurs, a well-known patent attorney in Toronto, with the inspiration for the Club and for its longevity. The late Carl Orbach, who participated in the meeting, noted that Leon Arthurs *was* the Reading Law Club, although he was not a lawyer. According to Arthurs' son, Professor Harry Arthurs, Leon was a completely self-taught man. He left school at 14 years old, travelled, took night courses at Columbia University in New York in engineering, became an inventor,⁵⁶ did radio repair throughout the war and in 1944 passed his patent office examinations. As a patent attorney, he received many referrals from lawyers concerning intellectual property issues, and was involved in a number of significant cases. Leon Arthurs loved the law and lawyers and according to Reading Law Club members commented frequently and with insight on legal issues and theories. Arthurs lectured at some of the Club dinner meetings. In 1951 his office was on the tenth floor of the Lumsden Building at 6 Adelaide Street E. where there were a number of lawyers' offices.

As soon as a Jewish student registered at Osgoode Hall or was called to the bar, Arthurs would encourage him⁵⁷ to become a member of the Club, which offered mentoring and the possibility of networking. He was the Reading Law Club's secretary from its establishment until the Club ceased activities in the mid-1960s. He organized meetings and worked with the Executive, in particular the President and the program co-ordinator. Unfortunately, any papers he had relating to the Club no longer exist, but every member who was interviewed or attended the September meeting clearly recalled his influence on the Club.⁵⁸

Donald Carr was one of the more actively involved members of the Club over many years, as a member of the Executive and as its program co-ordinator. He worked closely with Arthurs and initially practised law on the same floor in the Lumsden building, in the firm of Cohen, Garfinkle and Carr. Originally from England, Carr immigrated to Canada in September 1948 and was called to the bar in 1951. He was the Reading Law Club's program coordinator for a number of years and on the executive from 1957 through to 1964.⁵⁹

The Reading Law Club Executive consisted of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and what were known as "Executive Members." The program co-ordinator had the relentless task of ensuring that there was an educational program for each dinner meeting, which included inviting the speakers, developing the program and often chairing the panels. The members of the Executive moved up the ladder to President, initially for a two-year term, then

⁵⁶ He invented a machine to stimulate circulation for those with Raynaud's Syndrome.

⁵⁷ Given how few women there appear to have been in the Reading Law Club, the choice of pronoun is intentional. It is possible that when the Reading Law Club began in 1947 only men were eligible to join, but by 1958 there were at least some women lawyers who regularly attended Reading Law Club meetings. At the September meeting Helen Aaron recalled a discussion she described as "almost a fight" between Lily Sherizen and Irving Aaron in which Sherizen asserted that female lawyers should be invited into the Reading Law Club.

⁵⁸ The Lawyers Club Minutes suggest that the invitation to the Reading Law Club members to join, included an honorary membership for Leon Arthurs.

⁵⁹ The documentary material that still exists on the Club is found in Carr's remaining files dating from August 1957 to November 1961. Carr, "correspondence" *supra* note 28.

from 1955 on for a one-year term. An almost complete list of Presidents has been pieced together from remaining documents as follows:

1947-49	Percy Shulman, Q.C.
1949-51	Nathan Strauss, Q.C.
1951-53	M.W. Kellerman, Q.C.
1953-56	H. Max Swartz, Q.C.
1955-56	Maxwell A. Levy, Q.C.
1957-58	J.J. Minsky, Q.C.
1959-60	W.S. Rosen, Q.C.
1960-61	Mannie Brown
1961-62	no information ⁶⁰
1962-63	Donald Carr, Q.C.?
1963-64	Donald Carr, Q.C.
1964-65	Irvine Usprech
1966	Edwin A. Goodman, Q.C.

Membership fees varied, but were always nominal. Correspondence in Carr's files suggest that in the late 1950s these ranged from \$6 to \$10 a year.⁶¹

B. The Dinner Meeting

The dinner meeting was the focal point of the Reading Law Club. The Club's members were engaged in establishing, advancing and solidifying their careers. Dinner meetings were designed to educate⁶² and to provide an opportunity for collegial discussions and socializing.

The meetings were held once a month, usually on Thursdays, beginning in September or October until May and typically in Convocation Hall at Osgoode

⁶⁰ A letter from Mannie Brown to Donald Carr in 1961 welcomes Carr to the position of Vice President, suggesting that in the normal course he would have become President in 1961-62, but Carr does not recall serving twice. He does feel that he may have served more than one year, however, with Irvine Usprech following him. Since the discussions with the Lawyers Club happened while he was President and took place in 1963-64, it is possible he was also President in 1962-63. *ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.* In 1960 the Executive decided that members in arrears for four years would be suspended until their dues were paid. Delinquent members seem to have been a constant problem, but the tongue-in-cheek approach to collection, illustrated in the Club's correspondence, suggests that no one worried a great deal about the fees component. A letter from Leon Arthurs, as Secretary, to Donald Carr, as Financial Secretary on January 6, 1960 reflected that approach to the \$32 amounts owing:

Dear Mr. Carr,

The Executive Secretary of this August Institution now derives great and fiendish pleasure from turning over to the Financial Secretary the attached list of delinquent accounts which are to be dealt with by the said Financial Secretary in the well-known manner. The following are the accounts, namely... each of these gentlemen being in arrears of dues for three years preceding the current year,

Very truly yours,

Leon Arthurs

P.S. I also attach the account of [], Esq. Q.C. which also seems to merit your most earnest and cordial attention. Carr, "correspondence" *supra* note 28.

⁶² In its focus on education, the Reading Law Club appears to have differed from the Lawyers Club. Part of its negotiations with the Lawyers Club involved the latter agreeing to increase educational programming.

Hall. Monthly notices were sent out on a postcard-like mailing that contained the date, location and time of the meeting, the topic for discussion and the speakers. Members were required to RSVP to Leon Arthurs by noon of the day before the meeting. The card also set out the names of the current Executive and the Past Presidents. The Club's Honourary President was His Honour Judge Samuel Factor, the second Jew to be appointed a judge in Canada.

Members of the Reading Law Club included students and those called to the bar and Leon Arthurs maintained the membership lists. Although the Club was active for approximately 19 years, the years for which the most documented information is available are 1957-1960 and 1964. In 1957 there were approximately 300 members, representing about ninety per cent of Jewish lawyers in Toronto.⁶³ The 1958 membership list, which is the only surviving membership record for the Club, shows four women members; Ida Goldstick, Helen Grossman, Q.C., Clara M. Muscat and Lily Sherizen, Q.C. All four were also actively involved with the Women's Law Association of Ontario (WLAO). Lily Sherizen, for example, was the Chair of the Public Welfare Committee in 1947 and the WLAO President in 1951. It is possible that these women felt that issues more relevant to their experience were explored in that association than in the male environment of the Reading Law Club. Members interviewed remember that the Club also had a few non-Jewish members over the years who practised in association with or had some other connection to Jewish lawyers.⁶⁴

The Reading Law Club was the introduction to the profession for many newly-called Jewish lawyers. It provided an opportunity to meet colleagues and make connections that could result in mentoring opportunities and referrals. It also represented a low cost continuing education environment before there were the widespread professional development opportunities that exist today. While some lawyers attended meetings regularly, became part of the Executive or participated on panels as speakers, other members recalled attending sporadically or ceasing their connection in later years when they perceived that the necessity for a club for Jewish lawyers was beginning to disappear.

Although the vast majority of Club members were Jewish, the speaker lists reflect subject expertise, not ethnic, religious or cultural background. The overwhelming majority of speakers were male. With only a small number of women being called to the bar annually until the 1970s this is not surprising. Some invited speakers inquired why there was a "Jewish lawyers' club." When the reason was explained, the response was usually a mild statement of dismay and occasionally a stronger response, but that was the extent of the discussion. The Reading Law Club chose not to focus on the issues that led to its establishment. It never encountered difficulty in recruiting speakers and to the best of the members' recollections they did not have to avoid any content experts because of their anti-

⁶³ The participants at the September meeting could not remember there having been Jewish lawyers' clubs outside Toronto.

⁶⁴ At the September meeting, participants noted that the Reading Law Club intentionally did not limit membership to Jewish lawyers or include any objects that defined a mandate related to a Jewish identity. The Club was open to anyone who wished to become a member. Participants noted that Jewish clubs in Ontario did not restrict membership, a fact on which the community prided itself. Meeting participants named a number of Jewish clubs that were established to address barriers to Jews joining non-Jewish clubs, including the Island Yacht Club, established in 1951 because Jews were excluded from the Royal Canadian Yacht Club. Despite this policy of inclusion, however, virtually all members were Jewish.

Semitic attitudes. It was common for panels to be made up of both Jewish and non-Jewish speakers.

The surviving programming files reveal the similarity between the continuing legal education topics of 50 years ago and today.⁶⁵ The topics focused almost entirely on the “nuts and bolts” of practice, with little attention to political, societal or philosophical subjects. Harry Arthurs has noted that some of the younger members tried to encourage a broadening of the discourse, but this did not catch on.⁶⁶

In the surviving files there are two invitations that commemorate occasions when the Club sought to go beyond the usual educational topics and address members' interest in Israeli politics and law. There is a letter dated August 13, 1957 inviting His Excellency Abba Eban, then Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, to speak to the Club, but Eban was unable to attend. On February 25, 1960 a luncheon was organized to take place at the King Edward Hotel, hosting the Attorney General of Israel. Guests included Chief Justice McRuer, Kelso Roberts, Jacob Finkelman, Sidney Harris, Fred Catzman, Bora Laskin, and J.J. Robinette. Albert Strauss, one of the September meeting participants, also recalled a lecture he heard at the Reading Law Club while he was student, on the origins of the laws of Israel.

There are differing accounts of the typical attendance at dinner meetings. They range from 25-30 members to 100-200.⁶⁷ Meals were prepared in the Law Society kitchen and served by Law Society staff. Although the Club did not hold meetings on Shabbat and meals were usually fish or pasta, members at the September meeting recalled that few Jewish lawyers at the time were openly religious and the Club reflected that secular approach. Meetings did not begin with a prayer; members did not wear yarmulkes.⁶⁸

The Club also held annual, well-attended dinner dances, which Leon Arthurs and to some degree the Lady Reading Club organized, at a variety of locations including the Northwood Country Club, the Primrose Club and the Prince George Hotel. Dinner dances were advertised as “open to all members of the legal

⁶⁵ Sample topic titles from 1957 include, “Are Judgements Useless?”, “Everyday Mechanics’ Liens”, “Shareholders’ Agreements in Private Corporations”, “Bankruptcies,” “Pre-incorporation Agreements in Private Companies and the Relationship of Shareholders to Each Other in Such Companies,” “The Proposed Estate Tax,” “Tax Appeals,” “Open Forum on Fees,” “The Modern Estate,” “Legal Ethics,” “A Master of Titles Looks at Title Insurance,” “Recent Developments in the Law of Status and Property Rights as between Husband and Wife.” As well, there were panels on the Ontario Municipal Board, expropriation, bankruptcy and mortgagees’ remedies. Law Society of Upper Canada Archives, Donald Carr fonds, “Dinner meeting notices”, 2009011-003.

⁶⁶ There is correspondence from Donald Carr to Harry Arthurs on August 25, 1961 confirming that Arthurs and Sidney Harris would be presenting a panel on religious education in public schools. Carr, “correspondence” *supra* note 28.

⁶⁷ In a letter from Carr to W. Marsh Magwood, Esq. the Master of Titles (3 October 1957), who addressed the Club on Title Insurance, Carr thanks him for his lecture and apologizes for the poor attendance. “Unfortunately it is just this type of apathy which may cause a similar situation to exist in this jurisdiction as now exists in the State of New York and other States.” Carr, “correspondence” *supra* note 28. The reference would appear to be to those US states that had title insurance schemes. Carr wrote a similar letter of apology for the small turn out to Benjamin Luxenberg on April 8, 1958.

⁶⁸ There is one notation in September 1960 that the October 6th program was being moved to another date because it was the first day of Succoth.

profession,” although members of the Lady Reading Club interviewed did not recall non-Jewish lawyers attending.

Members of the Club tended to be those Jewish lawyers who were in private practice and membership varied over the 19 years of the Club’s existence. The 1958 membership list reveals that many of the Jewish lawyers who were among the “firsts” to accomplish public recognition were members of the Club. These included Norman Borins, David Croll, Nathan Phillips, Isadore Levinter, Sydney L Robins and Nathan Strauss. Not all Jewish lawyers joined the Club, however, and this may have reflected their own desire to avoid too close an association with a Jewish-identified organization, their disinterest in issues relating to private practice or a sense, as years passed, that the Club did not have a great deal to offer them. As Ontario society changed and the Jewish members of the bar increased and changed with it, the incentive to join may have diminished.

C. A Changing Profession

Barriers intended to keep Jewish lawyers out became more porous in the 1960s. Harry Arthurs recalled that for his generation of lawyers, called to the bar in the early 1960s, although prejudice and anti-Semitism still existed, change was evident. Doors were slowly opening that had previously been not just closed, but locked. Jewish lawyers still tended to work in Jewish firms, because establishment firms continued to exclude them, but non-Jewish clients were revealing less reluctance.⁶⁹ While change would be steady from the 1960s onward, the legal elite took its time recognizing and accepting it. Even in the face of this, for younger Jewish lawyers the increase in their numbers made it clear they were in the profession to stay. Perhaps as well, when the baby boom generation began making its presence known it began to challenge the status quo of the legal profession along with many other areas of society.

The Lawyers Club was also changing, evidenced by a different kind of leadership. In 1963,⁷⁰ Donald Carr, then President of the Reading Law Club, received a telephone call from Samuel Grange⁷¹ who indicated embarrassment over the continuing de facto restrictions that were part of the Lawyers Club’s profile and his belief that it was time to do something about them. Donald Carr’s reaction to the overture was positive, but he made it clear that it was up to the Lawyers Club to take the first step. His reaction is not surprising, reflecting the view that it

⁶⁹ Eddie Goodman’s firm played a pivotal role in this increase of non-Jewish clients retaining Jewish lawyers. Christopher Moore’s tribute to Goodman upon his death noted:

... non-Jewish businesses were notably prominent among Goodmans’ clients. Clients of law firms, it seems, were a lot faster than non-Jewish lawyers to stop segregating their legal work. As the walls of segregation broke down, the existence of a large, successful, and prosperous firm like Goodmans was among the factors that helped convince the profession to put aside its hidebound ways.

Christopher Moore, “How Eddie Goodman changed legal practice” *Law Times* (25 September 2006), online: *Law Times* <<http://www.lawtimesnews.com/20060925769/Headline-News/How-Eddie-Goodman-changed-legal-practice>>.

⁷⁰ The Lawyers Club minutes suggests the discussion began in 1962. Law Society of Upper Canada Archives, The Lawyers Club fonds, “Trustees’ Minutes 1962-1966” (9 January 1964) (994099-10-7) [Lawyer Club Minutes].

⁷¹ Samuel Grange was appointed to the Supreme Court of Ontario in 1974 and to the Ontario Court of Appeal in 1982. In 1984 he headed the inquiry into the death of 36 babies at Toronto’s Hospital for Sick Children.

should not be up to the Reading Law Club to ask for entry to the body that had discriminated against its members. The invitation must be made to the Reading Law Club, leaving open the possibility that the overture could be rejected.

The Executive of the Reading Law Club met with Grange and with Stanley C Biggs and Donald Campbell, the Lawyers Club President and Immediate Past President, respectively, to discuss possible ways to approach the issue. The main options were to amalgamate the two Clubs under the name of the Lawyers Club or extend an open invitation to the male members of the Reading Law Club to join the Lawyers Club. The Reading Law Club requested that initially a few positions on the Executive be set aside for former members of the Reading Law Club.⁷² There was also a request that the Lawyers Club increase its educational programming. While discussions were ongoing there was agreement to have some joint meetings.⁷³

The Reading Law Club held a meeting at The Noshery, a restaurant on Eglinton Avenue West in Toronto, to discuss the Club's future.⁷⁴ There was a large turnout, which participants at the September meeting recalled included the late David Lewis, later to become the leader of the Federal New Democratic Party. No one could remember Lewis having been to any previous meeting of the Reading Law Club.

Forty-five years after that meeting, participants at the September meeting remembered the emotions the issue raised and the variety of views expressed on how to respond to the invitation. Formal amalgamation was distasteful to many, as it might leave the impression that the Lawyers Club had swallowed the Reading Law Club. Some members opposed any involvement with the Lawyers Club. One of the September meeting participants recalled that some opposed on the grounds that if they accepted the invitation it would "be the end of the Club." David Lewis urged acceptance of the invitation, arguing that if a barrier was coming down the Club's members should avail themselves of the opportunity that it engendered.

The invitation from the Lawyers Club was for the male members of the Reading Law Club only, since the Lawyers Club continued to exclude women members. Although none of the participants at the September meeting could recall if the Reading Law Club actually had any women members in 1964, a draft letter from the Lawyers Club to the Reading Law Club at the time the two Clubs were discussing uniting, reveals that they did. The Lawyers Club letter notes,

As you can appreciate, we have a slight problem in your having lady members but once their views and yours are known we hope we may be able to work out a solution satisfactory to all.⁷⁵

⁷² Lawyer Club Minutes, *supra* note 70, December 19, 1963. In 1964-65 the two Reading Law Club members on the Lawyers Club Executive were Irvine Usprech (Membership Secretary) and Donald Carr (Program Committee with Pierre Genest).

⁷³ There is, for example, a November 7, 1963 invitation from the Reading Law Club to all members of the Lawyers Club to attend a cocktail reception in honour of recent appointees to the bench. The Lawyers Club extended a similar invitation to "Judges Night" in January 1964. Law Society of Upper Canada Archives. Provincial Director of the Ontario Legal Aid Plan fonds. 2001079-249 "Invitations", Lawyers Club Minutes. 10 October 1963.

⁷⁴ The exact date is not known, but it would probably have been late in 1963 or early in 1964.

⁷⁵ Lawyer Club Minutes, *supra* note 70 (January 9, 1964).

Since the Lawyers Club did not change its restrictions against women members at that time, it is not clear what the “satisfactory” solution was or what the reaction of the women members was. The fact that Reading Law Club members would be joining an organization that continued to be discriminatory did not affect the vote. Women lawyers’ right to equal treatment within the profession lagged decades behind changes respecting other forms of discrimination, even among those groups who were themselves discriminated against.

In the end the members voted to accept the Lawyers Club invitation. Participants at the September meeting recalled that the amalgamation route was not accepted.⁷⁶ There are no Reading Law Club records about these events, but the Lawyers Club’s Minutes capture the progression of the discussions. The draft letter proposed to be sent to the Reading Club began,

While it was not always so, for many years membership in this Club has been open to any male barrister or solicitor qualified to practise in Ontario. It is understandable that many Jewish barristers and solicitors did not wish to join The Lawyers Club in view of its earlier history.

However, the trustees and members of The Lawyers Club earnestly hope that you and your members will agree that the time has now come when there should no longer be two clubs operating along the same lines and perpetuating this breach within our professional life in Toronto.⁷⁷

The Lawyers Club Minutes of the March 6, 1964 meeting recorded that the members of the Reading Law Club had unanimously accepted the invitation to join the Lawyers Club. As an interesting addition the Minutes went on to state that “Mr. Grange was directed to send a letter on behalf of the Lawyers Club to the Department of Justice lending the support of the Club to the representations being made against the spread of what it known as “hate literature.”⁷⁸ While the Reading Law Club may not have been political in its general approach, it is difficult to see the Lawyers Club’s decision to write the letter to the Department of Justice as anything other than the result of the Reading Law Club’s influence, a demonstrable way for the Lawyers Club to signify its rejection of anti-Semitism.

One hundred and twenty members of the Reading Law Club applied for membership in the Lawyers Club.⁷⁹ Whether more Jewish lawyers went on to subsequently join the Lawyers Club is unknown, as is whether those who did join remained after that first year. There was a sense among those at the September meeting that few became active members.

⁷⁶ This is reflected in the January 21, 1964 Minutes of the Lawyers Club noted: “The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th December, 1963 were briefed by the Chairman and on motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the same were approved, subject to the following changes: In the paragraph under the heading “The Reading Club” the word “amalgamate” to be deleted and the word “join” substituted; the word “amalgamation” to be deleted and the word “joining” substituted; and the word “amalgamated” to be deleted. Lawyer Club Minutes, *supra* note 70 (January 21, 1964).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Lawyer Club Minutes, *supra* note 70 (March 6, 1964).

⁷⁹ Lawyer Club Minutes, *supra* note 70 (April 27, 1964).

Stanley Biggs writes in his autobiography of his recollection of the first meeting that followed the vote of the two clubs. Law Society Treasurer, John Arnup, was also present and “expressed the view of the benchers that it was a very good idea, there being no basis for continuing any aspect of discrimination in the two professional bodies with similar laudable objects.” Biggs also refers to a letter received from Past President of the Lawyers Club, the Honourable Justice Wilfred Judson of the Supreme Court of Canada. Remarking on what he called the amalgamation, he felt “sure that it is a good thing and will meet with general approval.”⁸⁰

The media was interested in the story, as it had been in 1952, and reported on it before the two Clubs could issue the press release they had planned. On March 26, 1964, the *Toronto Telegram's* editorial remarked,

...it may be said that no other profession is more sensitive to the standards and mores of our society.

The news, therefore, that the Lawyers Club of Toronto and the Reading Law Club (which is predominantly Jewish) are soon to merge may be taken as typical of what is happening across the country. Racial and religious barriers are coming down.

Prejudice has had a hard time dying in this country as elsewhere, and we still can't utter the Amen to its demise. It was not until 1951 that the local Lawyers Club began to open its doors to Jews and Negroes. As a result, Jewish lawyers developed a parallel organization. And if there were enough Negro lawyers they would undoubtedly have reacted similarly.

...Gradually it began to dawn on [the clubs] that religious and racial labels have nothing at all to do with their common interests as members of the legal profession.⁸¹

The *Pembroke Observer* editorial was blunter about the implications of the racial prejudice that the Lawyers Club had displayed. Commenting on the *Toronto Telegram* editorial it concluded,

A good sign it is...but also a depressing one, that racial and religious tolerance should be so late in coming to what is normally regarded as one of the most enlightened groups in Canadian society. If it is only now that those specially trained in equality before the law are coming to recognize equality before God, then it is no wonder so much of the rest of society is still besodden with the evil of prejudice.⁸²

⁸⁰ Stan Biggs, *As Luck Would Have it In War and Peace: Memoirs 1913 to 2007* at 135. [self-published] Copy available in Law Society of Upper Canada Archives. The uneven nature of the Lawyers Club's progression away from anti-Semitic practices was illustrated by the fact that its 1964 dinner for its Past Presidents was held at the Granite Club, which at that time still refused membership to Jews.

⁸¹ “Crossing the Bar,” *Toronto Telegram* (26 March 1964).

⁸² *Pembroke Observer* [Ontario] (7 April 1964).

To signify the coming together of the two Clubs the Reading Law Club joined the Lawyers Club on a project the latter had been working on for some time. For a number of years the Lawyers Club's Horological Committee had been considering a gift of a clock to the Law Society in appreciation for the use of Law Society facilities.⁸³ The Executives of both clubs commissioned a Toronto firm to design a clock of a nature similar to the Janus clock attached to the Royal Courts of Justice in London where it overhangs the Strand, facing toward St. Paul's Cathedral in one direction and toward Trafalgar Square in the other. The Convocation Hall Clock was to have four faces, be made of oak and be in keeping with the appearance of Convocation Hall.⁸⁴ The total cost of the clock, including installation was estimated at between \$900 and \$1,000 and the two clubs shared the cost equally.⁸⁵

At the first meeting of the 1964-65 season on September 9, 1964 Biggs and Carr made the clock presentation on behalf of the Lawyers Club and the Reading Law Club. Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls in the English Court of Appeal, was a guest speaker at the meeting.

In his remarks Biggs spoke to the dual purpose of the clock. The first was "to tell all who enter this beautiful Convocation Hall the hour of their coming or going. Time is no discriminator of personages. It is hoped the clock will be very useful to Her Majesty's Judges, as well as to all lawyers, who may gather here." As for the second purpose he noted it was also very important:

This being the first meeting of The Lawyers Club with its membership now including the members of the Reading Law Club, it is very fitting that the two Clubs should close the door on the past by acknowledging their debt to the governing body of the Law Society of Upper Canada for their use of the facilities and amenities of Osgoode Hall. Both Clubs have enjoyed many years of successful Club activity here.

Mr. Donald Carr for the Reading Law Club joins me in asking the Treasurer of the Law Society, Mr. John D. Arnup, Q.C. to accept the clock presented to the Law Society jointly by the two Clubs in grateful appreciation.⁸⁶

⁸³ "Clock Presentation to the Law Society of Upper Canada For Convocation Hall At the Lawyers Club Meeting at Osgoode Hall, September 9th, 1964" Law Society of Upper Canada Archives, Office of the Secretary fonds, "Lawyers Club re clock", 1-11-40 [Clock].

⁸⁴ The clock weighs 100 lbs, hangs on a chain of welded steel links guaranteed to take a load of at least 300 lbs. The hands are moved electronically by four separate motors all operating from the pulse of a single electric wire. The clock can be lowered to the floor for cleaning, repair and re-adjustment. Clock, *supra* note 83.

⁸⁵ There is some correspondence that suggests confusion over the sharing of the cost. Leon Arthurs wrote to Stan Biggs on June 2, 1964 expressing concern that the Lawyers Club Resolution respecting the presentation of the clock stated that the Reading Law Club would only pay \$375 toward the cost. Arthurs noted that the Reading Law Club had offered to share the cost equally. In his reply on June 4, 1964 Biggs apologized for the misunderstanding and confirmed that the two clubs would share the cost equally. See Clock, *supra* note 83.

⁸⁶ Biggs, *supra* note 80.

D. The End

Following what so many outside the Reading Law Club referred to as the amalgamation or merger with the Lawyers Club, the former nonetheless continued to exist and meet for some time. Most of the participants at the September meeting had no recollection of this, but letters found in the Law Society's Archives confirm that the Club continued to operate at least until 1966. The nature of the letters also suggests that there continued to be some philosophical differences between the Reading Law Club and the Lawyers Club.

In February 1965, the Law Society's Secretary wrote to Leon Arthurs, in his capacity as secretary of the "Reading Club," to inform him that the Law Society would begin charging administrative fees to all groups using the facilities for club dinners, dances and receptions, but not for committee and other meetings that did not include dinner or social functions. With respect to the service charge of \$25 Leon Arthurs wrote to the Law Society on September 30, 1965 noting his understanding that the service charge had been waived in certain instances. Could it be waived for the Reading Law Club as well? On October 1, 1965 the Secretary replied,

The charge of \$25 has been remitted in only one case, that of The Lawyers Club of Toronto, and they applied for consideration on the basis that over the years the Club has made many gifts to the Law Society. If you will set out the grounds for remission of this service charge for your Club, I shall place the correspondence before the Finance Committee...

On January 6, 1966 Edwin A. Goodman, then President of the Reading Law Club replied,

Our Club is not prepared to base any request for remission of the service charge on the basis of any contribution it has made to the Law Society or to the legal profession. Anything that has been done has been done because we felt it should be but not with a view to receiving any quid pro quo. We would, therefore, withdraw our request for this remission.⁸⁷

The letter illustrates that the Reading Law Club continued to take pride in its own identity and philosophy. And yet Goodman would be its last President. One of the participants at the September meeting recalled a meeting at Goodman's home, which he originally thought had to do with joining the Lawyers Club in 1964, but upon reflection believed it was a meeting at which it was agreed to disband the Reading Law Club.

And so, after almost twenty years, the Reading Law Club ceased to be. The end of the Club does not appear to have attracted any notice. Many believed it had ended in 1964. The behaviour and patterns of the legal profession in Toronto were changing. Other law associations of varying types that embraced Jewish lawyers were growing up in the city. For example, several of the founding members of the Advocates' Society in 1963 were prominent Jewish lawyers, including Isadore

⁸⁷ Secretary, *supra* note 6.

Levinter and Norman Borins. Perhaps younger Jewish lawyers did not see the Reading Law Club as necessary to their career path and so its demise would not have caused consternation. This may have been one of the additional reasons that accepting the Lawyers Club's invitation in 1964 had seemed palatable.

Participants at the September meeting reaffirmed their view that the Reading Law Club's slow withering away by the mid-1960s reflected the effect of changing attitudes to Jewish lawyers within the profession, brought about by Jewish lawyers' resolve to forge ahead in the face of anti-Semitism, by their achievements over the years and by changes within Ontario society at large. One participant noted the Reading Law Club's existence typified the sociological maxim that "out-group hostility creates in-group solidarity." In his view when that hostility ceased, or at least diminished significantly in Ontario, the Reading Law Club ceased to be active. The "separate but equal" approach that the Reading Law Club's existence symbolized gave way in the later 1960s to a preference for becoming part of legal organizations that welcomed all lawyers.

In contrast, in 1988 on the occasion of its 40th anniversary, the Montreal Reading Law Society affirmed its original mandate to "lobby for fair representation of Jews in the Bar and on the Bench." It recently celebrated its 63rd anniversary. The Anglophone-francophone dynamic in Québec has added complexity to the issues the Jewish community has faced there. The particular nature of anti-Semitism in Québec, reflected against the backdrop of World War II, may have strengthened the resolve of Jewish lawyers to maintain an organization of legal professionals. Post-Duplessis Québec nationalism and the separatist movement that began in the 1960s are also political realities that Jewish communities elsewhere in Canada have not had to address. Moreover, in the Anglophone francophone reality of Québec, Jews have, in one sense, been traditionally lumped in with the Anglophone community. To the extent Anglophones were considered for judicial and other appointments, Jewish candidates were often forgotten, making a body such as the Reading Law Society that much more important to raise awareness of qualified Jewish candidates.

While the first Jewish lawyers were appointed to the Superior Court in Québec earlier than in Ontario there is insufficient evidence to conclude that it was the Reading Law Society's political mandate that made the difference.⁸⁸ Moreover, the overall rate and level of court appointments of Jewish lawyers to the bench in Ontario have been comparable to those in Québec, suggesting that each community has accomplished its goals within its unique context.

In a January 2010 newsletter, the then President of Montreal's Lord Reading Law Society commented on the disappearance of the Toronto Club, in contrast to the continued strength of the Montreal Club as follows:

The question is why is there such a different outcome in two neighbouring provinces for societies founded and organized by Jewish jurists? My response is that our longevity is attributable to the extraordinary dynamic between the membership and the leadership of L.R.L.S. The membership has provided the

⁸⁸ Samuel Factor was appointed to the County Court in Ontario in 1945; Harry Batshaw to the Superior Court of Québec in 1950; Samuel Freedman to the Manitoba Queen's Bench in 1952; Joseph Sweet to the County Court in Hamilton in 1952 and Abraham Lief to the Superior Court in Ontario in 1961.

oxygen of financial support and attendance at programs, whereas the leadership has been able over time, to present programs and carry out other initiatives in support of its Mission Statement which the membership by and large, considers relevant and worthy of its support.

Still, the example of the disappearance of the Ontario entity should be instructive to all of us. We will always have to combat the forces of complacency, apathy and taking our continued existence for granted.⁸⁹

His interpretation is, of course, one possible reason for the Reading Law Club's end. There is some evidence that attendance and participation at the Reading Law Club's meetings was low at times. But low attendance at Club meetings does not necessarily equate with apathy for the advancement of Jewish lawyers. There are other explanations that speak to the different histories of the two Clubs.

The Reading Law Club began as a postwar body intended to provide support and collegiality to Jewish lawyers at a time when the Lawyers Club excluded them and there were few, if any, other options available to them but to start their own Club. It ended in 1964 when the Lawyers Club recognized the need for a meaningful rapprochement, rather than the pro forma actions of 1952. It was not the opening of the Lawyers Club door per se that was significant; it was what it symbolized. The Reading Law Club's existence, its viability over 19 years, the dignity of its activities in the face of profession-wide anti-Semitism, may eventually have become an influential indictment of the Lawyers Club's behaviour. The Reading Law Club's decision to wind up could be seen as evidence of its members' belief that their persistence and determination to go forward in the profession, despite obstacles, had paid off.

There were still battles to be fought against anti-Semitism in the years following 1964 and Jewish lawyers continued to find ways to do so. In the Ontario context it may have been felt that whereas a separate professional organization of Jewish lawyers had once been necessary and important to maintain, the preferred approach was to make a mark in all legal organizations. This decision may have been easier to make because the Club had never actively seen itself as a political organization with stated goals to advance Jewish lawyers in the profession. It is, of course, possible that had it had political goals it would have continued to exist, but in any event there is little evidence to attribute its demise to the type of apathy the Lord Reading Law Society comment suggests.

Jewish lawyers in Toronto and throughout Ontario continue to have a strong connection to one another and to their community even without the Reading Law Club. They are as well represented on the judiciary at all levels and at the heads of organizations, legal associations and in politics and academia as are Jewish lawyers in Québec. Perhaps in the end, longevity is not the only measure of success. Perhaps, the Reading Law Club's long term legacy is the fact that it existed at all and that its members, in coming together over a crucial 19 year period immediately following the World War II, made it clear to the Toronto legal

⁸⁹ Irwin Rudick, "President's Message Lord Reading Law Society Newsletter," (January 2010) online: The Lord Reading Law Society <<http://www.lordreading.org/>>.

elite that Jewish lawyers were in the profession to stay and would succeed despite all attempts to keep them out.

IV. THE LADY READING CLUB

While the Reading Law Club was meeting regularly, a parallel club of members' wives was also operating. As with the Reading Law Club the story of the Lady Reading Law Club⁹⁰ is one of context. In contrast to North America of the 1940s when women flooded the workforce to replace men who were in the armed forces, the 1950s is seen as the decade of the "stay-at-home" wife. Educational levels of lawyers' spouses in the 1950s varied. Some of this generation of women had university degrees, but were never expected to use them for employment. Husbands studied, began to establish themselves professionally, rose in their chosen careers and made a place for themselves in the world. In some cases wives worked to support husbands' education, but the majority would not have undertaken paid work. In the early years of marriage they managed households on very little money. They raised children, established and organized their husbands' homes and the family's social schedules, supported their husbands' careers and often volunteered their time in a number of organizations and in what were known as "women's auxiliaries." If the outside world often treated this as a monochromatic existence, the reality was layered and complex.

What made the Lady Reading Club unusual was that law associations did not typically have a wives' branch. And yet in 1955 after the Reading Law Club had been in existence for eight years, the wives of those members and in some cases wives of lawyers who were not members of the Reading Law Club undertook to form a club themselves. The Lady Reading Club lasted at least a decade longer than the Reading Law Club. Some of its documents have survived and they tell a story not only of the Club, but of the evolving status of women.⁹¹

The Lady Reading Club's constitution sets out the Club's objects to "furnish a forum for discussion and debate, particularly on subjects from the legal point of view" and "expend all monies received by the Club from membership dues and

⁹⁰ There were, in fact, two Lady Readings. In 1887 Isaacs married Alice Edith Cohen who despite being a chronic invalid was active in her husband's career and in her own right. She died of cancer in 1930. Subsequently Lord Reading married Stella Charnaud, the first Lady Reading's secretary. The second Lady Reading became increasingly active in voluntary social work and with the Personal Service League, created to serve the needy and unemployed. She became chairman of the League and later a Magistrate. See online: Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_Isaacs,_Marchioness_of_Reading> & <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stella_Isaacs,_Marchioness_of_Reading>.

⁹¹ These include the Constitution, membership lists and correspondence respecting the various prizes, and newsletters. Lila Orbach, the President of the Lady Reading Club in 1968-69, has provided copies of newsletters as well. The Law Society's archives also contain correspondence and Committee meeting references to the Reading Law Club and Lady Reading Club prizes. For Siegal's papers see Ontario Jewish Archives, Accession Record 1992-4-1. The date of the establishment of the Lady Reading Club is assumed from a reference in Sonia Siegal's papers to a dinner dance in 1965 to celebrate "our 10th anniversary." The Lady Reading Club newsletters illustrate the changing ways in which women referred to themselves. In the earlier editions they are identified by their husbands' first and last names, with "Mrs." preceding. Later the women's first names are provided in brackets after their husbands' name. Finally the women's first names replace those of their husbands.

scholarship cards,⁹² for the endowment of scholarships, bursaries and prizes, to such educational or other institutions as would, in the opinion of the Club, merit assistance and support.” Membership in the Lady Reading Club was open to wives and widows of any member or any person eligible for membership in the Reading Law Club and to women members of the Ontario Bar, although no one from this latter group joined.⁹³

The Lady Reading Club's main activities were its monthly meetings, which often included an outside speaker, and its contributions to scholarships and prizes. In the October 1968 newsletter President Lila Orbach set out information on the Club for prospective members:

The Lady Reading Club is a group of lawyers' wives, with a diversity of ages and interests, who formed a primarily social and informal group... We conduct our business at the beginning of each meeting and have a stimulating guest speaker address us on current or law topics. Then we adjourn for a social hour.⁹⁴

The Club organized an impressive array of speakers over the years. Unlike the more nuts and bolts nature of the Reading Law Club topics, these presentations were more eclectic and covered a wide range of legal, political and social topics, including abortion, legal aid, negligence law, homosexuality, apartheid, prevention of juvenile delinquency, Neo-Nazism, LSD, immigration and the changing status of women.⁹⁵ Meetings were held in the homes of the Club's members. The hostess supplied the refreshments, which always conformed to kosher dietary laws. Speakers donated their time. The program coordinator was responsible for sending letters of thanks.

The Club newsletter included recipes, congratulatory or condolence greetings, the outline of the topic being discussed at the upcoming monthly meeting, calls for donations to the Elizabeth Fry Society, which assisted women in Canadian prisons, and notices of gatherings and dinner dances.⁹⁶ In 1966 a new section was added to the newsletter called “From the Members,” the goal of which was to provide a forum for individuals to express their views on important issues. It does not appear to have caught on, but two such columns were included among Sonia Siegal's papers, one on the dangers of apathy, the other on rehabilitation of those who have been in prison.⁹⁷

⁹² Scholarship cards were so named because the proceeds of their sale went to support the awards program. In essence these were note cards for special occasions such as births, holidays and other events.

⁹³ See the Club's constitution, Siegal *supra* note 91, and interviews with Helen Aaron, Sybil Geller and Lila Orbach, *supra* note 4.

⁹⁴ Law Society of Upper Canada Archives, Archives Department collection, “Lady Reading Club newsletters”, SP-PER138 [newsletters].

⁹⁵ Siegal, *supra* note 91.

⁹⁶ In February 1968 notice of a black tie dinner dance at \$17.50 per couple noted, “All members of the legal profession are invited.” Siegal, *supra* note 91.

⁹⁷ In the November newsletter 1966 Rochelle Krivy wrote:

The disease of our time is apathy. Discounting the band wagon hopping of the youth of today and the rarely met fanaticism of a rabbi or philosopher who risks ridicule when he enforces his opinion vocally, we are all of us guilty of political

The Lady Reading Club was not primarily a fundraising organization, but the revenue from membership dues and from the sale of scholarship cards went entirely to fund a number of scholarships and prizes in Ontario and in Israel. In addition, on at least one occasion, following the 1967 Six Day War in Israel, the Lady Reading Club held a two-day fundraising drive, donating \$1,434 to the Israel Emergency Fund.⁹⁸

The Club made regular contributions to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem through annual donations to its law library and for student prizes. In 1958 it made a special gift on the occasion of Israel's 10th anniversary. In 1959, 1960 and 1961 it provided three, four and two scholarships/bursaries, respectively. The books purchased with the Lady Reading Club funds were located together in a section of that University's law library with a plaque noting "Gift of the Lady Reading Law Club."⁹⁹ In one of its thank-you letters the Hebrew University of Jerusalem recorded "its grateful appreciation of your active interest in its cultural and scientific activities on behalf of Israel, the Jewish People and humanity."¹⁰⁰

In April 1958, the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University wrote to the Lady Reading Club regarding the 1958 installment to the "Lady Reading Club, Toronto Canada Section of the Law Library." The letter is a window into the hopes and optimism of a new nation, then only ten years old, and its gratitude for the Lady Reading Club's contribution.

As you know, the School of Law and Government and its Law Library at the University is confronted with a challenge far greater in scope and in concept than the vital training of lawyers and judges alone. In terms of everyday Israel life the work of the School has broader significance, for from this school must come the civil servants and administrators whose legal background will aid in forming and shaping mature statehood. From this School, so that justice and the ethical concept of justice will be maintained, must come teachers and specialists. From this School must come continuing education and research into Israel's legal systems...English, Moslem, and Jewish...so that in their fusion unanimity of justice will be preserved for all of

and social indifference. Why worry about creeping Naziism, insidious Communism; why concern ourselves about our representatives in government? When was the last time you involved yourself in something you felt deeply about? When was the last time you signed a petition, or wrote a letter to the editor of your paper? We are the elite, the privileged, educated minority. Shall we let ourselves be led, or shall we be heard? It has been said, 'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.'

Krivy's use of this particular quote is ironic, given that historically it was used by opponents of women's suffrage to justify why women did not need the vote. In another newsletter Anne M Silverman urged women to vote on December 5, 1966. In 1967 Doreen Silver wrote an editorial in which she posited the idea that it was "time that government give consideration to a recommendation of the Ontario Bar Association – Criminal Justice subsection that a man need not suffer for past mistakes once his debt to society is paid." Siegal, *supra* note 91.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* Lady Reading Newsletter (September 1967).

⁹⁹ There is a photograph of the plaque and the shelf among the Siegal papers. The plaque reads, "This section was established by the Lady Reading Club, Toronto, Canada." Siegal, *supra* note 91.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

Israel's citizens, Arab and Jew alike. And from this School must come a corps of diplomats and ambassadors trained and well-versed in international law, so that Israel may hold her head proudly among the nations, strengthen her prestige, her influence, her trade and her ties with all peoples, everywhere.

By this project, your Club is playing a positive role in the shaping and moulding of a greater democratic destiny for the people of Israel, for you are not contributing only toward the cost of law books, but rather to a Library from which, through study and research, the Law shall be proclaimed with new concept and with new clarity throughout the Land.¹⁰¹

On occasion members of the Club visited the Hebrew University in Israel and reported back on the section of the Law Library where the Club's donations were located. On May 13, 1970 Ralph Halbert, of Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University, wrote to Mrs. Kenneth Karp thanking her for the Club's \$150 cheque and recalling her visit the previous year to the Hebrew University. "We regard the Lady Reading Club as one of the most consistent of our supporters over the years."¹⁰²

These prizes and contributions continued annually well into the 1970s until the Club disbanded. On July 23, 1974 the Canadian Friends of Hebrew University wrote to Sonia Siegal, "Seldom if ever have [we] had an organization which has annually and over such a long period supported the Hebrew University out of its limited resources and we are therefore most appreciative of your help."¹⁰³

The Club also provided annual prizes of between \$50 and \$100 to the University of Toronto Faculty of Law and to the Law Society both when it operated the law school and later the bar admission course, for students achieving the highest marks in a variety of subjects.

In general the prizes for the University of Toronto and the Law Society were donated in the name of the Reading Law Club, not the Lady Reading Club. The exception to this was the prize the Club established in 1971 to be awarded to "the woman graduating from the Bar Admission Course with the highest standing." This was known as the "Lady Reading Club Scholarship."¹⁰⁴ The prizes to the University of Toronto ceased in 1972. There is no information on when the prizes to the Law Society ceased, but this may have coincided with the Club's own end.

The last newsletter in the Siegal papers is dated March 1976 and states, "Before the meeting, President Linda Miller will be discussing the future of the Club, ideas for membership, retention, recruitment and programming."¹⁰⁵ By the 1970s the membership numbers were dropping. The Siegal papers contain three membership lists, two of which were from the 1970s. There were 113 members in 1971-72 and only 90 in 1973-74.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* April 28, 1958. Letter from Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* May 13, 1970. Letter to Mrs. Kenneth Karp from Canadian Friends of Hebrew University.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* July 23, 1974. Letter to Sonia Siegal from Canadian Friends of Hebrew University.

¹⁰⁴ Legal Education Committee report, "Minutes of the Meeting of Convocation (15 October 1971): ccxxxvi.

¹⁰⁵ Siegal, *supra*, note 91.

Changing times no doubt contributed to the Lady Reading Club's demise. With no Reading Law Club in existence to easily determine the source of new members, recruiting would have been difficult. Moreover, the numbers of young women who worked outside the home were increasing, with less likelihood that they would be attracted to the Club's original promise that by joining it wives would be furthering their husband's careers. By 1977 approximately one-third of students entering law school were women, making a club of lawyers' wives that much more anachronistic. Finally, in all likelihood, the members themselves were changing, reaching different stages in their lives, some of them preoccupied with other activities. As their children reached school age, teen years and beyond, a number of wives entered the work force, sometimes in their husbands' law offices. One of the members of the Lady Reading Club has indicated that by the 1970s there were increasing opportunities for women to make significant volunteer contributions to organizations throughout the city.

The 1976 newsletter's call for reflection may well have been the beginning of the end. Like the Reading Law Club, the Lady Reading Club had served an important community function, but as the context in which it was born changed, its members saw fit to devote their not inconsiderable energies elsewhere.¹⁰⁶

What purpose did the Lady Reading Club serve for its members? Lila Orbach, active in the Club for many years and its President in 1969, has reflected on the importance of the Club as an opportunity for young mothers to have an evening out, listen to lectures on eclectic and interesting topics and meet other adult women whose lives were similar to their own. The younger women all had husbands who were forging careers; the older women could remember what that felt like.

Sybil Geller, active in the club from its early years until 1966, was a young mother when she joined. The family was living in the new suburb of Don Mills, which was then fairly isolated. Geller's husband was working long hours in a new and challenging profession. She received a telephone call from Helen Aaron, the wife of one of the more senior members of the Club and a force within the Lady Reading Club, telling her she should join the Club to further her husband's career.¹⁰⁷

Within a short period of becoming a member Sybil Geller became disillusioned, since the main thrust of the meetings seemed to her to be more about exchanging recipes than about discussing events relevant to the larger world. She tendered her resignation in writing, explaining her disappointment in the programming. As she recalls, she then received another call from Helen Aaron accepting her criticisms and concluding that Geller should become the Club's program coordinator, which she did.

¹⁰⁶ For example, Sybil Geller noted that she left the Lady Reading Club in the 1960s as her interests and volunteer efforts expanded. For 20 years she was a Red Cross volunteer, finishing as President of the Ontario branch, and was on the Board of the United Way of Greater Toronto and the Board of Ontario Cancer Treatment & Research Foundation. Since 2002 she has been heavily involved with the Aphasia Institute in Ontario.

¹⁰⁷ Ironically, John Geller was never a member of the Reading Law Club, although his name appears on the 1958 membership list. In the early 1950s he became the first Jewish lawyer in many decades to be invited into partnership by a Toronto establishment Bay street firm. Non-Jewish firm members did not join the Lawyers Club and Geller did not join the Reading Law Club.

Sybil Geller has noted that what the Club did for her and the other young wives was intangible. "No one in my family was a professional and to them doctors and lawyers were in a class to which they could only aspire for their children. Here I was young and penniless, welcomed into the homes of respected lawyers, treated like one of their own." When she wrote her original letter of resignation "the wonderful thing was that they listened to me. Can you imagine what that did for my self-confidence? This inclusive attitude and atmosphere was at the core of the Lady Reading Club."

This evocative description could apply equally to the experiences of members of the Reading Law Club. Leon Arthurs sought out law students and newly called lawyers for membership for a reason. Interaction and mentoring gave young lawyers a foundation in the profession and a sense of belonging that would stand them in good stead over the years. If the Club's history was more social than political, its value to its community was no less important for the period it did exist. Both Clubs left an indelible impression on those who were in them - a lasting example of the strengthening power of community.

V. CONCLUSION: DIVERSITY IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

There is much that will remain untold about these men and women of the Reading Law Club and the Lady Reading Club. The picture provided here would have been richer, more nuanced and textured if their story had been told forty years ago. Looking back inevitably restricts the breadth and scope of the view and lessens the intensity of the experiences and the pain and joy of the issues confronted. But whatever the distance from which this story is told, it resonates not just in the context of the Jewish legal community's triumph over anti-Semitism, but for the example it provides to other groups.

"Recognize yourselves," it says to those now seeking entry, acceptance, success and a permanent place in the profession based on their competence alone, as Jewish lawyers once did. "See that change does happen, that tenacity is worth it and that our story resonates with yours."

As the profession continues to reinvent itself, struggles for acceptance will be part of its story. Though dramatic events do not characterize the story of the Reading Law Club and the Lady Reading Club their existence is nonetheless a reminder of those struggles and is worth remembering.