

July 15, 2021

A Change of Status and a Request

By: Nigel Bankes

With the permission of the editorial leaders of ABlawg, I am using this platform to announce my retirement from the Faculty of Law at the University of Calgary effective June 30, 2021. It seems particularly fitting to borrow ABlawg for this purpose given the number of times I have used it to communicate with the profession and the broader community about law and policy developments here in Alberta - and beyond. And I hope to continue to do so after retirement, if perhaps not as frequently as in the past.

I first joined the University of Calgary in 1981 as a research associate with the Canadian Institute of Resources Law. I joined the Faculty in 1984, thanks to the encouragement of the then Dean, John (JPS) McLaren, to teach property law, natural resources law, and administrative law. Sincere thanks to my colleagues and support staff, and to the generations of students whom I taught and from whom I have learned - particularly the many graduate students with whom I had the opportunity to work.

I end this short post with a request of those of you who have read my ABlawg posts over the years.

One of the most satisfying developments for me at the law school was the creation of the [Public Interest Law Clinic](#) in 2015. This was an idea with a very long gestation period, ultimately brought to fruition with the facilitation of Jim Peacock QC and the support of the Peacock Foundation.

The Clinic, currently under the capable and enthusiastic leadership of Christine Laing, has created superb hands-on educational opportunities for our students. The Clinic has represented clients in a number of project-based environmental assessments, including the Teck Frontier project and the Grassy Mountain coal mine project (still under active consideration). It has also worked with clients to protect the habitat of Westslope Cutthroat Trout through several judicial review applications under the *Species at Risk Act*, [SC 2002, c 29](#), and in the Grassy Mountain hearing.

The Clinic scored an important victory earlier this year in the *Normtek Radiation Services Ltd v Alberta Environmental Appeal Board*, [2020 ABCA 456 \(CanLII\)](#) case dealing with standing rules in Alberta. This decision should make it easier for Albertans to participate in a variety of environmental and regulatory hearings and speak for public interest and public land values.

The Clinic has also undertaken projects dealing with addiction treatment interventions, Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPP) suits, and a range of access to information issues cutting across a number of different areas of public interest law. An important ongoing project, launched with the leadership and support of Judith Hanebury QC, provides advice to clients struggling with debt and foreclosure issues.

It is my hope that the Faculty will be able to continue the important public interest work of the Clinic over the coming years. To that end, I have marked my retirement by making a gift to the Clinic.

I hope that you may think about doing the same. Donations will be used to support the work of the Clinic, in particular to hire an articling student on a continuing basis.

For information about the Clinic see [here](#).

For information about how to support the work of the Clinic see [here](#).

The Faculty will host a virtual retirement event to send me on my way on June 29, 7 – 8 pm. All are welcome to participate. For details on registration see [here](#).

My email address will continue as ndbankes@ucalgary.ca

Editors' note: In addition to the virtual retirement event on June 29, the Faculty of Law has created a [kudo board](#) to mark this occasion; we encourage current and former colleagues, students, collaborators, readers, and others to leave Nigel a note.

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