



NOVA SCOTIA BARRISTERS' SOCIETY

NSBS & Stewart McKelvey present inaugural Race and the Law Essay Prize

Event: Presentation of inaugural award

When: Thursday, June 11; 4:30 – 6:30 pm

Where: Halliburton Hotel, 5184 Morris Street, Halifax

Note: Mr. Steeves is unable to attend, but Professor Michelle Williams-Lorde will accept the award on his behalf.

A new annual Race and the Law Essay Prize will be awarded for the first time today to recognize outstanding scholarship by students of Dalhousie Law School, pertaining specifically to race and the law. Created by the Race Relations Committee (RRC) of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, the prize is sponsored by Stewart McKelvey.

“There is important work being done by students at Dalhousie on issues of race and the law,” explains Bedford lawyer Barbara Darby, a member of the RRC’s paper prize subcommittee. “We hope it will invite more students to give consideration during their academic study to issues of race and encourage them to develop their race literacy. That way, we hope that the paper prize can be a part of a process by which the Society can draw more attention to issues of race and how race impacts on the practice and teaching of law in Nova Scotia.”

The inaugural prize winner is **David Steeves**, for his submission "**Maniacal Murderer or Death Dealing Car: The Case of Daniel Perry Sampson 1933-1935.**" Sampson, an African-Nova Scotian veteran of the Great War, was arrested and tried in the mysterious 1933 deaths of two young brothers whose bodies were found near railway tracks on the outskirts of Halifax.

Committee members chose Mr. Steeves’ paper based on the criteria of content, form and race literacy. They found his “gripping” account of an important moment in Nova Scotian legal and social history to be very well researched and executed, and highly accessible due to its creative expression. The critical examination of the Sampson case illustrates Halifax’s response to crime during a period of social and economic upheaval, while also revealing a previously unknown aspect of racial discrimination that impacted many jury trials from 1890 to 1943.

A lawyer and member of the Bar societies in both NS and Alberta, Mr. Steeves graduated from Dalhousie Law School last month with a Master of Laws degree. He also holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from Dal and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature and history from Mount Allison University. He is presently in Toronto, pursuing a career in litigation while developing further work for publication.

His winning paper will appear in the first collection of African-Canadian legal history forthcoming in 2010, to be published by the Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History.

The RRC extends its thanks to all students who submitted papers to the competition. Says Ms. Darby. “During our evaluation process, the committee members were most impressed by the calibre and quality of the papers. It was terrific to read all of them, as each one offered readers an opportunity to learn something new. We look forward to reading next year’s submissions!”

The Nova Scotia Barristers’ Society is the regulating body for the legal profession, whose purpose is to uphold and protect the public interest in the practice of law.

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