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Native students call for major changes to law schools

by Doug Saunders

If Canada's legal system is going to do anything for aboriginal people, there will have to be big changes to what gets taught at law schools.

That was the message from the 30 Native law students from around Ontario who met at Osgoode Hall last weekend to discuss law school curriculum.

After two days of meeting and debate, the students delivered a list of demands to the deans of Ontario's

six law schools, five of whom attended the conference.

The students' message was urgent and timely.

Manitoba provincial court judge Murray Sinclair opened the conference by chronicling the failure of the Canadian justice system to understand Native justice or aboriginal culture.

Last year Sinclair chaired the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, which concluded that a separate court system is needed for

the First Nations.

In his opening speech, he described the "social chaos" resulting from the failure of Canada's justice system to understand the Native perspective.

Forty to seventy per cent of prisoners in Canadian provinces are Native, Sinclair noted, while less than one quarter of one per cent of

Canada's 45,000 lawyers are from aboriginal backgrounds.

Although many law schools now have affirmative action programs to attract Native students, very few students take advantage of them (Osgoode currently has around 30 students from aboriginal backgrounds).

According to the students at the

conference, this is a result of the almost total lack of Native perspectives in law courses.

"It's not enough that Osgoode Hall has a couple courses on Native issues," said Susan Hare, a second-year Osgoode student and one of the conference organizers. "We need Native professors teaching them,

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York campus trashed last year to tune of \$100,000

by Nancy Grosso

York security and maintenance staff say acts of vandalism on campus are costing the university thousands of dollars.

"\$100,000 is a conservative estimate," said Doug Moon, superintendent of maintenance and labour.

According to Jim Drennan, director of security, an estimated 274 acts of vandalism were reported in 1991, an increase of 14.6 per cent from the previous year. The university's security budget has cost an estimated loss between \$25,000 and \$35,000, excluding labour costs.

Drennan explained there is no one particular area that vandals will strike. "Vandalism occurs all over the campus, but mostly in parking lots, second to that at residences, followed by areas of central student traffic."

According to Moon, acts of vandalism which take place at night or over the weekend cost more to repair. The university has to employ off-campus contract workers to repair the damage at a much higher rate. "York doesn't employ the full spectrum of the trade maintenance sector needed to repair all acts of vandalism," Moon explained.

The University of Toronto has faced similar trends in vandalism. Sergeant Len Paris from the U of T Police Department said 155 acts were reported in 1991, costing over \$33,000.

According to Drennan, security will increase surveillance in the parking lots, and at pubs during pub night when people are leaving. The enforcement will concentrate on increased patrol and visibility through the creation of cycle patrols and through community outreach.



Osgoode student Susan Hare (left) addresses delegates at First Nations Law Students conference on Saturday. Sitting are Richard Allen, minister of colleges and universities; Gordon Peters, vice-chief of the Assembly of First Nations; Jim MacPherson, dean of Osgoode Hall law school • photo by Jeff Keay

Toronto abortion clinics under attack

Canadian University Press

Toronto — Toronto abortion clinics are still under attack, four years after the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the federal law on abortion.

An entranceway to the Morgentaler clinic was set on fire by a gasoline bomb at 2 a.m. Jan. 24, causing \$5,000 worth of damage. Three days later, a woman posing as a patient set off a stink bomb in a clinic bathroom. Neither incident shut the clinic down.

And earlier this month, Campaign Life — an anti-abortion group — established a storefront office next door to the Cabbagetown Women's Clinic, which performs abortions. Workers at the clinic say members of Campaign Life have been harassing women as they enter the clinic.

Henry Morgentaler said he believes the violence is coming from a group of people who are frustrated.

"They are acts of people whose cause is lost," he said. "They are crazy. This is speculation, but perhaps they want to commemorate the Jan. 28 (1988) Supreme Court decision on abortion." The court struck down the federal law on abortion, saying it violated a woman's right to privacy.

Carolyn Egan, spokesperson for the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, agreed with Morgentaler.

"It shows the frustration of anti-choice individuals because they are losing their battle. They are now trying to intimidate staff and patients through violent means."

The Morgentaler clinic has a court injunction prohibiting anti-abortion protestors from demonstrating within 500 metres of the clinic. The clinic, open since 1983, had been the focus of many protests in which demonstrators attempted to block access to the clinic.

Jim Hughes, national president of Campaign Life, said although he was aware of the attacks on the Morgentaler clinic, the everyday business of the clinic is far worse.

"Whatever happened is nowhere near the violence employed in the abortuaries," he said.

Hughes said his organization was not responsible for the incidents.

"No pro-lifer person associated with Campaign Life would have done that," he said. "At Campaign Life we are non-violent."

Barbara MacFarlane, a nurse at the Cabbagetown Women's Clinic, said having a Campaign Life office next door makes clients and staff

nervous.

The renewed focus on abortion may be due to the attention the issue is getting in the United States, she said.

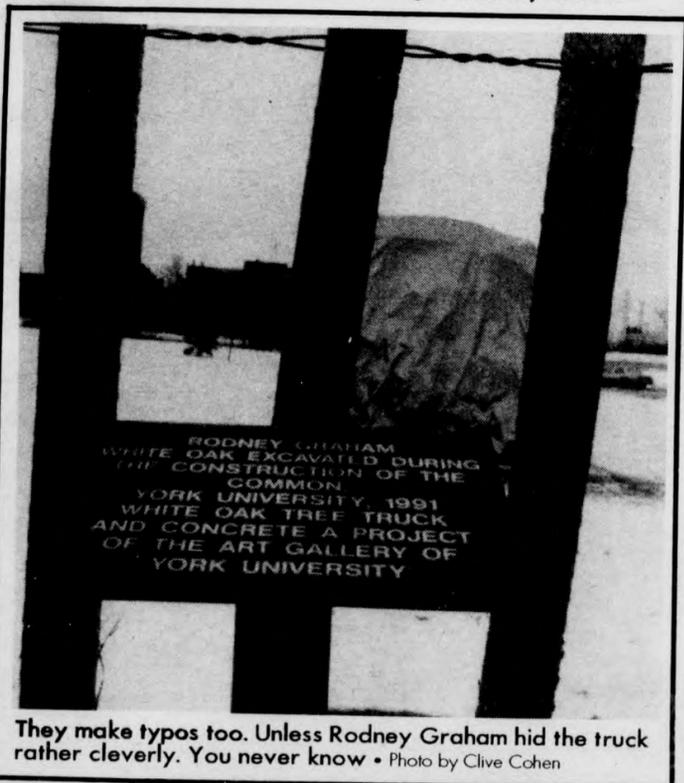
The U.S. Supreme Court is hearing cases which may erode women's right to an abortion guaranteed by the 1973 Roe V. Wade decision. A number of states are attempting to legislate parental consent laws, or outlaw abortion except in cases of rape or incest.

Abortion rights also garnered international media attention last summer when anti-abortion demonstrators flooded Wichita, Kansas in attempt to shut down area clinics.

Hughes said Campaign Life is working with politicians at a grassroots level to create new Canadian legislation on abortion. The organization offers counselling for pregnant women and attempts to talk them out of abortion, he said.

"We help women seek alternatives and help them to stop from killing their babies," he said.

Police said they have not caught the arsonist who set the fire at the Morgentaler clinic, but say six youths were seen running from the scene.



They make typos too. Unless Rodney Graham hid the truck rather cleverly. You never know • Photo by Clive Cohen