

EDITORS' PREFACE:

THE COMING OF AGE OF THE *CHARTER*

Each year, the *University of New Brunswick Law Journal* presents a Forum containing a selection of essays on a topic of current legal interest. This year's theme is *The Coming of Age of the Charter*, which explores the evolution of Canadian jurisprudence in the twenty-one years since the inception of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The *Charter*, perhaps more than any other legislative initiative, has impacted Canadian law in ways that may not have been anticipated by its drafters. It has facilitated the legal recognition of same sex relationships, and has guaranteed the rights of Canadian citizens to think, believe and say what they wish, within reasonable limits. It protects victims and criminals alike, pledging that all individuals are equal before and under the law, regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. The *Charter* enshrines values that are fundamentally Canadian, and our legal system is better for it.

In preparing this forum, we sought out articles dealing with any and every aspect of *Charter* jurisprudence in order to demonstrate its pervasive influence in Canadian law. These ten articles explore but a fraction of the areas that the *Charter* has impacted in the past twenty years. The one feature that unifies these submissions is the certainty that the *Charter* will continue to be a vital force in Canadian law as well as Canadian life.

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