

AUTUMN 2018

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
ALUMNI MAGAZINE

A D R I F T

Dementia steals people away from the lives they knew.
Research is finding a better way forward

Alumni Weekend

Return to your old
stomping grounds this fall.

Sept. 21 - 24



LOOK
INSIDE
for event
listings!



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VOLUME 74 NUMBER 2

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Compassion has always driven Anwar Shah to help others. His work with the World Bank will improve lives for future generations, including that of his granddaughter Amina. Page 26. Photo by John Ulan

ON THE COVER
A patient-centred approach to dementia care means working to replace feelings of disconnection with a sense of purpose and wellness. Page 18.
Illustration by Hugh Syme



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INFLUENCERS. ACHIEVERS. ADVOCATES. MEET U OF A ALUMNI WHO ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

This year's crop of alumni award winners have something in common: they believe every problem has a solution and they are driven to find it. Whether it's saving lives, serving justice, healing through art and conversation or just listening, meet a group of alumni motivated by compassion for others.

By Sarah Pratt

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

FOR FINDING WAYS TO TREAT CANCER

Charles Lee, '90 BSc(Spec), '93 MSc, '96 PhD
Medical geneticist

► Treating cancer is what gets Charles Lee out of bed in the morning and what keeps him up at night. "I think, 'Do I need to sleep for another hour or should I use that hour more constructively?'"

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

Lee is a medical geneticist and he is all too familiar with statistics like, "One in two men and one in three women will develop cancer." That's why Lee is spending every waking moment working on a potential solution—one beyond surgery, radiation, chemotherapy and traditional drug therapies. It's genomic medicine and it will suggest a drug treatment specific to each patient's needs.

It starts with a surgeon removing one tumour, cutting it into tiny pieces and implanting one piece into each of several mice. The tumour grows until it's a treatable size, then the mice

are each given a different drug or combination of drugs. A month later, Lee and his team can see how well each treatment worked on the same tumour. When a drug treatment overpowers a tumour, the successful results are put into a database, where the tumour's genetic fingerprint is also stored. For each tumour in the database, there is a corresponding treatment that was successful in treating a mouse. In the real-life application, if a person's tumour has a similar DNA profile to one in the database, the patient could work with their oncologist to decide whether to take the course of drugs that worked on

the mouse with a similar tumour.

The project is underway at the billion-dollar Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine in Farmington, Conn., where Lee is director. The lab opened four years ago with three employees but is now home to 386 employees—more than half of whom are researchers. Lee estimates the database and treatments will be ready for direct application in two to four years, though that feels like an eternity to him.

"I feel nervous and a major sense of urgency," says Lee. "This can help countless people. It's huge and we don't want to waste any time."





▼ SPORTS WALL OF FAME

For years of winning and giving back

Pandas rugby teams

1999 to 2003

The Pandas rugby teams of 1999-2003 were a dominant force in the sport, winning five straight national championships and fielding athletes who were not only athletic all-stars but academic all-stars as well. A number of the players continued to give back to the program through coaching, managing, officiating and as members of the medical team.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS:

Five Canada West and CIS national championships

CIS players of the year, rookie of the year, All-Canadians, Academic All-Canadians

Canada West coach of the year

Nine Pandas played for the Canada National Senior Women's 15s team



▼ DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

For being a true pioneer in the field of dental care

Marcia Boyd, '69 DDS
Dentist

When new graduate Marcia Boyd saw a job ad in the *Edmonton Journal* for

A steep learning curve: "I had a pink skirt on and was heading north. I was going to be the queen of Frobisher Bay. When I arrived, they handed me a duffel coat, gumboots, a portable

summer job plunged Boyd into the world of dentistry faster than she could have imagined, and her experiences in northern communities taught her to apply her knowledge to solve problems. The adventurous dentist, professor emerita and former dean at the University of British Columbia reflects on some of her memorable experiences from a career that started in the Arctic and ended on the Pacific coast.

New experiences: There are some moments in Nunavut that stand out in Boyd's memory. "In Pond Inlet, I helped deliver a baby girl." And her northern social life was always fascinating. "Communities brought

generator, headlamp and a cold sterilization kit." Boyd was flown into communities and met by dog team and she had to estimate how many weeks she would need before they would return to pick her up. The conditions were rugged. "I would set up in a school, near a window for extra light to do fillings. I did extractions while the patient sat in a wooden chair. I did things that give me a full body shudder now."

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DESPAU; PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DESPAU

in movies to watch. One was *The Cyclops*, and for two weeks afterwards, the soapstone carvings were all cyclops." Overall, Boyd says her time in Nunavut was a magical experience. "It was fascinating for a new grad."

► Advancing personally and professionally: While continuing with part-time clinical practice and after working as a professor at UBC, she became dean of the Faculty of Dentistry. Here she guided the faculty through advances in dentistry and an increase in the number of women in the field. "[Including] more women has brought a further richness and depth to the profession."

Meet the winners at the 2018 Alumni Awards, Monday, Sept. 24. Tickets are free. Register at uab.ca/awards.

used in Canada wasn't able to cope with the cold winters. Pheasey began to manufacture drilling equipment sturdy enough to operate in some of the world's harshest climates, including Alaska, Russia and the Amazon jungle. In 1972, when the oil and gas industry in Alberta was heating up, Pheasey entered into the oilfield equipment manufacturing and distribution industry with the business he co-founded, Dreco Energy Services.

In the early 1970s, he realized much of the American-made oilfield drilling equipment

also saw an opportunity to use his problem-solving skills to tackle a bigger social problem: homelessness. As a member of

Edmonton's Committee to End Homelessness in 2008, he helped develop a 10-year plan to help the city's most vulnerable people find safe and affordable housing. The committee applied an approach that focused on mental health and addiction prior to addressing housing issues. By 2012, the number of homeless Edmontonians dropped by 30 per cent.

Pheasey, who has also supported the next generation of engineers at U of A and the United Way for more than 25 years, is committed to using innovation to help solve problems, whether it's in the business world or his community.

▼ ALUMNI HONOUR AWARD

FOR FINDING SOLUTIONS TO BIG PROBLEMS

Frederick Pheasey, '65 BSc(MechEng)
Engineer

Frederick Pheasey has spent his life doing what engineers do best: solve problems.

In the early 1970s, he

realized much of the

American-made oilfield

drilling equipment

▼ ALUMNI HONOUR AWARD

FOR SPEAKING OUT ON ISSUES THAT MATTER

Paula Simons, '86 BA(Hons)
Journalist

"For nearly two decades, Paula has been a voice of authority on virtually every issue that impacts this community. ... People who care about public affairs know they must read Paula to get a thoughtful perspective. Whether they agree or disagree with her, they know Paula will provide them with the critical thinking and analysis that is essential to understanding the issues."

Linda Hughes, University of Alberta
chancellor emerita and former publisher
of the *Edmonton Journal*



ALUMNI HONOUR AWARD

For being a voice for people living with HIV

Barbara Romanowski, '71 BScMed, '73 MD

Doctor, expert on HIV and sexually transmitted infections

Barbara Romanowski's early career coincided with the rise of the HIV epidemic in the 1980s. She sat down with longtime colleague Michael Phair, chair of the U of A Board of Governors, to talk about the leadership, compassion and challenges of that time.

MP: The first media conference we did in Edmonton, do you remember what you talked about?

BR: I don't have a vivid memory but I remember those days well and the media activity and how they wanted to sensationalize this disease. I think back with horror when these individuals were hospitalized and signs went up on the doors saying, "Contaminated. Do not enter." It was the Dark Ages. I kept saying to the media, "This is not a gay disease." I saw education as part of my job.

MP: I remember those days. I remember visiting individuals in the hospital and taking food in because some of the staff left food at the door. No one lived more than two years at that time. I'm sure that had an impact on you.

BR: It had a tremendous impact. I did not learn in medical school how to provide palliative care but that's what we were doing.



Barbara Romanowski and Michael Phair reminisce about their time working together to help people living with HIV.

went to many funerals in the first few years of HIV care and it took a personal toll. There came a point where I had to step back. There were too many.

MP: Oh, everyone died. ... There were funeral homes that wouldn't deal with them. There were also some religious organizations that wouldn't perform the usual kind of ceremony.

BR: I find it extremely difficult to accept that a family would reject someone

based on sexual orientation and, in those days, the type of disease that they had. On a positive note, oh, my God, we've gone so far in 30 years. We now have a disease that is manageable.

Patients should look forward to living to a geriatric age. Having said that, I think continued education is as important, if not more so, than it was in the early years, because people have become complacent.

you've done then and are still doing. You'll never know how much it meant to people like me and the others that I work with, and the people who unfortunately died.

BR: There were lots of sad times. There were some good times as well. One moves forward with a balance of the sad times and the pleasant times.

This conversation was edited for length and clarity. A longer, audio version will be made available online.

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

TOP ILLUSTRATION BY WENTING LI; BOTTOM ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DESPAU

ALUMNI HORIZON AWARD

FOR BEING A SCIENTIST AND ENTREPRENEUR

David Brown, '13 BSc

Entrepreneur

If you haven't heard of chitosan, you're not alone, though you may soon see it in food, beverages and medicine. Chitosan is a fibre traditionally made from the chitin in the exoskeletons of crustaceans and used to make food preservatives and biomedical products such as dissolvable pill capsules. Chitosan from shellfish, however, comes with inherent challenges, such as food allergies, a highly polluting production process and a lack of purity.

Chute has dispensed her message of hope in many other ways, as well.

A series of photographs called "The Quiet Rebuild" features volunteer models who want to share their stories of overcoming adversity. She also teaches Healing Through Art, a class that uses painting, collage, writing and sculpture to work through trauma. She is also a motivational speaker.

As people share their stories of heartache and work through their own grief, it can help to know they are not alone.

Three years later, Brown created Chinova Bioworks after seeing a need for natural preservatives in food, beverages and personal care products. Chinova uses chitosan from edible mushrooms. It's a natural dietary fibre, an antioxidant, tasteless, odourless and is kosher, halal and vegan.

Brown's creative solutions have offered sustainable alternatives to harmful ingredients and processes.



ALUMNI HORIZON AWARD

FOR SHOWING HOW ART CAN HEAL THE HEART

Alexis Marie Chute, '07 BFA

Artist

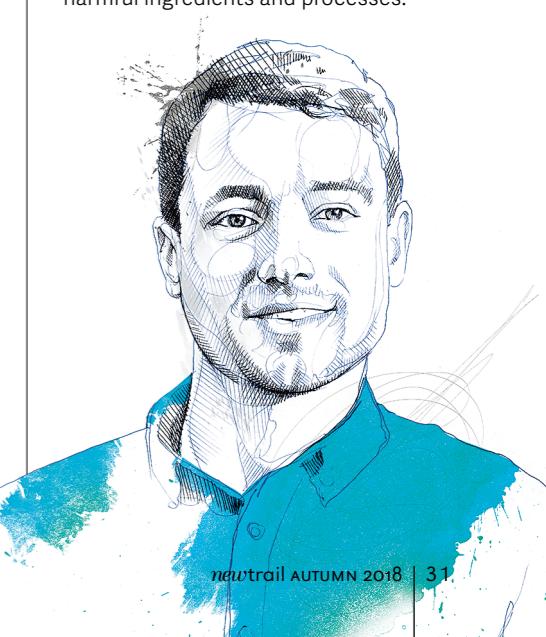
When Alexis Marie Chute's newborn son died from a cardiac tumour, she turned to art to help with the long process of healing.

Chute describes the year after her loss as her "year of distraction." She documents this season of her life in her award-winning memoir, *Expecting Sunshine: A Journey of Grief, Healing and Pregnancy After Loss*.

was the first surgeon in Alberta to successfully treat kidney cancer under hypothermic circulatory arrest, which involves cooling the body and stopping blood flow and brain function for a short period.

An internationally recognized clinician-researcher, Moore developed laser treatment as therapy for prostate and bladder cancer. It's called photodynamic therapy and it activates chemotherapy drugs inside tumours with the help of laser light. It's less invasive than regular treatment and gives hope to patients.

Moore's work has changed urologic and transplant surgeries and helped improve the lives of countless cancer patients and their families.





For being a coach and a leader

David Breakwell,
'79 BCom
Hockey player and coach

David Breakwell has been a volunteer hockey coach for 38 years. More than 800 players benefited from his experience and 14 of those went on to play in the National Hockey League.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS AS A PLAYER:

1977-78 Golden Bears hockey team national champions
• Team's leading scorer
• Canada West First Team all-star
• National championship all-star team

1978-79 Golden Bears national champions

1978-79 Olympic team final 40 (Red Team tour of Europe)

1977-78, 1978-79 Member of two championship teams at the Pacific Rim Tournament, where the Golden Bears represented Canada against teams from Japan and the United States

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

FOR GIVING PEOPLE A VOICE

Anwar Shah, '83 PhD
Economist

When Anwar Shah was growing up in a small village in northern Pakistan, he knew exactly what he wanted to be—even if he didn't know what it was called. He wanted a job where he could help developing countries.

Shah can trace this unusually mature and socially aware world view back to his father, Shah Muhammad, who worked to raise money to build a girls' school near their village, Chak No. 113 JB Phulahi. At the time, the boys travelled eight kilometres to school but the girls couldn't attend because parents feared for their safety. Muhammad's girls' school opened in 1953.

Shah pursued an education in economics, motivated by growing up in a society where the rich lived alongside people who could hardly feed themselves and were denied basic rights and services. He saw no accountability and was disheartened by the way the

“Watching my father raise



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DESPAU; PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

money to build the school and work to get accreditation from the government—this shaped my own view of the world and I knew I wanted to contribute to society,” says Shah from his home in Potomac, Md.

When Shah moved to Canada to do a PhD in economics, he saw local government empowerment and was inspired. Shah went on to spend most of his career working for the World Bank, helping decentralize governments in developing countries and giving people a voice. He has conducted policy and reform dialogues in 47 countries, and showed people how to find democratic solutions to combat corruption in government.

“World Bank gave me a platform to work from and access to people of influence in the developing world, politicians who wanted positive change,” says Shah.

After spending years making a difference, Shah returned to Pakistan five years ago for a visit. The school his father worked so hard to bring to life is still going strong.

“My early life and education prepared me well for my career,” says Shah. “I have always been motivated to help people.”

ALUMNI HONOUR AWARD

For blazing a trail for women in business

Stella Thompson, '68 MA
Businesswoman

Stella Thompson is a businesswoman in every sense of the word. In her more than 40-year career, Thompson has cut a swath through the business world in marketing, strategic planning, information systems, finance, policy governance and more. Her experience has led to titles such as co-founder, chair and director, as well as positions on many boards.

Thompson's work as an oil executive with Petro-Canada led to her first board appointment: the Prime Minister's National Advisory Board on Science and Technology. She went



on to be the first woman to sit on boards for Allstate Insurance, Agra Inc. and Laidlaw Inc.

among others. She currently lends her expertise to Connect First Credit Union.

Thompson, who has advocated to increase gender diversity in the boardroom and tackle gender issues in the workforce, has this advice for young women: “Don’t take the forward movement for granted. Keep on fighting the fight.”

ALUMNI HONOUR AWARD

FOR BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE INNOVATION

David Wishart, '83 BSc(Hons), Biochemist, professor

Metabolomics is an innovative approach to health care, using a technique that identifies and catalogues every chemical in the human body and looks for patterns in those chemicals that correspond to different illnesses. David Wishart developed tools and techniques that helped launch Canada's first metabolomics company, Chenomx, in 2000. He also leads The Metabolomics Innovation Centre that provides services to labs around the world. Those who know Wishart recount the impact he has had on students, peers and the medical community.

“David has worked in a tireless, energetic manner to establish a world-class foundational centre for metabolomics, and he has had a positive influence on the whole research community.”

Randy Goebel, associate vice-president, academic; associate vice-president, research; principal investigator, Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute

“The satisfaction I derived from working in the Wishart lab was the light in my life at a very dark time. In addition to providing me with meaningful work, Dr. Wishart was also individually supportive.”

Connie Sobsey, '07 BA, PhD student,
Faculty of Medicine, McGill University

“He is truly doing research that is unique and world-class.

The tools and techniques developed by Dr. Wishart have led to new discoveries and new technologies.”

Christoph Borchers, professor,
University of Victoria, McGill University

▼ DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

FOR USING THE LAW TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS

Sheila Greckol,

'74 BA, '75 LLB

Judge

► When Sheila Greckol was growing up in the small town of Vilna, Alta., she saw young people trapped by circumstance. Greckol's mother, Lura, was a Grade 1 teacher who would sometimes bring home students who lacked warm winter clothing or food. As a result, Greckol became aware that some of her classmates had no freedom of choice when it came to what they ate, where they lived and how they lived. Many of these children were from First Nations, including nearby Saddle Lake Cree Nation and Good Fish Lake First Nation.

Greckol carries these early childhood memories with her today in her work in the justice system.

"Some of the things I witnessed, including violent incidents involving local police and Indigenous people, as well as poverty, racism and the accompanying social problems, are still with me, even though it's been 50 years since I left home to go to university," says Greckol.

She spent 25 years as a lawyer working on cases involving abortion and freedom of choice, the rights of members of the LGBTQ community, paid maternity leave and more. In her current role, as a justice of the Court of Appeal of Alberta, Greckol is still witness to the disadvantage in the lives of Indigenous people.

"We see the consequences of colonialism—aptly called cultural genocide—every day in the courts. The tragic narratives, the vast overrepresentation of Indigenous offenders in the criminal justice system," says Greckol.

One of the many issues Greckol feels must be advocated for is Indigenizing the courts. This means locating the courts within or near First Nations communities, having community members working there, using traditional cultural approaches to guide people toward a healing path, and fashioning creative, rehabilitative sentences where possible.

Greckol believes non-Indigenous people in Canadian society have a responsibility to do what they can to work toward reconciliation with First Nations peoples.

"I believe it rises to the level of a moral imperative," she says.



PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN; TOP ILLUSTRATION BY WENTING LI; BOTTOM ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DESPAU

▼ ALUMNI INNOVATION AWARD

For empowering parents of sick children

Lisa Hartling,

'90 BSc(PT), '10 PhD

Professor, Department of Pediatrics

Shannon Scott, '06 PhD

Professor, Faculty of Nursing

Knowledge translation
in health research

More than two million children visit an emergency department in Canada each year, yet more than 80 per cent don't receive specialized pediatric care. Instead, they are seen in a general emergency department. Lisa Hartling and Shannon Scott want to ensure that children, regardless of where they are treated, receive the best care based on their age, situation and up-to-date pediatric knowledge. They also want to see children



treated in settings other than busy emergency rooms—such as a doctor's office or the home—whenever possible.

It all begins with the parents. In an effort to help parents make better health-care decisions for their children, Hartling and Scott developed innovative knowledge translation tools that combine parents' stories of their health-care experiences with their children, art, novel media and

scientific evidence. Parents can educate themselves on a variety of common childhood illnesses using these animated videos, audiobooks and interactive infographics.

The goal is to give parents the confidence to decide where and when to seek medical attention.

These tools were developed with funding from various local, provincial and national agencies.

▼ SPORTS WALL OF FAME

For a career of coaching excellence

Rob Daum, '82 BPE, '84 BEd

Hockey coach

Rob Daum had a decade of coaching excellence with Golden Bears hockey, as well as stints in national and international arenas.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

- Three national championships
- Nine consecutive national tournament appearances
- Five-time Canada West coach of the year
- Two-time national coach of the year
- Alberta record for conference regular-season winning percentage, .823, when finished career at U of A
- Assistant coach, Edmonton Oilers, 2007-08



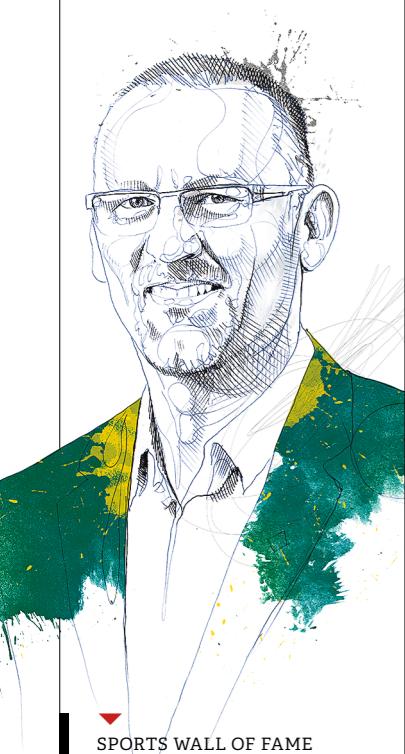
▼ ALUMNI HONOUR AWARD

FOR EFFECTING CHANGE TO INDIGENOUS HEALTH CARE

Lynden (Lindsay) Crowshoe, '93 BMedSc, '95 MD

Researcher

As a researcher and member of the Piikani First Nation, Lindsay Crowshoe works to ensure Indigenous Canadians have culturally appropriate medical care. He advocates for change through research, lectures, mentorship and Indigenous health working groups. These groups focus on the social factors that determine the health of Indigenous people, including barriers to access, cultural bias and intergenerational trauma. Crowshoe works with a variety of organizations, including the Elbow River Healing Lodge, which provides culturally competent care to Indigenous Canadians, and the Truth and Reconciliation Working Group at the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine.



SPORTS WALL OF FAME

For excellence on the court

Douglas Baker, '80 BPE

Basketball player and coach

Douglas Baker joins his wife, Trix, on the Sports Wall of Fame. Their child, Jordan, holds 10 Golden Bears basketball records, has played for Canada and could one day join them on the Sports Wall of Fame.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

Three-time Golden Bears basketball MVP

Three-time Canada West all-star

CIAU All-Canadian 1976-77

Golden Bears records for season field goals and season field goals attempted, 1976-77

Scored an average of 18.4 points per game, second best in Bears basketball history



Deborah Barrett's son, Anthony, is the inspiration behind Anthony at Your Service.

ALUMNI INNOVATION AWARD

For giving a future to adults with intellectual disabilities

Deborah Barrett, '75 BA, '89 MSc

Anthony at Your Service

Anthony at Your Service is a business that employs adults with intellectual disabilities to do custom deliveries in the Edmonton area.

"Anthony at Your Service demonstrates that individuals with significant intellectual disabilities can contribute meaningfully to their community through visible, paid employment. This initiative changes social perceptions and cultural perspectives while creating real jobs for real pay. Dr. Barrett's vision, perseverance and hard work give adults with intellectual disabilities and families hope for a better future they haven't had until now."

Lyndon Parakin, vice-president, Autism Society Alberta

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DESPAU; PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN



ALUMNI HORIZON AWARD

FOR BUILDING INTERFAITH BRIDGES

Nakita Valerio, '09 BA, '17 MA

Writer, entrepreneur

Police-reported hate crimes targeting Muslims more than tripled from 2012 to 2015,

according to Statistics Canada. In 2017, there were 1,752 anti-Semitic incidents recorded in Canada—the second straight record-breaking year. These rising rates of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia fuel the work of Nakita Valerio. Her graduate studies, focused on the history of Muslim-Jewish relationships in colonial contexts, inform her research and much of what she does outside the classroom. Her mission is to help people learn to accept different

cultures and understand and put into practice the organized efforts required for coexistence.

Valerio is also a volunteer educator and community organizer. In 2016, she co-founded the AMPAC Muslim-Jewish Women's Collective, a group that meets monthly to share, learn, build friendships and do charity work.

"It's been really positive in a short amount of time," says Valerio, who owns The Drawing Board Canada,

a content development company. "There were people who had actively vowed to never sit across the table from someone of the other faith, who have had their minds changed by the group."

Imagine if more of these conversations were going on around the world.

HOW TO HAVE A TRANSCULTURAL CONVERSATION

For anyone having exchanges with people from different cultural communities, Valerio offers some tips:

► Approach each other with the intention to share, listen and learn. Recognize that people's voices and experiences do not necessarily speak for their entire community, just as yours don't.

► Expect that things will be uncomfortable and embrace that. Discomfort is a place from which we can learn, grow and begin the journey of questioning the self.

► Recognize that safe spaces are carefully curated and enforced. Set your boundaries and stick to them.

► Get to know people as they are, not just as they have been labelled or as they self-identify. Identities are complex and fluid things.

ALUMNI HONOUR AWARD

FOR SERVING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Susan Richardson, '87 BA(Spec), '08 MA, Judge

Two years changed Susan Richardson's life. After graduating from law school in 1990, she spent two years as program manager at Excel Resources, which helps prepare adults living with mental illness or developmental disabilities for employment. This guided Richardson toward a legal career that would help protect the rights of the most vulnerable. In 2011, Richardson was appointed as a judge of the provincial court of Alberta and continues to work with vulnerable populations. Richardson's peers call her a passionate advocate who lives with respect for the law and people's rights.

"Susan Richardson's desire to learn and continuously educate herself on society's complex issues has undoubtedly shaped her reputation as a role model both in and out of court."

Lesley Cormack, dean, Faculty of Arts

"She is a role model for criminal law practitioners, particularly young women who are considering entering the practice of criminal law and who may ultimately consider a career on the bench."

Donna Valgardon, judge of the provincial court of Alberta

"When Judge Richardson was appointed to the provincial court, I knew ... [she] had not only been an outstanding prosecutor but one who had dedicated herself throughout her professional career to continuous learning—not only of the law but also of the complicated social issues which so often underlie criminal behaviour."

Terrence Matchett, chief judge, provincial court of Alberta