

PRESS RELEASE

October 11, 2011

Women's rights organization releases alternative orientation guide for law students

The National Association of Women and the Law ("NAWL") Charitable Trust for Research and Education will today release its *Gender and the Law Manual: An Introductory Handbook for Law Students*. The Manual was compiled by a working group of law students from all over Canada following a leadership summit held by NAWL in February 2011 to train feminist leaders in law school. It aims to provide feminist and equality seeking law students with hope, encouragement and inspiration as well as with some of the tools they may need to survive law school and legal practice.

The *Gender and the Law Manual* consists of manifestos, excerpts of articles and personal accounts written by 25 feminist students, professors, lawyers and activists. Taken together, these excerpts encourage students to think critically about the law and to use the skills they acquire in law school to advance the equality rights of women and other marginalized groups. The handbook updates an earlier manual published 20 years ago and acknowledges that there remains much work to be done to reduce systemic discrimination embedded in the law, as well as in legal education and practice. By publishing this material at this time, the NAWL Trust is renewing its commitment to advance the equality rights of Canadian women.

"The NAWL Trust for Research and Education was founded in 1983 to fund, prepare and disseminate research and education about legal issues in all aspects of the social, economic and political life of Canadian women. It is our hope that by exposing some of the institutional barriers that make the law school experience difficult for many women and individuals from equality seeking groups, we will effectively encourage more awareness and discussion of the issues – and perhaps even encourage small steps to be taken toward the development of practical answers as well," says Anne Levesque a member of NAWL's National Steering Committee.

The translation and publication of the manual was generously supported by the Shirley E. Greenberg Chair for Women and the Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa. Professor Rosemary Cairns Way, the current Greenberg Chair, describes it as "intended to help women feel more at ease in law schools and in the legal profession, and perhaps more importantly, to encourage feminist students and future lawyers to think critically about the law and take action to denounce inequality and injustice."

A roundtable on feminist issues in legal education will follow the release of the Manual and is being organized to take place this spring.

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If you would like more information about the Gender and the Law Manual, please contact:

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