

Baxter Family Competition on Federalism

Rachel and Colin Baxter

The following papers by Erika Arban and Éléonore Gauthier are two of the three winners of the Baxter Family Competition on Federalism,* organized for the first time in 2017 at the McGill Faculty of Law, our *alma mater*. The Competition was established to encourage young lawyers, legal academics, and law students to write and talk about federalism – the pros and cons of our form of democracy which divides up powers and responsibilities between provinces and a common federal government. By inviting legal scholars who are either still students, or with less than five years' experience, we hope to rekindle interest for federalism from a legal perspective, one that may not have received as much attention as it deserved, or required, over the last few decades, at least in Canada.

In this inaugural year, 47 papers were submitted, from nine countries. They were judged by an independent panel with expertise in law and governance, and the top three winners were invited to Montreal in March 2017 to present their papers at a Symposium held at the McGill Faculty Club. We were thrilled that several members of the international jury were in attendance and impressed by the lively discussion that followed the presentations.

As founders of the Competition, we strongly believe that we can all benefit from a more thoughtful discourse about the strengths and weaknesses of federalist systems. If properly and respectfully fostered at law schools, such enquiries and debates can promote a new generation of citizens who have given some thought to how our country operates and to ways to make it better. Recent world events give one lots to think about in terms of the division of powers, and the way our Constitution shapes political debate. We believe that the Competition also has the collateral benefit of teaching people (possibly future leaders) about other systems and promoting respect and tolerance of differ-

* The first prize winner, "Constitutional Jurisdictions" by Asha Kaushal, is to be published separately by the University of Toronto Press.

ences. Our hope is to foster study and dialogue that can lead to real, practical improvements in our form of government.

This year's event would not have been such a success without the commitment of Professor Johanne Poirier, holder of the Peter MacKell Chair in Federalism at the McGill Faculty of Law, and the dedication of our international panel of judges who carefully read and analysed each of the submissions. We sincerely thank Professor Poirier and the judges:

- Prof. Eva Maria Belser, Co-Director, Institute of Federalism, University of Fribourg, Switzerland
- The Honourable Ian Binnie, lawyer and former Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada
- The Honourable Marie Deschamps, lawyer and former Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada
- Prof. Jean Leclair, Faculty of Law, Université de Montréal
- Prof. Peter Oliver, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa
- Prof. Patricia Popelier, Associate-Dean, University of Antwerp, Belgium
- Prof. Cheryl Saunders, Director of Studies, Government Law, Melbourne Law School, Australia
- Prof. Marc Verdussen, Faculté de droit, Université catholique de Louvain

We also wish to express our gratitude to the *Review of Constitutional Studies* for publishing these papers, and thereby bringing them to a wider audience.

The Baxter Family Prize in Federalism will be awarded every second year. This was its inaugural year, which also happens to be Canada's 150th anniversary. The next call for papers will be in 2018, with the Symposium to be held in 2019. Please stay tuned for dates, themes and conditions by visiting the Peter MacKell Chair's website at the McGill Faculty of Law.

We look forward to the second round in 2018-2019 and encourage the submission of papers from young legal thinkers, in Canada and from around the world!