

## Submission #8

I am a Member called to the Alberta Bar in 2010. I am a visible person of colour. I have generally had an excellent experience practicing law in Alberta and as an Articling Student and Law Student. However, I would be lying if I did not acknowledge that I did experience racism in law school and in practice. To focus on two specific incidents, in law school [at an Alberta law school] [REDACTED], I attended an evening gathering of classmates for 1st year students [REDACTED]. I was busy speaking to a classmate when another white, male, classmate (fellow 1L cohort member) approached me without invitation and told me that I should go upstairs to the other party where black students (unsure what faculty) were holding an event. Not only was this racist but I am not black and I was absolutely stunned by the comment as was the classmate I was speaking with. I don't clearly recall what I did in response - I recall feeling extremely embarrassed and surprised but also anger and rage. I come from a low income family, and as a refugee immigrant to Canada. I went to school in [Alberta] [REDACTED] (from Gr. 1 through Law School) but this was the most shocking experience of direct racism in my life. I recall myself not wanting to ruin my law school career by acting out physically - I recall walking away feeling strange and like the evening was ruined and I did not fit in. Without belabouring, another experience I recall involved a friend who suggested that I secured my job as a lawyer due to the color of my skin rather than on merit - I was told that this "friend" heard this from "someone" at my office. Needless to say, this person is no longer my friend but I certainly felt that it was a racist comment. There were other incidents that were more subversive and pernicious in that the actions and words directed towards me were open to interpretation and ambiguity - sometimes I felt it might have to do with my skin color or maybe the person was having a bad day or simply was ignorant, or maybe I did something wrong that I was not alive to - one can never really tell sometimes but the feelings and wonder remain. Again, the vast majority of the experience of Law School and the practice of law as a Member in Alberta has been excellent, full of talented and laudable people. I share this experience not because it was standard - rather these were the exceptions to my experience. Still, acknowledging this and talking about it may help others who had the same, better, or worse experience and if it helps younger students / lawyers or other Members and the Law Society grow, then all the better.