

to becoming a sole practitioner. "I wanted to explore different areas of the law and I knew becoming a sole practitioner would afford me those opportunities," says Sara regarding her transition to private practice.

Sara currently maintains a practice based in Iqaluit where she focuses primarily on criminal defence litigation. "There are very few of us in private practices here in Nunavut," says Sara. "Nunavut offers so much to someone in private practice. I have had many opportunities to develop personally and professionally as well as grow my practice as a sole practitioner – opportunities that I couldn't take advantage of when I was a staff lawyer with legal aid."

Sara's private practice in Iqaluit has expanded to include administrative law, parliamentary law, and elections law. She is Counsel to the Chief Electoral Officer and to Elections Nunavut, the Deputy Law Clerk at the Nunavut Legislative Assembly and sits as a member of the Nunavut Criminal Code Review Board and of the Labour Standards Board.

In addition to her law practice, Sara is a member of the Law Society of Nunavut's (LSN) Discipline Committee as well as Special Counsel and Senior Project Advisor to the LSN. She also formerly served as Director of the Canadian Council of Criminal Lawyers representing Nunavut.

From the start, Sara has always sought out challenges, educational as well as professional, ensuring a varied legal practice. Her resume includes clerking for Justice Louis LeBel at the Supreme Court of Canada from 2004 to 2005, and served in the role as a Legal Officer (Reserve) with the Office of the Judge Advocate General of the Canadian Armed Forces from 2007 to 2014, which included deployments as a legal advisor on Canadian Forces operations overseas.

Prior to arriving in western Nunavut, Sara started her legal journey on the east coast of Canada in Nova Scotia. It was here that Sara graduated from Dalhousie University with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Political Science and International Development Studies in 1999. She then went even further east to attend Trinity College, University of Dublin in Ireland. Here Sara received her LLB in 2003 and a Masters in Letters (MLitt) focusing on International Criminal Law in 2005. In 2003 she completed the Federation of Law Societies of Canada's National Committee on Accreditation's course of studies. Sara also graduated from Carleton University in 2009 with a degree in International Affairs from the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs.

“I have had many opportunities to develop personally and professionally as well as grow my practice as a sole practitioner...”



“I really enjoy the people I work with, and together, we do good work.”

Sara was admitted to the Law Society of Upper Canada (now Law Society of Ontario) in 2005, and to the LSN in 2014.

For Sara, practicing law in Nunavut is both challenging and rewarding at the same time. She also willingly admits that working as a lawyer in the North is not for everyone.

“Good colleagues and good relationships with those in the justice system make the job easier. I really enjoy the people I work with, and together, we do good work.” Sara points to the different pace from practicing law in the south. Specifically, the system of circuit court in Nunavut. The court travels from community to community and the court is only in any one community for a relatively short period of time on each Circuit. As such, a significant amount of work must be dealt with within that period of time.

“Court circuits are intense. We often have to contend with a high volume of files, a significant amount of travel, weather delays, and technological challenges. We also must respect that many of us are outsiders who are relatively privileged. Our work requires us to practice trauma informed lawyering. Despite all these challenges, I have had great experiences because of the people I work with.”

Lawyers need to be able to build trust and relationships with the community as well as their clients when conducting circuit court. For Sara and many of her colleagues, it is important that Nunavummiut have trust in their counsel. “We don’t get to spend a lot of time with them because of the nature of circuit court,” says Sara. “Many of us are also from outside of Nunavut and not Inuk. It takes a lot of courage for our clients to put



their trust in the lawyers assigned to represent them.” Sara believes that to be a competent lawyer in the North, individuals need to be aware of the privilege of that trust and have respect for the culture and the people.

LAW SOCIETY OF NUNAVUT'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE FEDERATION OF LAW SOCIETIES OF CANADA

Sara is also the member nominated by the LSN to the Council of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada. The Federation of Law Societies of Canada (the Federation) is the national coordinating body of the 14 law societies, including the LSN. Every lawyer in Canada and notary in Quebec is required by law to be a member of a law society and to be governed by its rules. Furthermore, the Federation promotes the development of national standards, encourages the harmonization of the 14 law society rules and procedures, and undertakes national initiatives as directed by its members, among other activities. Each of the 14 law societies has a Representative who serves as the voice for their law society at the national table. Since 2018, Sara has been the LSN's Representative.

Sara was nominated by the LSN's President and CEO to bring forward Nunavut's position to the national discussions and to ensure the unique features of Nunavut are taken into account when setting national standards. “While the Nunavut Bar is relatively small, Nunavut's perspective matters on the national stage. When the Federation is developing standards, Nunavut has an equal voice like all other Federation members,” says Sara. “The Federation is committed to having all of Canada – from coast to coast to coast – represented around the table.”

