

Ironically, it was while working at the diamond mine that Mansell discovered his passion for law. He recalls, "While working at the mine I went to visit my roommate from undergrad who was a first-year law student at the University of Toronto (U of T). While visiting him I attended a couple of law student events and was fascinated with the work, discussions and debates the students were having. I was intrigued and decided to write the LSAT. The following year, in 2004, I found myself at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Law."

When asked what made him choose the University of Saskatchewan he replied, "I really enjoyed my time at USask. Coming from the North, I really appreciated the small class size, it was less intimidating than a bigger school like U of T and more collegial. Growing up, my grandparents also had a cabin at a lake outside of Lloydminster Saskatchewan. I spent many summers there and had a lot of good memories. It was an easy choice for me." Later in his career, his choice to attend USask would serve him well beyond receiving his education from there.

While attending USask, Mansell focused his law school studies in Indigenous law and Constitutional law. In 2006, he completed a semester in Finland at the University of Turku where he undertook a directed study comparing the self-government models of different circumpolar Indigenous peoples.

After graduating from the University of Saskatchewan College of Law in 2007, Mansell moved west and articulated for McLennan Ross, a full-service civil firm in Edmonton. Once he became an associate, Mansell transferred to their office in Yellowknife to be closer to family "During my time with McLennan Ross, I did a lot of insurance, employment, and general litigation," states Mansell. "While I was happy for the Court experience, and enjoyed my time with McLennan, I knew it wasn't what I wanted to specialize in."



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COMING FULL CIRCLE

Having always considered Iqaluit his home, when Mansell saw a posting for Legal Counsel with the Department of Justice at the Government of Nunavut, he jumped at the chance and applied. And so it was in 2009, Mansell returned home to Iqaluit.

During the time between 2009 and 2017, Mansell held several different roles within the Department of Justice, including acting Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Director of Policy and Planning and Legal Advisor to the Devolution Secretariat.

GIVING BACK TO THE PROFESSION

When Mansell returned to Iqaluit in 2009, he joined the Law Society of Nunavut and started to look for ways to give back to his profession. "I see volunteering as an opportunity to grow both personally and professionally," says Mansell. "It's a great way to meet others and promote your profession." Mansell has been very active with the law the Law Society of Nunavut. He has served in all the Executive roles on the Law Society Board including two years as President of the Board. He is also the past President of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) Nunavut Branch as well he served as Nunavut's representative on the CBA National Board. Mansell has also served as a member of the Nunavut Legal Services Board, the Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal and the Nunavut Judicial Advisory Committee.

NUNAVUT LAW PROGRAM

While working as the Director of Policy and Planning with the Department of Justice in 2017, Mansell's alma mater was awarded the Nunavut Law Program contract. Shortly after, USask put out the call for a Director for the Program. "I knew the faculty and the Dean at USask; I also knew the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut. It seemed like a good fit and an excellent opportunity, so I applied." Mansell was hired in May and had four months to get the program off the ground before the students started in September. "I served as Director until 2020 when I was offered the Deputy Minister (DM) position back with the Department of Justice. The timing wasn't great, but it was too important an opportunity to pass up, so I went back to Justice as DM. Fortunately, Lana Walker stepped in to run the program for its final year and did a great job. 22 students graduated and most are doing their articles now," says Mansell with pride. "Working with the Law Program was such a rewarding experience. It was amazing to see the students mature and grow in their legal studies. To be part of a Program that will expand the Nunavut Bar and will contribute to a justice system that better reflects the population of our Territory was an honour. These students will change the future of the profession in Nunavut."

