

**“OFFENSE, RESPECT, ETHICS AND THE LAW: HOW SHOULD WE SPEAK TO
ONE ANOTHER ABOUT SENSITIVE SUBJECTS?”**

A public forum convened by the Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership and the
Canadian Civil Liberties Association

Saturday, April 17, 2010, Munk Centre, 1 Devonshire Place, University of Toronto

10:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., followed by a reception 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

10:00 – 10:15 **Introductions and preliminary matters** – Janet Keeping (Sheldon Chumir Foundation) and Nathalie Des Rosiers (Canadian Civil Liberties Association)

10:15 – 11:00 **“Respect and Offense”: What is “respect” and what role does it play in our concept of human rights?** (Trudy Govier, Philosophy, University of Lethbridge) **What does it mean for speech to be offensive?** (Dan Shapiro, Sheldon Chumir Foundation)

15 minutes each to speak, and then 15 minutes for questions

11:00 – 11:45 **What do Human Rights Commissions primarily exist to do, and what is their mandate to regulate speech?** (Linda McKay-Panos, Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre)

20 minutes to speak, and then 25 minutes for questions. [Question periods are cumulative – previous speakers may also be asked questions, with priority going to questions pertaining to the most recent presentation.]

11:45 – 12:45 Lunch – provided

12:45 – 2:00 **The political and social philosophy around free speech** (Micheal Vonn, British Columbia Civil Liberties Association; Kelly Toughill, Journalism, University of King’s College; Alan Borovoy, Canadian Civil Liberties Association)

Each speaker will have 15 minutes, with 30 minutes for questions

2:00 – 2:45 **How have the human rights codes provisions on speech worked out in practice?**
(Noa Mendelsohn Aviv, Canadian Civil Liberties Association)

2:45 – 3:00 Coffee break

3:00 – 4:00 **What now for the ethics of debate?**

- Just because legislation is the wrong way to go, it doesn't follow that nothing can be done to nurture less abusive public discourse. There is an ethics of debate.
(Richard Moon, Law, University of Windsor; Dan Shapiro)
- How do we operationalize respect in our public discourse? (Trudy Govier)
- Question period

4:00 – 4:30 **What does all this mean for media ethics? How should journalists respond?**
How does all this work out in the practice of journalism?

Two working journalists will give their views on these questions. (Steve Meurice, Deputy Editor, National Post; Marni Soupcoff, Deputy Comment Editor, National Post)
Each will have 15 minutes to speak.

4:30 – 5:30 p.m. Discussion

Reception – 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.