



*in memory of*

**Alexandra Dodger**

*B.C.L./LL.B. 2011*



1983-2011



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## WHAT'S INSIDE? QUEL EST LE CONTENU?

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ÉDITO	3
OBITUARY	4
MAX REED	5
KIRSTEN ANKER	5
DAN HARRIS	6
ALEX SHEE	7
THOMAS CHALMERS	8
GREGORY KO	9
MIKE LOCKNER	10
VICTOR MUNIZ-FRATICELLI	11
D. SIMMONDS	11
LAEKA REZA	11
ROBERT LECKEY	12
TINA PIPER	12
CÉLIA JUTRAS	13
SOPHIE ROY-LAFLEUR	14
KATRINA PEDDLE	15
STEFAN SZPAJDA	16
ADELA MACIEJEWSKI SCHEER	17
GUIDE-CARRIÈRES EN INTÉRÊT PUBLIC	18
MARGARET CARLYLE	19
ANONYMOUS	19
PAYAM AKHAVAN	20
ANDREW DEAK	21
CITY OF TORONTO	22
EVAN FOX-DECENT	25
DANIEL JUTRAS	26

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## WANT TO TALK? TU VEUX T'EXPRIMER?

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Envoyez vos commentaires ou articles avant  
jeudi 17h à l'adresse : [quid.law@mcgill.ca](mailto:quid.law@mcgill.ca)

Toute contribution doit indiquer le nom de  
l'auteur, son année d'étude ainsi qu'un titre  
pour l'article. L'article ne sera publiée qu'à la  
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basera sa décision sur la politique de  
rédaction.

Contributions should preferably be submitted as  
a .doc attachment (and not, for instance, a  
".docx").

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*Co-Editor-in-Chief*

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HÉLIA  
TAHERI

Le 17 Octobre 2011, la faculté de droit a perdu  
une de ses étudiantes de la promotion 2011 :  
Alexandra Dodger.

Students, faculty members, family and friends  
have come together to celebrate her life and  
honour her memory.

L'équipe du Quid a décidé de dédier ce numéro  
entièrement à Alexandra.

## SONNET 18

### SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY?

*by William Shakespeare*

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest;  
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

# ALEXANDRA DODGER

(December 23, 1983 - October 15, 2011)

“You were a true original Alex.” Alexandra Natalia McFabulous Artful Dodger (her full name) was witty, intelligent, and passionate. She always kept people on their feet, challenging their opinions and asking them to question their ideas. You could hear her debating in the hallways or challenging norms in class. She laughed a lot and danced in a funny way, allowing no coffeehouse to be immune from her charm.

She came into law school with a tremendous sense of purpose. You could see in her eyes that she knew she could make a difference, and she did. This passion may have come from her working class background, raised as a single child by her mother and grandmother who worked hard to make ends meet. It most probably was in great part shaped by her involvement in the University of Toronto Student Union and NDP. It took form at McGill in RadLaw, the LSA, McGill’s Young NDPs and other student groups. She stood up for what she believed in, and eloquently argued those ideas. She even helped our faculty shine as part of the Jessup International moot team that represented Canada in its international rounds. But, at her core she was an activist. She spoke up at every SSMU General Assembly, demonstrated for human rights on campus and even camped out in front of administrators’ offices. If she had a cause, she gave sweat and blood for it. She never went unnoticed and was always recognized for having an impact.

As a law community, we have tremendous potential to make this world a better place; she took the time to remind a lot of us of that fact. She was starting a career in what she loved, advocating for the weak and the voiceless at Amnesty International in Ottawa. She lived life to the fullest, but she had so much more to accomplish.

Alex never ceased to make us laugh, think and try to make this world a better place. No matter where she is now, she will continue to challenge us to be passionate, involved, and committed to doing what we love and changing the world for the best, because she would have.

The testimonials and stories in this Quid are a snapshot of the tremendous person she was. She leaves many friends hoping that her life can inspire others to live one filled with purpose and surrounded by love.



Photo by Christopher Rompré

MAX  
REED

# A TRIBUTE TO ALEX DODGER

“How could this have happened to Alex right now, she was supposed to be arresting George Bush” was how one friend reacted to the terrible news of Alex’s death.

Alex’s most recent adventure at Amnesty was part of her well-known, longstanding commitment to social justice about which lots will be said. But this is a story about banter not biography. Rather than recite her CV, I want to reflect on the passing of a good friend.

You can forget currency metaphors to describe Alex. To fully capture her complexity you have to compare her to one of those multi-sided die used in those role-playing games she so disdained. Her commitment to equality and social justice grew out of her personal history. She was raised in a newcomer family that worked hard to make ends meet. She lacked the privilege that many of us at McGill law took for granted. Yet she never used this as a stick to poke guilty liberals (ok... only a few times). Instead, she used it to inject passion into her principles. Without being doctrinaire, she was rigidly coherent in the classroom, the hallway, and, especially, the bar. One friend recounts with joy the way his arguments with Alex defined Immigration and Refugee Law. I’m not so sure the other students were as joyful as he or she. But she certainly had a strong presence at McGill law.

She wasn’t just relentless at McGill, but also towards McGill itself. In 2010, she worked in Paris for four months. Loving la vie Parisienne, she decided that she wanted to pursue an academic exchange there. But McGill said no. In reply, she waged war. She emailed every McGill administrator she could think of, phoned them daily, and even camped outside one woman’s office for a bit. When this didn’t work, she emailed every law school in Paris to create a program just for her. At one point, the Dean of Science Po was ready to grant her request. McGill, though, as it is want to do, held its line. Eventually, McGill and her reached détente in Brussels where she enjoyed herself a great deal. In a former life, I was employed full-time by the McGill student union to fight McGill on behalf of students. I never fought a bureaucratic battle half as intensely as she fought this one.

It didn’t matter if she won or lost, if she was right or wrong, Alex advanced her cause with a unique mix of dignity, gusto, passion, and intelligence, that always made an impact. Her recent work with Amnesty garnered so much media attention that my friends in Sweden and the USA, who did not know Alex, sent me the news articles with a big thumbs up.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Photo by Christopher Rompré

KIRSTEN  
ANKER

Dear Alexandra,

I find an old reference letter; in it, I wax enthusiastically about the bright future that you will no longer have. I write that you were outstanding as much for your passion and dedication as for your compelling intellect. We will not forget.

Given her passionate commitment to principles, it is only natural that Alex provoked strong reactions. I once had lunch with someone who Alex fought against. Her successful advocacy had cost him a lot of money and time. While the mere mention of her name raised his temperature, his respect for her talent and commitment lowered mine. A glance at Facebook this week tells us that this story is not unique. The profound respect from her opponents speaks to her strength of character.

Strangely, though, my own experiences with Alex rarely involved her political side. Rather, I knew her as a friend with whom I had the best of times, but never, until now, the worst of times (and this is not her fault). Unlike some lefties, and many lawyers, she was serious about her ideals without taking herself too seriously. In short, she was a blast.

No time was this more obvious than the first time I met her. Our evening started out at a reception at the Law Faculty called Coffeehouse. Alex rarely, if ever, missed this. After the reception, we went out to a restaurant where Alex and one of our friends proceeded to argue vigorously about politics. The two of us observing this were unsure if she and our friend would ever speak again. However, the evening ended with a bottle of wine on my balcony after which Alex and her debating partner snuck into the neighbour's pool for a swim. It may seem odd to remember someone because she liked to party. But the Alex I knew was, at her core, whimsical. It tempered her political side and further endeared her to those of us who didn't always agree with her.

Alex loved to travel. When we lived in Paris at the same time she would drag me along to look for Serge Gainsbourg's house, ex-

otic mustard, hipster bars, and whatever else struck her fancy. During this time, seven of us went to Barcelona. When we landed, Alex introduced us to a friend that she had made through her political days in Toronto. He happened to be the economic advisor to the President of Catalonia. Through Barcelona we traipsed eating tapas as we went. One night ended in gleeful joy because Alex demanded we frolic in a playground reserved for children on the beach. The locals, needless to say, did not approve. Even confined to, in her view, provincial Ottawa, Alex explored the world. She hosted numerous Couch Surfers from France and scoured for conferences that would allow her to travel.

I was in New York last weekend. While there, I went to Occupy Wall Street. It was an impressive piece of political action and theatre. The event had a serious message about inequality that was delivered in a whimsical way. My final SMS ever to Alex was "you would love this, wish you were here." Today, I feel this ever more strongly.

This tale ends tragically. Alex was taken from us by a senseless, and very likely criminal, act. We must be as relentless in fighting for justice for her, as she was in fighting for justice for others. We must not let her death extinguish her passion. We must continue her work to bring equality to everyone and justice to those who try to escape it – including the 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States.

Thanks for the fight and the fun, friend. I am so very sad you are gone.



*Member of Parliament for Scarborough Southwest*

## STATEMENT ON ALEXANDRA DODGER (PRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT)

Monday, October 17, 2011

Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a heavy heart to remember the life of a friend whose journey was tragically cut short this past Saturday at the age of 27. Alexandra Dodger was killed after being struck by a car near her home in Ottawa.

Alex was an extraordinary woman who was passionate about life and was determined to improve the lives of those around her. She cared deeply about giving a voice to the voiceless. Alex had just graduated from law school at McGill earlier this year and started a promising career with Amnesty International. Alex dedicated so much of her time to many causes, one of which was

the Ontario New Democratic Youth, where I had the pleasure of working with her and where we became friends. There is no doubt in my mind that Alex was destined to do great things and was going to bring forth positive change.

I will cherish our time spent together and miss all the times that we will never have. On behalf of myself, Her Majesty's loyal opposition and all our staff, many who knew Alex well, I would like to extend our deep and sincere condolences to Alex's family, friends and colleagues, but especially to her mother and grandmother who must now endure what no parent or grandparent should have to.

*See the video at <http://danharris.ca/videos>*




**ALEX  
SHEE**

Alex,

You were unique and one of a kind. Big shades and a funny pale face. I close my eyes and remember us dancing and laughing. I hadn't seen you in such a long time! You off in Paris, Brussels, the Hague ("with your cheap airlines and European cities at your fingertips") and me in Asia (lost with a backpack). I remember you sending me messages about my Mongolian adventures, encouraging me to see the world (especially the -stanz...) and to find my place. Rest assured, I wanted to tell you that I feel like I am getting closer to it, that I am slowly figuring out what you helped me realize: I can make a difference in people's lives. I am so sorry I didn't see you the other day when you came to Montreal; I thought we would have so many other times to see each other. I was stressing about things that I now realize don't matter.

I wanted to tell you how proud I was to see you working at Amnesty, seeing someone finally brave enough to do what they love - no compromise. I was looking forward to George W. Bush's

face when you arrested him (I don't think anyone else in Canada would have the guts to do something like that!). There were so many things that I was looking forward to seeing you do!

I remember one of the last things you told me: the glory days are just beginning, keep having fun. I have been thinking about that for the past couple of weeks... I won't forget.

Thank you for helping me, supporting me, and being that special advisor I always need and counted on. I will make crepes this Sunday for you, so I can remember our brunch.

I will miss you a lot.

Your "little" Alex  
p.s. Thanks for never debating me, and being gentle, I was always scared of the moment I would have to face off with you in an argument.



*Alex with fellow class of '11 students Scott Scambler, Bryana Jensen, and Faizel Gulamhussein*

Photo by Charlie Feldman

Left, Alex with BCL/LLB class of '10 graduate Natai Shelsen at the 2010 Grad Ball



Photos by Charlie Feldman



"Always festive and in the spirit, here's Alex as seen at a Halloween Coffeeshouse"



SAO

## ALEXANDRA DODGER

### A SAD GOODBYE AND AN OPPORTUNITY MISSED.

The extent of my knowledge of Alex was from across the SAO counter. Now that I have learned more about her I hope she might have considered the counter somewhat of a wall.

I was always happy to see her smiling face, and she was always pleasant and interestingly attired. Over the past few days, after reading some of the notes posted on the faculty's website, attending the memorial, and spending time with her friends afterwards, I have developed a greater understanding and

appreciation for her commitment to her friends, family, and to all via her passion for social justice.

I am saddened that I did not have the opportunity to better know this quirky brilliant person, or is it brilliantly quirky person, for I have missed out on a chance to share her passion and learn from her. I am also certain, like many, that I would have considered her a cherished friend. Alex, for the chance missed, my apologies.





GREGORY  
KO

# YES, IT IS BREAD WE FIGHT FOR, BUT WE FIGHT FOR ROSES TOO

I wake to the sun's glint reflecting off the earthen tiles from the russet brick block adjacent. A clanging, rhythmic melody chimes from across the room. "In December drinking horchata, I'd look psychotic in a balaclava. Winter's cold, it's too much to handle, pincher crabs that pinch at your sandals. Whoa ohh ohh." Half-dazed, wiping out the blariness of an evening too well spent, I shoot a squint across the room. There, resplendent, achingly graceful, she angles a wry grin. "Hey, sleepyhead" she chuckles. "I know it's not December, but we've got horchata", she beams, girlishly swaying and humming in the warmth. She'd picked up breakfast, and was savouring the balm of our tan-coloured flat in medieval Barcelona.

I've been waking to these images of Alex over the past few mornings, half-expecting her to appear. They're fleeting, yet vivid. An uncorked bottle of white in hand, a billowing dress, a silver locket swaying. I see her straw-coloured hair. I hear her dry chuckle. Her eyes roll. Her silver earrings dangle wildly. Her nose twitches. She's about to waltz on in, muttering about the most absurd encounter on the street. And, of course, searing on her lips, a story she's burning to tell.

There's so much anguish in reaching for words to explain the inexplicable. And so we're left with worn images and impressions of an imperfect memory. Yet, anyone who met Alex couldn't help but take note of this unearthly force within her.

When I first met Alex on the back terrasse of a Plateau drinking well, she began our relationship by expounding with didactic exactitude on the unassailable tenets of the student movement and collective action. Somehow she'd found out that, in a past life, I was involved in student politics and queer activism. That was enough, that was her cue. And, as neurotic

as she first appeared, I, like everyone else who met her as we began our lives in Montreal, was left with the unshakable feeling that we'd met a force of nature.

Alex's speaking out gave courage to others to speak out. She pushed back on the genteel norms of the academy, and refused to compromise her frank self. And despite this irreverence for polite society, she had a preternatural ability to marshal fact and argument. In a law faculty that tells women, perhaps not explicitly, but implicitly, to sit down and shut up, she would go punch for punch with the smuggest debaters. She spoke with convincing passion about fostering a more egalitarian world, namely because she understood firsthand, with intimate and agonizing detail, the insidious ways our society perpetuates social inequality, under the guise of meritocracy.

Yet, what's strange is that as much as I admired her social activism, its rigour, force and compassion, it was Alex's insatiable hunger for the world around her that drew me in. She saw the world through a reimagined lens, with equal parts whimsy and adventure. Being with her felt like communing with the world at some heightened level, convention abandoned. A moment, a place, a thought, all looked different with Alex by your side because everything somehow seemed possible, it all seemed so alive. And so my heart breaks and yearns, for all those alleyways not trodden on, those amaretto and cokes not drunk, those jeggings and skirt combos not worn, but especially with anguish, those other worlds not dreamed of.

*Those lips and teeth that asked how my day went  
Are shouting up through cracks in the pavement  
Here comes a feeling you thought you'd forgotten  
Chairs to sit and sidewalks to walk on*



MIKE  
LOCKNER

## ALEX (1983-2011)

Here and elsewhere, you will hear from people who want to admire Alex Dodger's fearlessness, laud her audacity and commemorate her fierce societal engagement. Me, I want to do what I've always done: make fun of her.

It is not hard to make fun of Alex. Her finger-pointing-kissy-face dance, deployed at the slightest hint of Jarvis Cocker or the 1980s, was a favourite target. Her repeated smuggling of bottles of diet-pepsi-and-amaretto (possibly the vilest substance in the known universe) into any type of school event was another. When she moved from one apartment to another, I made fun of her for the 30 garbage bags full of clothes we had to haul into and out of the van. When she painted her apartment an eye-searing purple, I made fun of her for both the colour, and the fact that she had only bought mini-rollers to paint the entire apartment (I regained the use of my arm two weeks later). At any karaoke-related event – and many karaoke-unrelated events – I made fun of her for her singing, as indeed before I met her I never knew the "Doo doodoodoos" in "Hungry Like A Wolf" could be given that. much. emphasis. I made fun of her for bringing a bolt-cutter to school to steal back her bike (it had been stolen from her only days before), and then leaving an article from the Civil Code of Quebec to justify the repossession.

Even her political beliefs and engagements were, for an apolitical milquetoast non-participant like myself, something to make fun of her for. I bugged Alex about her image as a political firebrand, turning every minor complaint she made into a

pseudo-revolutionary epic cry for freedom (STUDENTS, THROW OFF THE BREADED SHACKLES OF THIS GREASOFASCIST CAFE-TERIA). I made fun of her take-no-prisoners approach, which she applied liberally to situations ranging from broad social injustice to restaurant choices she did not agree with. I needled her constantly about the NDP, the CFS, and all the other organizations that she supported throughout the years.



Photo by Christopher Rompré

I loved making fun of Alex Dodger for all these things, because whether I was bugging her about her dancing or her most strongly held beliefs, the reaction would always be the same. She'd smile, sheepishly. She'd roll her eyes. She'd shrug her shoulders. And she'd say "What can I say?" And then, of course, she'd make fun of me right back (there's no shortage of material).

Making fun of Alex was fun because she was so good at making *making fun* fun. I've seen firebrand-Alex in action (terrifying), but to me, dork that I am, even our loudest debates were always cut with a generous dose of goofiness, self-aware charm, and digressive whimsy. Alex could wield an iron fist when she wanted to, but it always had on purple sparkle nail polish. I have never known someone who was so committed to her beliefs, but at the same time so willing to laugh at herself, and to just laugh in general.

That's over now. I still really want to make fun of Alex, because that's what we did, and that's how I clumsily articulated my admiration to her. But her response, that sheepish-smile-and-shrug, exists now only as a memory. And though I hope the memories of her will be able to last me through the years to come, it's just not the same without that – without her, there, laughing at herself, laughing at me, and just, you know, laughing. That's what hurts the most.

Alex was so many things to so many people, and did so much in her short, short life. You should read every one of the things written about her since her death from all the insightful and engaged people she impacted. You should talk to all her friends to see all that she was, and you should think about it, and appreciate it, and take what you can from it into the future she no longer gets to share with us. I think, in time, I'll do that too. But for now, I just sit here wishing I could tell one more stupid joke, and get one more knowing smile.



It is very difficult to write on the death of one's student. A sense of generational obligation and affection makes it especially hard. The event is unnatural, a reversal of the order of time. Even those of us not far in age or temperament from our students, because of our position feel responsible, proud, hopeful of what they will make of themselves and of whatever may have taught them. Alexandra was my student in the very first class that I taught at McGill. She was smart and she was witty and outspoken and wise. I feel her loss terribly, for what she gave and what she would have given all of us.



## TRIBUTE

Bright. Articulate. Feisty. Socially aware. Fun. Beautiful. Those were my first impressions of Alex when we met in Paris in October 2010. What started as just a tea among four McGillers turned into a ten hour adventure filled with meaning, laughter, deep conversation and fascinating stories. Alex talked about her family, her challenging road to law school, and the unexpected "finds" she made along the way. I immediately knew she was destined for greatness. I am overwhelmed with sadness that our friendship has been cut short. Her death is senseless, and our grief is profound. I will always remember her and be inspired by her amazing spirit, intrepid nature and passion for justice.



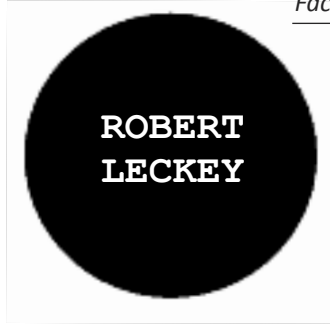
I would like to pay my respects as I spoke to Alex over email just a month before she passed. Even though our conversation was short, Alex was very personable despite her obvious stressful state while articling in Ottawa. I remember her smile and only found out later that we had similar social concerns. I send my condolences to her family.

Rest in peace Alex, you did your job here.



Photo by Laeka Reza

Faculty



Faculty



In Family Law, in Fall 2009, Alex—I knew her as Ms Dodger—used to sit in the first or second row of the bank of seats to my left in the Moot Court. Each time I teach Family Law, I am blessed to have a handful of students who are especially articulate, even outspoken, in class, who ask penetrating questions and make no bones about their seeing injustice and absurdity in the way law deals with families. Alex was foremost among them that year. Her short paper, which I have just reread, took the course pack's Law and Economics reading to task for its assumptions' unreality in the face of the abiding structural subordination experienced by many women. I don't mean to imply for a moment that one's level of outwardly visible engagement, or one's rigorous articulateness, in Family Law provides any kind of index for the grief occasioned by the loss of a young life. That was simply how Alexandra Dodger's path crossed mine during her years at the Faculty of Law.

In the short time since the terrible news, the tributes paid to her by others have led me to think that the sharp passion I was lucky enough to witness in Alex was typical of her way of being in the world. I am grateful for the three months we occupied a classroom together.

I cannot begin to fathom the sense of grief that her mother, her grandmother, and others who knew her well must be feeling.

I was so sad and shocked to hear about Alexandra's death. She took my Canadian Legal History course in fall 2009 and I was immediately endeared by the way she made friends by asking other students to be accountable for those kind of throwaway comments that hang in seminar air like a bad smell. She dove into a fabulous paper about Dorothea Palmer, an Ottawa nurse who was charged with distributing information about contraceptives promoting birth control to housewives in 1930's Eastview, which led to the storied Eastview Birth Control Trial. I hope she got it published, I know she was working on that, she had a way of telling the story that made the characters and conflicts come alive. Alexandra was a gifted writer, I still use the paper as a model of legal history writing. I felt great courage when I understood how despite difficult health she lived life fully: I'd run into her in the randomest places, like when I looked up to see her sitting across from me in a half-lit bedouin-style cloth tent sent up as a soundbox for a CKUT fundraiser in a church on Ste. Catherine Street. With her heartfelt convictions and compassion I was sure I'd be reading about her in the paper, not as I did on Monday. As a fellow traveler and a friend I feel lucky to have had the chance to walk the same path with her for a while and wish she were still

here clearing the air, being what it is to live a life without regrets.

Best,  
Tina



Photo by Shaila Kibria

Top – Vlad Glebov, Walied Khogali. Bottom – Shaila Kibria, Alex Carter, Alex Artful-Dodger





CÉLIA  
JUTRAS

REMEMBERING  
ALEXANDRA DODGER  
(1983-2011)

My dearest Alexandra,

Words can only begin to express how appreciative I am of the last 5 years that we spent so closely together. Loved by countless people and enchanting so many others, I am eternally grateful that you elected to have me as one of your closest friends in law school and thereafter.

If roles were reversed, Alex, I know that you would speak with great eloquence of our many adventures, our journey through law school together, of our lasting friendship through your many travels, of the many laughs we shared, but also of the tears we shed in the moments we faced hardship.

I don't believe I will be able to share these stories with your friends and colleagues at this time, as I am stricken with paralyzing grief. However, please know how honoured I feel to have been your accomplice and friend for these last few years, and that I am inconsolable as a result of having lost you so suddenly.



Photo by Charlie Feldman

Alex and Célia Jutras at the 2010 Grad Ball.



Photo by Charlie Feldman

*While it's true Alex could often be found at coffeehouse, she could also often be found making funny faces when asked to pose for a picture. Pictured: Alex and a glass of wine, alongside fellow class of '11 Graduate Charlie Feldman and 4L Jonathan Katz*

Alex, I will miss your brilliance, your kindness, your zeal, your lust for life, and most importantly, your courage. You were a principled activist, a strong feminist, and you undoubtedly would have become an unassailable opponent in the courtroom.

I would like to take this occasion to briefly cite one of your favourite authors, Milan Kundera, author of the *Unbearable Lightness of Being*: "Without realizing it, the individual composes his life according to the laws of beauty even in times of greatest distress."

I believe what Kundera meant was that we must make beautiful form out of this tragic, senseless incident and continue to strive for the principles Alex so ardently defended.

Je t'aime ma belle et tu me manques déjà beaucoup trop.



**SOPHIE  
ROY-LAFLEUR**

When I first met Alex in our Public International Law class at McGill, I thought it unlikely that we would eventually become good friends. Not because I did not like her or disagreed with her, but rather because I thought she was out of my league! I was really impressed by her ease and confidence in the classroom, and kept wondering how she knew it all and could express herself so eloquently. It was only a year later, as we kept showing up for the same classes and going to the same events that we actually started talking to each other. I discovered that we shared similar interests and concerns about the Middle East, and that I could learn a lot from her.

One thing leading to another, the following summer Alex took me out to some of her favorite spots in Toronto, and, while we were both in Europe during the fall, she invited me to stay with her in Paris for several days. That is where I had some of the best times with Alex: doing a photo shoot with friends on Les

Champs-Élysées; climbing the Eiffel Tower in a snow storm; and trying on perfumes at Arabian Oud. Paris is also where I discovered Alex's love for Star Trek and Jean-Luc Picard, as well as for Serge Gainsbourg and his melodies. As you can see, Alex was multi-faceted and never, ever boring.

For me, she was both a caring and generous friend and a constant source of inspiration. She was strong and determined, yet humane and attentive. She was engaged in many different things, and yet I feel like she gave them all a hundred percent of her ability and commitment. I feel privileged to have known Alex and to have shared those moments with her. The laughs, the serious conversations, all of it!

I will, like many others, miss her dearly. But I know that her spirit will live on as we remember her and keep being inspired by her dedication and passion for life and for many causes.

Photo by Sophie Roy-Lafleur





Photo by Christopher Rompré

**KATRINA  
PEDDLE**

## REMEMBERING ALEX

It feels very strange to be writing this. I want to write about the way I knew Alex, and that was through organizing with her at law school.

Alex put the rad in Radlaw. A couple of years ago, there were about 50 people milling around the atrium, and we were trying to pull the last few things together to launch Palestinian Human Rights Week.

Seeing the crowd, Alex turned to me and said, "I really think you should just go to the SAO and get the microphone." But by the time I got back, she had a better plan. She got Dina to climb up on a table to make the opening remarks. Without a doubt, she was solutions-oriented.

Alex Dodger was a 'doer'. I loved that about her. She was someone who showed up at 7 pm on a snowy Tuesday from another event across town to make sure that all the photos were up in time for the next day's vernissage. She was someone who

showed solidarity with her classmates, never afraid to take someone on in the Quid or elsewhere. She was committed to international solidarity movements, and made links between local and global systems of power with rigour and passion. And she did so all the time.

You might not always agree with Alex, but you certainly respected her. She was a woman with solid arguments. And her arguments were meant to change your mind, to open it up with possibilities of social change. She backed her convictions with her life choices.

She was a hard worker, the kind of person that we knew we'd hear about as she launched herself into social justice lawyering. Landing an articling job with Amnesty International was a perfect fit for Alex. After all, she'd been at this stuff for years. They have lost one amazing articling student.

Alex was both small p and capital P political. She spoke out to defend a woman's right to choose. She cared about the make-up of her campus community. She organized to ensure that the educational institutions where she thrived would be accessible to those coming without the privilege of parental financial support.

Alex also cared about the rights of workers. One of her last Facebook updates was to her good friend and classmate Rachel Gotthilf, posting a video of a MUNACA worker getting arrested for disrupting the homecoming events here last week. We joked through sadness about how she'd have been mad if we crossed a picket line to remember her.

Alex was someone who wore her political stripes on her sleeve, and boldly challenged those around her to live their values.

I, like so many, will miss her.



**STEFAN  
SZPAJDA**

There's no shortage of activists who fail to persuade others because they don't seem persuaded themselves. They show up to rallies and carry placards, but it's tough to shake the feeling that, for too many of them, these gestures are a way to make friends or form identities. That was not Alex. She would never be so crass.

Alex was the most elegant bullshit detector I have ever encountered. When triggered—a regular occurrence—she served up an orderly set of propositions, paired them with practical examples, and delivered it all with self-possession. It's not that she never went out on a limb. Part of what made arguing with her so fun was her ability to weave in and out of comfortable territory without ever losing her thread. She was driven to persuade both by a clear set of goals and a genuine enjoyment of the discussion process. Yes, Alex could sometimes sound like a true believer. But even at her most stubborn she was not pedantic. For how much she had to say and the breadth of topics dear to her, it was hard to find wasted words. Alex was compelling in part because she didn't seem interested in the horseshoe of politics, but rather in the promise of her ideals. Fairness, basically, moved her. The effect was impossible to dismiss out of hand, even if you ultimately disagreed with her.

Alex taught me several things. She taught me that a direct, earnest manner is preferable to the posturing taken up by once-precocious teenagers who've yet to mature into careful thinkers. She put it well, I thought: "Stefan, you can't just sit back and lob grenades into arguments. It's annoying." She was right. She also taught me about bread and roses—the idea,

roughly, that our obligations to each other extend well beyond the subsistence level. That a firm belief in the immutability of human dignity entails a robust commitment to social justice. Social justice, a notoriously fuzzy notion for most of us, seemed straightforward to Alex: whatever prevented others from enjoying the fullness of life was an obstacle that needed to be removed. Although my own understanding of social justice remains fuzzy, I will never again make excuses for those too selfish or cynical to be moved by our many failures to fully respect human dignity. In no small way, I have Alex to thank for that.

More so than anyone I'd met before or since, Alex knew how to make the political personal. For me, this was largely because we came from similar working-class immigrant backgrounds. We differed in part because at some point I decided to act and speak like people very much not like me, finding it easier to obscure the limitations in myself than to confront head-on the conditions that kept those limitations in place for others. Alex chose not to do that, and that's what so many of us mean when we call her courageous. And because I never questioned her motives, she was one of the few people to whom I enjoyed losing an argument. That was the draw of her persistence: if Alex's vision were realized, we would enjoy a more livable, equitable, and beautiful society. Many of us thought her vision was desirable. But to many it didn't seem possible. So I'm grateful for how hard Alex worked to convince us that much of what seems inevitable, and somehow just, is correctable, and in fact mostly arbitrary. I regret that at some point a foolish combination of my pride or immaturity got in the way, and we stopped arguing.

And then there was, as one friend put it, Alex the karaoke singer. We would not remember Alex as we do if her interests

were restricted to politics. Anyone who ever sampled her mulled wine or barszcz, was cut down by her incisive wit, or stayed until last call with her at Bifteck, knows that above all she was a *bonne vivante*. Even at play she stood apart from her peers. Whereas many freewheeling students take their cues from the Greenwich Village in the '60s, Alex was much more Harlem in the '20s. She wore red lipstick and tied bows to anything that could be made more festive.

Alex also didn't openly fret about the things that hobble so many law students. Grades and jobs hardly came up. Not because she lacked ambition. Her ambition was just directed elsewhere. I looked forward to watching her succeed because I knew that she would do it on her own terms, or not at all. Crucially, Alex was bound to do much more than deliver canned speeches to college crowds. Her work was substantive and transformative. If she made it, it would be because she parted some sea on her way there. Alex was among a handful of peers that seemed destined to inspire I-knew-her-when stories. I was sure that I'd be reading about her in the press, but I never imagined it would be under these circumstances. Her death was senseless and violent, the complete antithesis of her life's work.

\* \* \*

In the days since I found out about her death, I've remembered Alex as she was the day I met her. That day, in September of 2007, a small group of us ended up on a friend's rooftop terrace. Amid the boisterous discussions that first year law students share before they learn how little they know, we noticed a neighbour's swimming pool, and a fence that didn't seem so high. Alex and I climbed down to the yard, scaled the fence, and went for a quick, illicit swim. We laughed the whole time, and no one got hurt.



**ADELA  
MACIEJEWSKI  
SCHEER**

I only admired Alexandra Dodger from a distance, never having had the chance to get to know her, but I feel lucky in having gotten just a glimpse of the energy and dedication of this remarkable person. In December of my first year I was working in the computer lab and took some scrap paper from the recycling to write some notes on. The printed side was a cover letter. Out of curiosity (but perhaps improperly), I read it. In it, the author described her passion for human rights, her work with immigrants, her dedication to social justice. I was so taken not only by the work that this person had done, but especially by the sincerity and absolute commitment that was so apparent in it. I was intrigued and inspired by this person, the unknown but quite amazing Alexandra Dodger. Over the last two years I continued to see Alexandra's involvement in various projects, and the way in which her action was true to her word. That kind of dedication is something to hold close, I think. I can't really know what those of you close to her lost, but my thoughts and heart are with you.



Photo by Christopher Rompré



Photo by Sophie Roy-Loffleur

**SAO**

The Student Affairs Office would like to express its sincere condolences to Alex's friends and family in this difficult time. Alex was a determined, focused student who contributed a great deal to the McGill Law community. Her remarkable energy and enthusiasm will be missed.



ALEXANDRA  
DODGER

# GUIDE-CARRIÈRES EN INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

## TÉMOIGNAGE D'ALEX

*Editor's Note: the Career Development Office passes on this piece, in which Alex gives advice on working in the public interest field.*

1) *Quelle est pour vous la définition d'une carrière en défense de l'intérêt public?*

A career in the public interest is one that I would define as using your legal education and skills towards the pursuit of justice for persons or groups that are often marginalized in society. It's about using law as a tool to shift the balance of power – giving help to the powerless when they are faced with powerful opponents. I don't think it necessarily has to take place in the context of an NGO. However, I also think that we should be careful before labeling entire fields of law – such as environmental law or aboriginal law – as public interest law; you can specialize in those fields without necessarily advancing or supporting the cause of marginalized groups.

2) *Quel a été votre parcours académique et professionnel?*

Prior to studying law at McGill, I did my bachelors and graduate studies in History at the University of Toronto and McMaster University. When I moved to Montreal in 2007, I initially envisioned myself eventually moving back to Toronto to work in some kind of social justice capacity. However, the many encounters I had with my well-travelled classmates and professors convinced me that international work – something I had long dreamt of but was uncertain about realizing – was a real possibility. I tried to take courses, internships and extracurricular opportunities in internationally related fields. I will be articling in 2011-2012 with Amnesty International Canada, and hope to find a rewarding and interesting career balance that allows me to work abroad while retaining ties to Canada, while continuing to be engaged in the public interest.

3) *En quoi votre travail actuel défend-t-il l'intérêt public?*

My two most recent employment experiences in the public interest were working at Legal Aid Ontario and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

LAO's clients are low income Ontarians seeking legal assistance in a range of matters. Specifically, students in my office assisted refugee claimants, persons charged with criminal offenses, and parents at risk of losing custody of their children. Our clients often came from precarious situations – unemployment, poverty, substance abuse. The legal aid system needs more lawyers who are comfortable working with these client groups, and can treat them with respect. While the work can be challenging, it is never dull and the impact on client's situations is tangible.

The ICTY seeks justice for the victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia. While working in a UN Tribunal in The Hague can seem disconnected from the lives of survivors in Sarajevo or Belgrade, the work is important and depends on many legal interns to function. The ICTY seeks to end impunity for war crimes, and interns have the capacity to play a major role in the cases they work on.

4) *Quels conseils donneriez-vous à des étudiants de droit intéressés à travailler dans le domaine de la défense de l'intérêt public?*

Your best resource at McGill is probably your classmates and upper year students – applying where they have worked in the past. Unfortunately, although McGill offers some excellent internship and research opportunities, they are very competitive to get and often not widely advertised. Every job and internship I had, I had to coordinate on my own. Classmates I didn't know well were surprisingly forthcoming and supportive when I asked for application advice, and I recommend approaching anyone you can to let them know about your goals. This goes for funding as well – you may need to consider taking out a private line of credit from the bank if McGill doesn't offer you any financial support.



**MARGARET  
CARLYLE**

## THOUGHTS ON ALEX DODGER

What becomes immediately clear in the past hours since we have learned of Alex Dodger's sudden, tragic death was just how much she was admired, adored, loved, and needed by this world. What a huge loss of such a brilliant and talented woman. There is no way to adequately capture people's collective grief, but hopefully we can celebrate her amazing life together by reminiscing on her legacy and continuing the daily battle she led for a more just and giving world. When it comes to Alex, one thing stands out: she had incisive, brilliant, and shrewd insights on any topic that came up. I have not met a person before or since who could think so quickly on their feet and come up with the best solutions, tactics, and insight, or someone with such a sophisticated and immediate understanding of things, events, personalities, and politics. And what a presence Alex was in the student movement! I have an image of her at Canadian Federation of Students bounding up to the microphone – poised and fearless – before diving into an invariably articulate, feisty, intelligent, and poignant commentary. I also have a more recent image of a young woman at the height of her brilliance, about to embark on a law career. Between these two images alone, we have a lifetime of memories. Leaving the last words for Alex, from one of her many admirers: thinking of your memory, we see the brilliant, amazing, fearless, perceptive, intelligent, tireless, committed, and witty woman, activist, student, friend, advocate, and visionary you are and the huge amount you achieved in a lifetime devoted to social justice.



**ANONYMOUS**

Without hesitation, my fondest law school memories directly involve Alex Dodger. An ardent human rights defender and champion of progressive causes, it was refreshing to have a spirited ally at the faculty and such a refreshingly witty friend to share memories with, learn from, and uplift those around you with endless laughter. Alex masterfully articulated her points of view, and always knew how to keep professors on their toes with sheer poise, confidence and class. An accomplished mooter and debater, the real success of Alex's life was the way she inspired and moved people to make a change. She was more

than a great human being, she was the friend that everyone has ever wanted, but rarely get the chance to meet. She cherished her friends so much; one could always rely on her to give a helping hand. When I was at a crossroads, seriously contemplating abandoning a legal career and the law faculty, I found a friend in Alex who pushed me to forge ahead and think about the work that I could do for my community. She gave tough love, but would never give up on a friend. She didn't give up on me and I am eternally grateful. We won't let her memory die.

**PAYAM  
AKHAVAN**

Alexandra was my student in Public International Law. I also knew her as coach of the Jessup International Moot and her internship with the UN Tribunal for Yugoslavia in The Hague. She was a thoughtful and brilliant student who had a deep commitment to using her education to further human rights. In her short time in our midst she was an example of dedication and social responsibility to her peers. I am devastated by her loss and offer heartfelt condolences and prayers for her and her grieving family.

*On the right, Charlie and Alex, two Class of '11 graduates, on the left: Two French tourists in Ottawa Alex met and befriended. As Charlie explained: "I went to meet up with Bryana in Ottawa this August and she invited other folks and it eventually turned into a karaoke party with some Court Clerks and strangers, and our fellow Class of '11 graduate Max Reed. I wasn't ready for just how passionate Alex would be with her karaoke stylings. Even though we disagreed on politics, you'd never know from the way we sang together in harmony. I love that she had no qualms about belting a terrible Spice Girls song and then right after going in on some serious classic rock. She was always down, and I think that's what people love about her. Indeed, she somehow had two French tourists with her - I'm still not sure what the story was - but they were having a blast in her company and she was doing her best to keep everyone smiling and singing."*



Photo by Charlie Feldman

*On the right, Alex as spotted in her usual state - loving life - at the 2009 Law Partner Lunch. From left to right: Class of 2011 graduates Mike Lockner, Martin LeBlanc-Rioux, Gregory Ko, Alex, and current 3L Krista Kais-Prial.*



Photo by Charlie Feldman



ANDREW  
DEAK

## FOR ALEX, FACTUM PARTNER, DANCE PARTNER, AND DEAR FRIEND

I first met Alex in my constitutional law class. She made her mark quickly with her incisive comments on the Charter, access to justice, systemic inequality, and women's rights. If there was oppression, Alex was there to say something about it. I shared much of Alex's analysis, and when I didn't, she was pretty quick to convince me otherwise. Her voice was clear and uncompromising. I felt much better having her around. I was too scared to contribute in first-year, in those large and intimidating class settings where you don't know how people might judge you. Alex appeared fearless. She was my hero in Constitutional Law, and then in Civil Evidence, and Immigration and Refugee Law. I was always in awe of how she could come up with questions and comments so quickly and articulately.

I later got to know Alex in the context of student organizing, particularly through RadLaw and the occasional NDP-McGill event. I always looked up to her. The noise of corporate job opportunities knocking on the doors of the faculty can so easily drown out the other possibilities to pursue the path of public interest. Alex never forgot why she went to law school, and she was blazing her way to a career in social justice. She never wavered, incessantly fighting the good fight. Having just come from a memorial at U of T, I now realize that she was probably operating at about 20% at McGill. The McGill administration and the LSA should count themselves lucky that they did not feel the full wrath of Alexandra Dodger!

Early in second year I approached her to see if she wanted to moot together. Luckily for me, she immediately respon-

ded with an unreserved 'Yes! Lets do it!' I was so excited to be able to moot with such an excellent advocate, and someone who saw the world as I did. Working closely with Alex on our factum I got to know her a little better. She was, to my surprise, an anxious and erratic worker at times. She also revealed that she too got nervous before speaking publicly. She was also quirky. I thought, "If she can be so on the ball, so sharp, and so committed while also being sometimes anxious, erratic nervous and always her quirky self, then so could I!" These human traits also made Alex that much more likable. In fact, much of my first year was about losing my confidence; in second year, Alex helped me to regain a sense purpose and self-belief, and to find my own voice. I loved my mooting experience, and I owe that to Alex.

The rigmarole of the second year moot solidified our friendship. The factum has been known to ruin relationships. For Alex and I, it was a foundational moment. We joked about how perfect it would be for us to set up a boutique law firm together: 'Deak and Dodger LLP'. How could we not with two last names that were asking to be side-by-side? Alex would later call me to go out for impromptu nights on the town she loved so much, Montreal. She was enamored with the city, and knew how to let go and have a great time. My best night of dancing was with Alex, at a small club on St. Laurent, where we moved our bodies to 80s music until the bartenders kicked us out.

I went to Paris for a summer of third year, and Alex came to stay with me just before moving there herself for an internship.

Like Montreal, Paris also won Alex's heart. She brought her Dutch bike with her from The Hague. I told her she'd have trouble getting her bike on the Thalys train and then through the Paris metro, but my warnings did not stop her from negotiating a clear path for her and her bike to my apartment. Dutch and French transport authorities were no match for Alex's determination.

For the last year or so we had mostly been in different cities. Yet she was so easy to keep in touch with, constantly messaging and posting articles and commentary on Facebook. Now the lack of her updates in my news feed is already painfully noticeable. I saw her only two weeks ago while she was in Montreal. She told us that she was documenting how Syrian government repression was reaching Syrians in Canada, and that she was working on having former president Bush arrested for war crimes. She seemed happy. Like she had found her place at Amnesty International, holding governments to account and generally being a (paid!) full-time rabble-rouser.

I don't know what I or anyone else can take away from the tragedy of Alex's passing. All I know is that in her short time with us, she contributed more to the world than others do in a lifetime, and she lived everyday so fully, as if it was the last. She will forever remain an inspiration.



### CONDOLENCE MOTION

**Moved by:** Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

**Seconded by:** Councillor Mike Layton



The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Alexandra Dodger on October 16, 2011.

Alexandra was not only a remarkable young woman, but an example to everyone of a full, engaged life. She was a tireless and tenacious advocate for social justice, a scholar whose intellect was matched only by her sharp wit and a dear friend to an extensive network she was never too busy to support.

Born in Etobicoke in 1983, and raised by her mother and grandmother, she spent four years at Martingrove Collegiate before graduating in 2001 with high honors after spending her final year of high school at Silverthorn Collegiate.

She had an insatiable appetite for engagement with her community. Her constant search for ways to contribute to discourse, justice, and awareness led her, in her first eight months at the University of Toronto to write for campus newspapers, campaign successfully to bring U of T students into the Canadian Federation of Students, and at the end of her first year, win an election to become the representative of the entire undergraduate population of U of T as the External Commissioner of the students union. In her 4 years of participation with the student movement, she helped establish Ontario's first tuition fee freeze, was instrumental in the negotiation of a Toronto-wide TTC discount for postsecondary students, helped lower health plan fees for U of T undergraduates and was twice elected as the Ontario Representative to the national executive of Canadian Federation of Students, working full time to represent over 250,000 students across Ontario and over one-half million across Canada.

Yet advocacy in these years stretched far beyond the student movement. After she left her position with the CFS, she campaigned for the NDP, put together two provincial conferences of the party's youth wing, helped to organize the massive protests in Toronto which helped keep Canada out of the Iraq war, and never lost her cool.

Revelling in the richness of stories and the lessons offered by her undergraduate degree in history (minoring in Irish and Celtic studies and Middle Eastern Studies), Alex pursued an M.A. in history at McMaster, winning two national awards for her research in labour history and completing a thesis focused on early birth control advocacy in Canada. Along with her work as a teaching assistant and her on-campus activism at Mac, she simultaneously served as the President of the Trinity-Spadina New Democratic Party riding association, helping to elect Olivia Chow to parliament for the first time.

At 23, having done more than many can claim to have accomplished in a lifetime, Alex moved to

Montreal to begin studies in law at McGill University. There, she quickly solidified a reputation as an outspoken activist, a powerful and prolific writer, and preternaturally capable advocate for a variety of causes, courageously choosing to advocate for the human rights of Palestinians.

While earning impressive academic credentials, she also became a writer with the *McGill Daily*, won the honour of a position with the *McGill Law Journal*, and organized events with the McGill Human Rights Working Group. As a member of McGill's team at the Jessup moot competition, she finished 2nd place in Canada and earned the Dillard prize for the team's written submissions in the international legal advocacy competition.

Yet this was only her first three years of study. In her summers, she worked for legal aid Ontario here in Toronto, interned at a human rights organization in the Palestinian territories, and clerked at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague. Over the last twelve months, she worked as a *stagiaire* at an international law firm in Paris and spent a term of law school at the Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis in Brussels.

In May, Alex graduated from McGill University with degrees in common and civil law and, in August, took up a prestigious position as the Public Interest Law Fellow at Amnesty International in Ottawa, contributing to litigation and advocacy on public international law, the protection of refugees, the promotion of civil liberties, the status of First Nations and the defence of human rights. Her most recent work, assisting in efforts to have Canada prosecute George W. Bush for war crimes, was the subject of significant media attention.

Amazingly, throughout her years, Alex also demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to her personal relationships and her family, never forgetting a birthday and never turning down an opportunity to provide help during times of trouble and always going out of her way to assist those closest to her. She also knew how to enjoy life: travelling extensively and hosting dozens of friends during her time in Europe. Yet she never took the privileges she had earned through her hard work as an entitlement, but rather as an obligation to work even harder for a better world.

In the early morning of October 16, 2011, Alex was struck by a car while returning to her home in Ottawa. She passed away en route to hospital.

As a friend, student, lawyer and activist Alex was extraordinary. Indeed, the impressiveness of her achievements is dwarfed by the superlative power of her character. Her closest friends note that she not only had an analytical mind and the spirit of a fighter but also the heart of a poet. To her closest friends, and to all of those who knew her, her life's work and her spirit will always be an inspiration.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to Alex's family.

October 24, 2011

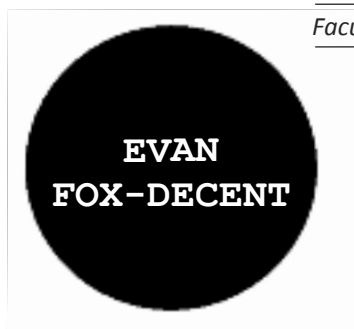


*Thank you to Sarah Goldstein, Alex's cousin, for sending us beautiful photos of Alex's childhood.*

*Below, Alex and her mother.*

*On the back cover, Alex as a kid.*





Faculty

# ALEX'S EXAMPLE

OCTOBER 21, 2011

I'd like to thank Katrina Peddle and the organizers for inviting me to speak here today. I've never been more honored. Alex was the very best of us.

I first came to know Alex as an engaged and thoughtful student in my Immigration and Refugee Law class. Her insightfulness, acuity of mind, and passion were evident immediately from her interventions in class and discussions we had outside the classroom. She went on to receive the highest mark awarded that year. She wrote a brilliant paper on the moral fragility of Canada's live-in care-giver program, and a first-rate exam that I later used as a "best answer." With academic credentials like these, Alex could have done virtually anything she wished to do in the legal profession. She chose to article at Amnesty International, a choice that speaks volumes about the kind of person she was.

Alex threw herself passionately into everything she did and touched, always following her heart, always open to new adventures and causes. Last year Alex was looking for something to do to fill the January-to-May gap this year, the gap between the time she was finishing her course work and the time she would write her bar exams. She received an offer from the law firm Freshfields to work in the in-

ternational arbitration department of their Paris office. However, they wanted her to start right away, in August of last year. True to form, Alex scrapped an exchange she had set up, went straightaway to Paris, and organized another exchange for the winter term of this year, in Brussels, so as to be able to graduate in the spring.

Now, in the midst of all this I had encouraged her to take some time off from what appeared to me as a tireless mission of setting the world to rights. She replied in an email, almost shyly, trying to ease my concern that she was pushing herself too hard, "I know it's not the sunshine and tequila soaked experience of Mexico you'd recommended, but I'm hoping assorted Belgian waffles and Kriek (a Belgian beer) will keep me warm." That was Alex – good-humored, adventure-seeking, wholly bereft of pretence, and reassuring, all the while juggling a variety of balls in the air.

But perhaps above all, Alex was a dedicated and courageous fighter. Dedicated because she so often, and in so many ways, put her time into helping others rather than herself. Courageous because she publicly supported causes, such as the cause of the Palestinians, that are mired in controversy. A fighter because she vig-

orously contested authority wherever it stood as a mask for oppression. In a world largely tone deaf to the systemic injustice of poverty, Alex saw in the global economic order a neoliberal juggernaut that quietly crushes the invisible and least advantaged. She saw international law as a way to throw sand in the tracks of this machine.

Alex, however, also believed that law, as an idea and an aspiration, has an inner heart, and it's heart, for her, was justice. Her impassioned understanding of law infused who she was and what she did, so it is not surprising that Alex gave herself over to struggles against injustice so selflessly.

It behooves us now to reflect on how we will honor Alex, as well as on how we will remember her. We can honor Alex best, I submit, by redoubling our efforts to fight for the disadvantaged. By standing up publicly for the vulnerable even when it is unsettling and makes others uncomfortable. By remembering that we are all law's agents and so share responsibility for the community and world in which we live. In short, by letting Alex's example inspire us all.

Thank you.



## SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE OCTOBER 21 MEMORIAL HELD AT THOMSON HOUSE

Chers étudiants, chers étudiantes, chers collègues et amis d'Alexandra Dodger.

Words fail us as we try to come to terms with the unspeakable tragedy of the passing of Alexandra. And yet we must speak.

We must speak because she spoke, tirelessly, loudly and honourably, on behalf of those who have no voice.

In this hour of grief, our day to day lives may seem pointless and tedious, overtaken as they are by the deep injustice of a wonderful life cut short and a future that will not be.

And yet we must continue to live, because Alexandra lived her life with passion, connecting with the lives of others, aware of their burdens and carrying their aspirations on her shoulders.

On this day of remembrance, our desire to see the good in all things, our commitment to being responsible and virtuous citizens, and our will to find meaning in the world around us may be eroded by the senseless death of a courageous young woman.

And yet we must continue to believe and to act on our beliefs, because that is what

Alexandra did, and that is who she was.

This Faculty is home to students, professors, and staff members who aspire to shape the world around them. Cette vocation de la faculté, cette aspiration s'exprime dans le quotidien de chacun et chacune d'entre nous. Elle prend des formes multiples, des couleurs variables, et s'appuie sur des regards et des perspectives différentes. La volonté de penser et d'agir qui a animé la vie d'Alexandra Dodger, et qui est partagée par tous ici, aussi différents que nous soyons. Cette volonté est le fondement le plus tenace de notre vie collective.

I know that Alexandra's passing is a source of deep grief for many students, colleagues and staff members who knew her most closely, and I offer my sincere condolences to them.

As you walk out of Thomson House later today, raise your head and look in the direction of Dawson Hall on the Main Campus. The McGill Flag on top of our oldest building is flying at half-mast today, in honour of this distinguished and inspiring member of the McGill Community, our friend, colleague, and student, Alexandra Dodger.



Photo by Lysanne Larose

On Friday, October 21, 2011, professors, fellow alumni, current students and friends of Alexandra Dodger gathered in the Thomson House Ballroom for a service in her honour. After an introduction by Assistant Dean Aisha Topsakal, the Trans-Symphonics performed the hymn *Bread and Roses*, a song of the women's movement. The Dean delivered remarks, followed by Sandhya Chari's emotional reading of 'Alexandra Leaving' by Leonard Cohen. LSA President Catherine Coursol read the motion establishing the LSA's Alexandra Dodger Award for students with an outstanding commitment to social justice, which will be delivered for the first time this spring. 3L Krista Kais-Prial then performed the hymn *The Night*. Remembrances then followed, with Prof. Fox-Decent recalling Alex as a student, 4L Katrina Peddle recalling her as an activist, and Eloge Butera (Class of '10) recalling her as a friend and colleague. The service closed with a candle lighting and moment of silence, followed by the Trans-Symphonics' performance of a concluding hymn.





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