

# START PROUD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Start Proud & OUTlaws Joint Statement on the Supreme Court of Canada's Decision in *Trinity Western University v. Law Society of Upper Canada***

**Toronto, Ontario, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018:** Start Proud and OUTlaws welcome today's decision by the Supreme Court of Canada protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals and ensuring that they have equal access to a legal education. Start Proud and OUTlaws (LGBTQ+ student affinity groups from Osgoode Hall Law School (York University) and the law schools at the University of Toronto, Queen's University, Lakehead University, the University of Ottawa, the University of Windsor, the University of Western Ontario, McGill University, the University of Alberta, and the University of New Brunswick) intervened as a coalition before the Supreme Court of Canada -- many were involved since the case began in September 2013 at the Ontario Divisional Court, and at the Court of Appeal for Ontario.

*"Start Proud has always been focused on ensuring that everyone is able to access the education and professional opportunities they desire, regardless of their sexual orientation. We are happy to see an end to what has been a five-year struggle to guarantee equality rights within the legal profession. As we argued before the Supreme Court of Canada, a barrier at the stage of entering law school represents a barrier to advancement in the legal profession and the opportunities that it presents. We are pleased that the Court affirmed that LGBTQ+ students and young professionals do not have to choose between a legal education and who they are as individuals. That is a choice we believe no one should have to make. That is a choice we believe no one should have to make. The Court' recognized that the Law Society's decision 'significantly advanced the statutory objectives by ensuring equal access to and diversity in the legal profession' and 'prevent[ed] concrete, not abstract, harms to LGBTQ people and to the public in general.' This decision is a huge step forward for the legal profession and Canada as a whole by making a strong statement about the importance of diversity, equality, and accessibility in the legal profession."*

~ Paul Jonathan Saguil, Chair of the Start Proud Board of Directors, and *pro bono* counsel to Start Proud and OUTlaws

Start Proud and OUTlaws gratefully acknowledge the efforts of their *pro bono* counsel: Frances Mahon, Marlys Edwardh, Vanessa Payne, and Goldblatt Partners.

### **About Start Proud**

Start Proud (formerly known as Out on Bay Street) is a Canadian non-profit corporation that provides resources and opportunities for LGTBQ+ students, young professionals, and pro-LGBTQ+ organizations across Canada. It provides members of the LGBTQ+ community with the necessary tools, resources and knowledge needed to transition through school to career. Start Proud works toward empowering institutions to embrace inclusiveness within the workplace and diversity within the workforce.

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