

First Prize Winner Grades 9-12:**Student:** Dante Wong – Grade 12, age 16**Prize:** \$2,000 for student and \$1,000 for Department/Classroom of Teacher

Determined, hard working, and passionate about human rights, Jody Wilson-Raybould is a role model for all Canadians but she doesn't see it that way. Instead, she says pragmatically, "If you want to see change, if you want your voice heard, you need to be sitting at the table." As of November 2015, she is now sitting at the nation's highest table. Ms. Wilson-Raybould is Canada's Justice Minister and Attorney-General, the federal government's top lawyer, ensuring federal laws comply with Canada's Constitution. She heads a powerful Department that less than a century ago instituted the laws that created residential schools, removed the rights of First Nations women if they married non-indigenous men, and introduced the Indian Act. Fifty-six years ago, Ms. Wilson-Raybould would not have been allowed to vote because of her First Nations heritage.

She is a member of the We Wai Kai Nation on her father's side, belonging to the Kwakwaka'wakw of northern Vancouver Island and the Central Coast of BC. Her Kwak'wala name is Puglaas, meaning "woman born to noble people" and she comes from a family of proud activists who were directly impacted by residential schools and the loss of status. Ms. Wilson-Raybould's strong sense of righting wrongs has driven her to become a lawyer, a provincial crown prosecutor, advisor to the BC Treaty Commission, regional chief of the BC Assembly of First Nations, and now Justice Minister where, along with issues such as the right to physician assisted death and ending gender discrimination, she is working on self governance and improved education and health care services for First Nations peoples. Jody Wilson-Raybould is without question a role model for all Canadians and since the Justice portfolio has previously been a gateway to the office of Prime Minister, her journey may not have reached its zenith yet.