Two young lawyers have received this year’s New Zealand Law Foundation Ethel Benjamin Scholarship - Kate Wevers of Wellington, and Grace (Sim Dam) Lee of Auckland. The Ethel Benjamin Scholarship is worth $25,000 to each of the recipients.

Katherine (Kate) Frances Marion Wevers
BSc/LLB (Hons) University of Otago

Kate will begin studying towards an LLM at Harvard University in August. Her research will focus on law and biotechnology and Kate is interested in the different possibilities for decision-making frameworks relating to biotechnology.

One of Kate's two degrees (she graduated from Otago University in 2005) is a BSc, where she majored in biotechnology. The other is an LLB (Hons) and her honours dissertation was on the impact of the Hazardous Substances and Organisms Act on civil liberties for loss or damage caused by genetically modified organisms.

"I hope to one day play a leading role in the development of law at the interface of biotechnological development in New Zealand," Kate says. She hopes to achieve this through a combination of legal practice, academic discourse and government service. She is particularly interested in how the legal system responds to and applies to scientific developments.

Before joining Russell McVeagh, Kate worked as a judge's clerk for Justice Tipping in the Supreme Court in 2007.

The Law Foundation established the Ethel Benjamin scholarship to commemorate New Zealand’s first woman lawyer. It is awarded each year to outstanding women scholars to support post-graduate research in law that encompasses the foundation’s wider objectives, in particular research that will protect and promote the interests of the public in relation to legal matters in New Zealand. Most years, two scholarships are awarded.