

Banack's BENCHER NEWS

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TREASURER ELECTION: Tom Conway has become the Law Society's 64th Treasurer, having been acclaimed in May. Since being elected a Bencher in 2007, Tom has held a wide range of important positions at the Law Society and the Federation of Law Societies of Canada. In his opening comments today to Convocation, Treasurer Conway committed to focus on his relationship with elected Benchers and external stakeholders to ensure continued fulfillment of the Law Society's obligation to regulate the profession in the public interest. He recognized that future challenges include the number of licensees in the profession, effects of the economic downturn and changes in the regulatory environment for legal services elsewhere in the world. The Treasurer announced the exercise of his prerogative to adorn the Treasurer's office with the portrait of former Treasurer Sidney Robins. Mr. Robins was first elected a Bencher in 1961, became Treasurer and thereafter a distinguished member of the judiciary. Mr. Robins, who regularly attends Convocation, serves as role model for Treasurer Conway and the entire profession in serving the public with wisdom and grace.

ADIEU TREASURER PAWLITZA: Laurie Pawlitza was elected Treasurer in 2010. She also contributed extensively as a Bencher since her first election in 2003. Under her leadership, the Law Society has made significant progress in many areas, including access to justice and equity related issues. This can be seen through initiatives such as the Parental Leave Assistance Plan; the retention of women in private practice; the introduction of Continuing Professional Development; and the Articling Task Force.

ROSS EARNSHAW: Ross Earnshaw was elected by Convocation to fill the vacancy of a Bencher from Kitchener, as Tom Conway has become the Treasurer.

McMURTRY GARDENS OF JUSTICE: On May 30, 2012, three new sculptures were dedicated to celebrate the 80th birthday of the Hon. Roy McMurtry. The sculptures are located in the pedestrian avenue that runs from University Avenue to Nathan Phillips Square at 361 University Avenue in Toronto. The sculpture garden and education centre exemplify Roy McMurtry's distinguished public service, while beautifying the area surrounding the Courthouse. It is now a must-see Toronto landmark. See <http://tlaonline.ca/>.

ARTICLING TASK FORCE UPDATE: Over 12% of law school graduates are still without articles. The Task Force is considering its work over the summer. It must deal with the students without jobs. The extensive submissions from all sectors of the profession express a wide variety of views. The task force will assess the information and deliver a report to Convocation that will hopefully provide a road map for the future training of lawyers that will be demonstrably better than the status quo. This remains the most significant and pressing issue before the Law Society that will impact the profession for years to come. Stay engaged in the discussion.

PARALEGAL 5 YEAR REPORT TO ATTORNEY GENERAL:

The A.G. personally attended Convocation and received a report reviewing paralegal regulation that became the Law Society's responsibility in 2007. The review clearly demonstrates that the implementation of paralegal regulation has successfully enhanced access to justice and consumer protection. To review this report go to www.lsuc.on.ca.

HONOURARY DOCTOR OF LAWS DEGREE: At the recent calls to the Bar, the Law Society awarded honorary doctorates to:

- Brian Greenspan
- Shirin Ebadi
- Derry Millar
- Michaele Jean

DR. SHIRIN EBADI: This 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner is an Iranian lawyer, former Judge, renowned human rights activist and author. She spoke to the Profession on June 14, 2012 at the Law Society and the following day was awarded an Honourary Doctor of Laws Degree. She spoke eloquently about her life and times and innumerable battles against injustice. Dr. Ebadi's book, "*The Golden Cage*" is an outstanding source of information that reveals important challenges in the time we are living. This outstanding event was equivalent to an earlier, memorable presentation by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT: The Federation of Law Societies of Canada has approved a model code of Professional Conduct. Other provinces are in the process of adopting changes to their Rules of Professional Conduct. Our Law Society is considering amendments to our Rules.

The profession is asked for input by August 31, 2012.

To see the Report, go to www.lsuc.on.ca. Submissions can be sent to jstrawcz@lsuc.on.ca.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT COUNSEL:

Convocation has reappointed Ms. Cynthia Petersen for a further 3 year term. She has held the position which has operated independently and at arms-length from the Law Society since November 2002. She has excelled in the job with expertise and professionalism. She may be reached 24 hours a day by voicemail: 1-877-790-2200; facsimile: 1-877-398-1100; or email: assistance@dhcounsel.on.ca

FOREIGN TRAINED LAWYERS:

The National Committee on Accreditation assesses international legal credentials of foreign trained law students. The Committee expects to process 1500 new applications this year and grant Certificates of Qualification to well over 500 individuals seeking admission to Canadian law societies. These individuals significantly swell the ranks of students graduating from Canadian law schools and is one reason those law school graduates face difficulties finding articling positions.

CONVOCATION REPORTS: All reports to Convocation can be viewed at <http://www.lsuc.on.ca>. In order to more fully understand the issues facing Convocation, you may wish to review previous editions of Banack's Bencher News at <http://www.kmlaw.ca/publications>

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