


Banack's Bencher News

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Volume #2 Issue #19

June 28, 2002

LAWPRO/LPIC: The successful LPIC that we have come to appreciate is changing its acronym to LAWPRO during the course of this year. The LPIC terminology is to become a thing of the past in an effort to reflect the diverse portfolio of insurance products and services which LPIC now provides. The corporate name, Lawyers' Professional Indemnity Company, will be continued.

MR. JUSTICE EDWARD DUCHARME: The appointment of Bencher Edward Ducharme to the Superior Court of Justice has created a vacancy in Convocation to be filled in the Fall. Bencher Robert Martin from London becomes the Regional Bencher for Southwestern Ontario.

DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION: Ms. Zeyneponen has been appointed to this position which is responsible for the regulation of the profession overseeing all functions involved in the complaint and disciplinary process. That includes complaints resolution, investigations, discipline, staff trustee, unclaimed trust funds and the compensation fund. These responsibilities were previously performed by the secretary and have now been divided among other senior managers at the Law Society. Ms. Zeyneponen was previously Executive Director and Vice Chair of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal.

END OF TERM REPORT: Benchers elected in 1999 have now served three years of a four year term. However, this last year under the leadership of Treasurer, Vern Krishna, has been most dramatic. Convocation has accomplished the following in the last year:

1. **CONTINUUM OF LEGAL EDUCATION:** A process has been implemented to consider fundamental change in the way students prepare for their call to the bar. A final task force report is to be delivered in September, 2002. As well, the adoption of a competence model for members of the bar will be implemented to enhance our ability to continue to serve the public throughout our professional lives. Grade B+ (with high expectation for the future)
2. **FINANCES:** The financial status of the Law Society and LPIC (now known as LAWPRO) are remarkable as a reflection of their positive management (and favourable economic conditions). Grade A
3. **PARALEGALS:** The profession's vulnerable position following

release of the Cory Report one year ago has been vastly improved. Hopefully, the enormous effort devoted to this matter by the Law Society, in concert with other legal organizations and the Attorney General may finally result in a methodology to focus on the unregulated and uninsured activities of paralegals, which threaten the interests of unsuspecting members of the public. Grade A for effort but B for overall effort pending a final resolution

4. **LEGAL AID:** Although no longer within the mandate of the Law Society, the funding of Legal Aid is inadequate and results in unjustifiable harm to needy members of the public and discourages effective, timely representation by lawyers. For Legal Aid Ontario and the government: Grade D-
5. **INTERJURISDICTIONAL MOBILITY:** Through the Federation of Law Societies, Convocation has played a leadership role in promoting a national response to allow lawyers in good standing to practice in other provincial jurisdictions. Grade A
6. **GOVERNANCE:** This relates to the internal workings of the Law Society and Convocation. Treasurer Vern Krishna, through tremendous hard work, planning and good management, has ensured that Convocation has met no more than once per month and has ensured that matters for debate are concluded in a timely fashion. Committee reports are received by Convocation once they are ready for decision-making, reducing the necessity for last-minute amendments. As a standard requirement, reports requiring Convocation's approval are previewed by the Finance Committee in order to ensure that the financial implications of any decision are fully understood by Benchers in advance. Grade A+
7. **STRATEGIC PLANNING:** Notwithstanding an extensive planning session, initiated by former Treasurer, Robert Armstrong, no consensus was reached by Convocation in respect of an agenda to be pursued by the Law Society through 2003. Although significant targeted initiatives have been successfully pursued, including creation of an Emerging Issues Committee, no debated program has been implemented at the present time. Grade C
8. **TECHNOLOGY:** Significant improvements have been made within the unseen technological abilities of Law Society departments to effectively communicate with each other and the profession. In addition, technology has been having a positive effect in areas such as real time electronic transfer of closing funds, internet learning, video conferencing and the virtual law library. The Law Society's leadership will continue to create opportunities for practice improvement and communication within the Law Society and within the profession. Grade B+
9. **TIME COMMITMENT:** Benchers continue to devote an enormous amount of personal time to Law Society matters. This includes attendance at meetings of committees, task forces, Convocation and discipline proceedings. Grade A+

Have a happy and safe summer with family and friends. As in the past, should you have any questions, criticisms or suggestions,

please do not hesitate to let me know.