

Banack's Bencher News #75

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TREASURER ELECT: Nominations for the position of Treasurer, to succeed Gavin McKenzie closed on May 8, 2008. As there was only one candidate for the position and in accordance with the applicable by-law, Derry Millar of Weir Foulds was declared elected as Treasurer. He will take office on June 26, 2008. Since being elected a Bencher in 1995, Derry has held a wide range of very important positions at the Law Society, LPIC and Legal Aid Ontario. Beyond the Law Society, he has contributed extensively to the administration of justice through membership in the Civil Rules Committee and its predecessor.

WOMEN IN PRIVATE PRACTICE: Convocation received an outstanding report in respect of the Retention of Women in Private Practice prepared following extensive research, consultation and thoughtful deliberation. The objective of the various recommendations is to address gender-based challenges faced by women in the private practice of law. The full text of the well-written report is contained in the Law Society Convocation Reports at the website noted below. Convocation approved all of the following recommendations:

- 1) A 3-year pilot project of larger firms to adopt programs for the retention and advancement of women;
- 2) Direct support to women through leadership and other programs in collaboration with legal associations where appropriate;
- 3) A 5-year pilot project to promote and support practice locums;
- 4) A 3-year parental leave benefit pilot program effective January 1, 2009, for practitioners in firms of 5 lawyers or less with a payment of \$3,000.00 per month to a maximum of \$9,000.00 per leave per family unit;
- 5) Resources for women through various programs, practice management and career development advice, in collaboration with legal associations where appropriate;
- 6) Information distribution about educational and other opportunities about the practice of law through the law schools;
- 7) An advisory committee of women lawyers from Aboriginal, Francophone and/or equality-seeking communities to implement the recommendations in the Report;
- 8) Development of networking strategies for the needs of such women practitioners;
- 9) Assessment of the effectiveness of each program and to identify further strategies for the retention and advancement of women in private practice following the completion of the pilot projects.

RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT: Convocation has amended the definition of conduct unbecoming a Barrister and Solicitor to include conduct which involves dishonesty or "conduct which undermines the administration of justice".

RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE: The Tribunals Committee tabled proposed new Rules of Practice and Procedure. Convocation approved a consultation process seeking input from a number of lawyers who appear regularly before hearing panels and then to seek input from legal organizations and the profession at large. Input and written comments will be accepted until September 2, 2008. To review the proposed new Rules of Practice and Procedure, refer to the Law Society Convocation Reports at the website noted below.

TRIBUNAL DECISIONS: Hereafter when Notices of Application are withdrawn in the course of the discipline process those withdrawals will be published on the Law Society website. No other steps will be taken to retroactively remove previously published interim orders or reasons in the withdrawn proceeding so that the profession and public will, at all times, be informed as to the status and rationale for actions arising from the discipline process.

EQUITY PUBLIC EDUCATION: The Law Society will hold programs in the Osgoode Hall, Donald Lamont Learning Centre at 4:00 p.m. in respect of the following:

- National Aboriginal Day: June 20, 2008
- Pride Week: June 24, 2008
- Louis Riel Day: November 13, 2008

CONVOCATION REPORTS: All reports to Convocation can be viewed at <http://www.lsuc.on.ca/news/>.

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/banacks_bencher_news_home.aspx.

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