



TREASURER RE-ELECTION:

The Nomination of Treasurer Schabas was unopposed and for very good reason. He has been re-elected for a second one year term. The Treasurer has taken on serious and substantive issues in the past year. He has pursued a proactive, robust agenda. The Treasurer is primed to address major issues that require attention, to ensure the relevance and primacy of the legal profession, before the completion of his term of office in June, 2018. Some are mentioned below.

NEIL FINKELSTEIN HONORARY LL.D:

In a recent ceremony the Law Society awarded Neil the LL.D degree, *honoris causa*, in recognition of his extraordinary professional accomplishments for the national public benefit. He has been counsel in 28 appeals in the Supreme Court of Canada, 54 appeals in Courts of Appeal across Canada as well as 99 major trials and hearings in eight provinces. Neil has been a consummate professional, teacher and mentor.

REFERRAL FEES:

The Law Society has set a cap on referral fees based on a percentage of the legal fee: 15% for the first \$50,000 of legal fees and 5% of all legal fees thereafter, to an absolute cap of \$25,000.

For help with the requisite mandatory forms visit lsuc.on.ca to access the following word friendly documents:

- Mandatory Referral Agreement
- Law Society Requirements for Referral Fees - What clients need to know.

There are also frequently asked questions and a referral fee check list.

A NAME CHANGE:

What do you think if the Law Society of Upper Canada undergoes a name change? How about a catchy moniker like the "Law Society of Ontario"? Today, if you Google Law Society of Ontario it will already route you to our LSUC site. As a part of strategic communications initiatives intended to enhance public awareness, Convocation will soon be asked to consider naming alternatives to better reflect the reality of Ontario geopolitics. I encourage you to share any views you may have about renaming the Law Society, with the Treasurer or any elected Benchers.

GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE:

The work of the Governance Task Force established in September, 2016 will be considered at a Bencher planning session in October, 2017. A consultant's report has confirmed that Convocation is larger than most similar boards and Bencher 4 year terms are longer than common three year stints. Our practice of electing all Benchers at one time as opposed to staggered elections is an anomaly and the current 12 year term limit is longer than other organizations in a comparator group. Stay tuned as there is much debate to be held and work to be done to modernize and improve the work of Convocation.

DIALOGUE ON LICENSING:

The Treasurer initiated a series of facilitated in-person and webcast group licensing discussions in June across the province. This is a crucial issue that will affect the future role of the profession. You can still submit your written input on the dialogue addressed to the Law Society at 130 Queen Street West Toronto M5H 2N6.

ALTERNATIVE BUSINESS STRUCTURES:

After a Working Group dropped consideration of majority non-lawyer ownership of Ontario law firms following the last Bencher election, many thought the issue had been concluded. However the Working Group has indicated to Convocation an intention to explore ABS options for legal services to be directly provided through "civil society organizations" like charities and trade unions to its members. This is said to be an attempt to facilitate access to justice, following focus group discussions and an examination of models in the U.K., Australia and the U.S. Consideration of the issue will continue over the summer.

RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE ADVERTISING:

In the Fall, Convocation will consider an initiative to allow transparent, "all in" pricing advertisements for residential real estate transactions to permit consumers to effectively compare offered prices. The new provisions will not be mandatory but if a lawyer chooses to advertise on the basis of price, then specified requirements are anticipated in every applicable case to include all fees, disbursements (with some exceptions) and on a purchase transaction, to include one mortgage. The objectives sought include elimination of misleading advertising, enhanced transparency and to assist consumers to compare prices for similar services. Stay tuned.

IN MEMORIAM: The profession and public suffered a great loss with the recent death of DAVID CROCKER. David was at the forefront of critical developments in environmental law. He was also at the centre of many important advances in the field that dictate our current environmental practice requirements. David was an outstanding advocate, a great mentor to young lawyers and a champion to others needing a hero to emulate. David's compassion, 100 watt smile, good humour and professionalism will be sorely missed.

**HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE SUMMER
SEASON!**

I am sending this public service newsletter to you at the email address you provided or published, as permitted by Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation. If you no longer wish to receive it please "Unsubscribe" below.

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