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FRESH START AND NEW BEGINNING

Treasurer Mercer has lost no time in impressing his thumb print on the Law Society and Convocation. He sought extensive input from Benchers throughout the past summer on a wide variety of matters. He recognized that the anticipated September work load for Convocation was not very burdensome. Accordingly, he directed that the limited agenda be combined with other activities and invited Benchers to participate by telephone conference. Many took up the opportunity to join by telephone saving significant expense that would have otherwise been incurred. Unusually, perhaps as another cost saving measure, those in attendance were not provided with lunch. It is noted that following last year's change of name to the Law Society of Ontario, the Treasurer has continued to move away from some long held traditions. He has decided to not gown, in the Treasurer's robes while chairing Convocation. He has demonstrated significant skill, candour and good humour that will serve Convocation well.

BENCHER ELECTION

Spring, 2019 will see our profession's next democratic exercise by election of a new cast of 40 elected Benchers. Hopefully someday the size of Convocation will be significantly reduced through long awaited governance reform. Participating at this level is a wonderful way for you to contribute to the profession and public. It is meaningful, interesting and challenging. Feel free to speak with past and present Benchers, Treasurers, your partners and significant others to determine if you can undertake this important diversion from your day jobs. We need an elected body that truly reflects all of the members of our Society. Join us.

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN

Outstanding and unresolved issues on the Law Society's plate include lawyer licensing, contingency fees, title insurance and governance. As well, we will see the further implementation of approved recommendations made by the Challenges Faced by Racialized Licensees Working Group, Law Society Reconciliation efforts and the Family Law Action Plan. The Treasurer has indicated an interest in considering emerging legal technologies that impact the delivery of professional services. As well, he has identified the importance of addressing fundamental issues like who is authorized to provide what legal services, as that may affect the traditional approach to professional practice.

COMING ISSUES

Lawyer competence and conduct at both the licensing stage and throughout our careers remains a critical matter to be addressed in order to retain public confidence in our work and our self regulatory model. Outstanding issues of equity and access to justice require ongoing attention. As well, cautious and thoughtful work must be undertaken with our new Ontario government.

WEBSITE AND PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

As part of the Law Society refresh and restart initiatives lso.ca has been overhauled in an effort to make it more accessible and user-friendly. Concurrent with that, a public awareness campaign has been undertaken for October-December. Its focus is "Our Society is Your Society". The goal is to educate the public about what the Law Society does and how to access appropriate legal services. Outcomes will be monitored. Stay tuned to digital, transit and billboard advertisements.

LAWPRO 2019

Base premium for lawyers will remain static at \$2950 per year. There will be no change in transaction levies noting however that the civil litigation levy had been increased last year from \$50.00 to \$100.00 per civil litigator, in recognition of the significant cost of defending civil litigation claims. To support the provision of pro bono legal service, LAWPRO provides discounted insurance to lawyers employed by organizations approved by the Law Society.

LAW SOCIETY 2019 LEVY

Stay tuned for Convocation's fall determination of the annual fee for next year.

GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE CONSULTATION

A paper released in August, available on the Law Society web site (lso.on.ca), is open for consultation until October 15, 2018. Almost 100 submissions have been made and many more are expected before the deadline. This consultation is vitally important and should receive your consideration. It is anticipated that the Task Force will report before the end of the year for consideration and decision by the current Bench before the election, next spring.

FEDERATION OF LAW SOCIETIES OF CANADA

Our Bencher Ross Earnshaw will assume the presidency of the organization come November. That created a vacancy and opportunity for the Law Society to nominate a representative to the Federation Council. The Treasurer's nomination of Michelle Haigh, for the balance of a one-year term, was approved by Convocation. Ms. Haigh has been a tireless, hard working Bencher since 2006. She has been Chair of the Law Society Paralegal Standing Committee since 2015 and on the Board of Directors for Legal Aid since 2011. She is a highly qualified, well regarded paralegal member of our profession and is the first non-lawyer to be nominated by the Law Society to the national organization.

LAW SOCIETY TRIBUNAL

Convocation today appointed five new lawyer adjudicators to the Tribunal Hearing Division following a rigorous recruitment process: Tom Conway, Jackie Harper, Wes Marsden, Jay Sengupta and Anne Spafford. They collectively add to the Tribunal's expertise on Indigenous issues and mental health, and increase the number of bilingual members. There are also three new bencher lawyer adjudicators: Rebecca Durcan, Tanya Walker and Heather Zordel.

MARTIN TEPLITSKY MEMORIAL FUND

LAWYER FEED THE HUNGRY PROGRAM

The Fund has been established in memory of Marty Teplitsky, the generous, selfless, thoughtful founder of the Toronto Lawyers Feed the Hungry Program. The new Fund's goal is to ensure the future financial stability of the Program that operates four days per week and serves over 60,000 nutritious meals each year. I am an enthusiastic supporter. Donations to The Law Society Foundation which is a registered charity since 1998 has made it possible to provide hot, healthy Community meals to Toronto residents in need. Meals are served from the Law Society's Toronto cafeteria at 130 Queen Street West. This is only possible because of donations to The Law Society Foundation and the work of many committed volunteers. To volunteer or to make your own donation, please visit Lawyersfeedthehungry.

[Donate Now](#).

IN MEMORIAM:

ROGER YACHETTI Q.C.:

Very sadly, Roger recently passed away. He served as an elected Bencher of the Law Society from 1979-1995 and thereafter as an Ex Officio Bencher. He was a great friend, an outstanding lawyer and a superb, active and engaged Bencher. He served the profession with honour and distinction. He will be greatly missed by all those who were privileged to know him.

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