



CONGRATULATIONS TREASURER:

Teresa Donnelly who has been elected 81st Treasurer, is a lawyer from Goderich, called to the Bar in 1991. She comes from a long line of very distinguished lawyers. She has been employed by the Ministry of the Attorney General since 1994 and has been the Crown Attorney in Huron County since 2011. The Treasurer was elected a Bencher in both 2015 and 2019 and during that period has served the professions in many different capacities, most recently as chair of the Audit and Finance Committee. Her priorities as a Bencher had been equality, diversity and inclusion, fiscal accountability, access to justice and sole and small practices. Treasurer Donnelly comes to her elected position with a real understanding of the Law Society and a clear vision of what needs to be accomplished. The challenge will be to secure the confidence and motivate the thoughtful, hard working Benchers who expect to be treated in a respectful, forthright and transparent fashion. Good luck Treasurer.

ADIEU TREASURER MERCER:

Mr. Mercer has earned the gratitude of the profession for having served two terms as Treasurer. The last year, of course has been fraught with challenges. First, a substantially new group of Benchers elected in 2019 with little governance experience but with very strong, united views on an issue which had them elected in a resounding fashion. The election outcome combined with the second crisis, COVID-19, meant Convocation met less frequently in person and when it did meet was a fractious group. For most of 2020, Treasurer Mercer, supported by an excellent senior management team, led the Law Society without traditional Bencher oversight or policy developed at Committee meetings. Bencher Paul M. Cooper has said it all in his message to Malcolm, echoed by others: "I have appreciated your integrity, logic, leadership and extraordinary work. You have served the profession, the public and the public interest

well."

PHILIP M. EPSTEIN Q.C., O.O., LL.D.:

The Law Society bestowed an Honorary Doctorate of Law on Phil recognizing outstanding achievement. He has contributed tirelessly to the profession as an elected Benchers for 10 years. He has been recognized as one of Canada's leading family law lawyers, an area which he pioneered, appearing at all levels of Canadian courts. He dedicated himself to scholarship, mentorship and excellence in his work for clients as counsel, mediator and arbitrator. His work has had a material impact on family law in Ontario. Phil has demonstrated what is the best among lawyers and has set a high bar for all of us to achieve.

BENCHER MICHAEL LESAGE:

Mr. Lesage became a member of Convocation upon the election of Treasurer Donnelly. Michael is an experienced GTA business and commercial litigation lawyer.

WHAT IS ONE THING WRONG WITH THE LSO?

In this pandemic crisis, which has been crushing lawyers and paralegals the LSO has found operational means to "keep the lights on" as a regulator. We are to feel good that we can defer filings and paying dues. But the Benchers elected in 2019 have collectively become tone deaf. They are all now sounding like a decades old establishment. If they are feeling the pain of the profession, then despite numerous public and private entreaties, they are not acting. Excuses abound, however Convocation today adopted various CEO recommendations to streamline administrative matters to modernize lawyers engagement with the LSO by reducing cost. Some changes although they appear to be well intended, will feel mean spirited and petty to others. Let's wait and see if the reforms achieve planned revenue increases. Maybe we can learn from British Columbia noted below.

BRITISH COLUMBIA IS TRYING:

Law Society of B.C. president Craig Ferris is quoted as saying, "Although our plans are not formally formulated yet, I just wanted to make it clear to people publicly that the B.C. law society is considering a targeted approach to assist our members which have been hard hit by COVID-19". We are expecting to invest somewhere around \$3 million in this targeted approach, through the reduction or elimination of fees for those of our members who have been hardest hit." Go figure that Ontario Benchers can't find a similar way to help.

JUSTICE GINA PAPAGEORGIU:

Justice Papageorgiou was appointed to the Superior Court of Justice. She had been an exemplary, hard working Benchers, not afraid to express her views or support unpopular decisions. Her independent, thoughtful analysis will be sorely missed at the Convocation table.

BENCHER BARBARA MURCHIE:

Bencher Murchie is welcomed back to Convocation to assume the "common sense" chair vacated by Justice Papageorgiou. Prior to June 2019, Barb played an enormously important role in the Tribunal Hearing process. Her reinstatement comes at an important time as our new Treasurer steps up to the plate.

JULY 1, 2020 - LAW SOCIETY:

ANNUAL REPORT - FILING: The deadline for completing your annual report has been extended to **July 1, 2020** to file without penalty.

FEES: The deadline for payment of fees has been extended to **July 1, 2020** to pay without administrative penalties.

LAWPRO: Balancing its ongoing insurance coverage requirements (10 -15 new claims per day) with the reality of law office closures caused by COVID-19, LAWPRO has thoughtfully deferred usual filings and payments. Some additional relief may be available if you are temporarily not practicing for a minimum of 30 days. For inquiries email service@lawpro.ca.

2020 - 2021 ARTICLING: The minimum required length of articling placements has been temporarily reduced from 10 months to 8 months.

2021 - SUMMER RECRUITMENT: The rules binding on students and lawyers have changed to reflect our current health crisis. It is anticipated that on campus interviews will be replaced by remote interviewing. For more information see <https://lso.ca/becoming-licensed/lawyer-licensing-process/articling-candidates/finding-a-placement/2021-toronto-summer-student-recruitment-procedures>.

2021 - 2022 ARTICLING: The rules have also been changed to reflect our current health crisis. For more information see <https://lso.ca/becoming-licensed/lawyer-licensing-process/articling-candidates/finding-a-placement/2021-22-articling-recruitment-procedures>. Email questions you may have to articling@lso.ca.

CALLS TO THE BAR CEREMONY: In person Call to the Bar ceremonies were cancelled due COVID 19 health concerns. 296 new lawyers (with more to come) were called to the bar by administrative process on May 28, 2020. That process will continue for the foreseeable future. It is most unfortunate that the momentous conclusion of years of legal training ends by electronic confirmation and not a celebratory occasion recognizing the hard work and sacrifice of students, families and loved ones. New lawyer colleagues I urge you to "air-hug" everyone in your bubble. Welcome and good luck in your new career.

Law Society AGM: The scheduled May AGM was postponed due to COVID health concerns. It has been rescheduled to August 10, 2020. Details will be provided in the Ontario Reports.

HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE SUMMER SEASON

REMEMBER TO THINK POSITIVE BUT TEST NEGATIVE

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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