



DEADLINE - STUDY OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS - NATIONAL WELL BEING

The first-of-its-kind National Well-being Study of legal professionals is underway across Canada. It is an important initiative to better understand and support the well-being of legal professionals across the country. The questionnaire which forms the basis for the study closes on Friday, June 25th. Sorry for the late notice. Make sure your voice is heard by completing the study questionnaire. Learn more about the study and how to participate at: <https://lso.ca/news-events/news/latest-news-2021/law-society-participates-in-national-study-on-well>

TREASURER ELECTION

Treasurer Donnelly was the only candidate nominated by Benchers. As a result, her election has been confirmed and she will lead the professions for a second and final year. Convocation remains a polarized and fractious group with multi-level agendas. The show down fights are yet to come in the 2023 Treasurer election and 2024 Bencher election. (More said about that below.)

CONVOCATION

Lawyer Eddie Goldenberg recently wrote in the Globe and Mail concerning the risks of constitutional change: "Institutional memory is a fundamental prerequisite to good government. The lack of it almost inevitably produces unfortunate and sometimes dangerous consequences."

In almost every Convocation, Benchers debate and consider matters of significance to the professions without the benefit of the institutional memory of former long serving Benchers cast out by the arrogance of the prior Bench. They believed they would remain as a constant presence to contribute the required historical context without ever recognizing their own vulnerability at the polls. The current Bench is left to its own devices with some long serving staff who are not even entitled to speak in Convocation debates. The Government compounded the problem in 2019 with a wholesale appointment of new Lay Benchers. Only one of eight has served for more than 2 years. Treasurers Mercer and Donnelly have implemented the exclusionary intention of the last Convocation by even precluding life benchers from committee participation now.

As the architect of term limits for Benchers, I recognize this may read like sour grapes from one who has been turfed. However, in the past, Bencher debate was informed and enhanced by insightful comments of the likes of Justices Arnup and Robins and Mr. Allen Lawrence. But the current Benchers and professions are unnecessarily disadvantaged. Debate should always consider unintended consequences that inevitably arise from an ignorance of the past and implementation of short term band aid solutions. The LSO should practice the long game and not just expediency.

FULLSTOP

The successful 2019 “StopSOP” campaign to elect Benchers has morphed into “FULLSTOP” for the 2023 election. “FULLSTOP” intends to run a slate of candidates to secure a majority of like-minded elected Benchers to direct the agenda of Convocation and the Law Society. Some organizational effort has been undertaken by other unrelated oppositional groups interested in enlisting candidates to respond to the “FULLSTOP” efforts. Times continue to change throughout all political systems. The old ways of getting elected a Bencher have changed. Decide how you want to participate in 2023 as a candidate and certainly to vote, in what may become a pivotal election for the professions. The campaign organization is underway.

MENTAL HEALTH

Chief Justice George Strathy has joined the chorus of legal professionals revealing their own encounters with mental illness. He candidly shared at the recent LSO Online Summit his memories as an 11 year old being confronted with his mother’s “nervous breakdown” leading to her death 35 years later. Poignantly the Chief Justice described the terrible effect it had on his family. It was recognized that we are in a stressful profession and are at risk for our own mental health issues, depression, anxiety, alcoholism and addiction. In addition, there are the issues we most cope with in our family, friends and partners. All of this has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistically we seek assistance about 50% less frequently than other professions. Each one of us needs to speak openly, combat stigma and take advantage of readily available help.

Remember that MAP is a confidential independent service designed to help us achieve health and wellness goals. Lawyers, paralegals, law students, judges, other legal professionals and their families are covered by MAP, giving access to traditional and innovative online services. Visit: [Member Assistance Program \(MAP\)](#).

Also, anyone belonging to the OBA can access its free-to-members wellness resources accessible at its [Wellness Hub](#).

CONTINGENCY FEES - JULY 1st

Remember the impending significant changes to the contingency fee regime. These affect the calculation of fees and impact how they are managed including marketing and client relationships. Read more:

<https://avoidaclaim.com/2021/10-tips-to-adapt-to-the-new-contingency-fee-regime/>

JUSTICE PAUL COOPER

Paul Cooper, first elected as a Bencher in 2015 from the Central East Region, has been appointed a judge of the Ontario Court of Justice. He made invaluable contribution to the Law Society through his diligent work. His vacancy in Convocation has been filled by Quinn Ross of Goderich.

DOCTOR OF LAWS, *honoris causa* (LLD)

An honorary LLD has been awarded by the Law Society to **R. Douglas Elliott**. His practice encompasses a wide range of complex business litigation including class actions, cross-border litigation, alternative dispute resolution, estates and trusts law. Mr. Elliott has argued some of this country's most important Charter of Rights cases, particularly in relation to minority rights, such as same sex marriage.

HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE SUMMER SEASON

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