



**20 FEBRUARY 2023
IN PUBLIC BENCHERS' CONVOCATION**

**MINUTES OF THE WINTER TERM CONVOCATION OF THE BENCHERS OF THE
LAW SOCIETY OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR HELD AT THE OFFICES OF
THE LAW SOCIETY AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE ON FRIDAY, THE 20TH DAY OF
FEBRUARY 2023, COMMENCING AT 9:30 A.M.**

The following Benchers were present:

Elective Benchers: Suzanne Orsborn, President
Renée L.F. Appleby, KC, Past-President
Scott Worsfold, Vice-President
Rod Zdebiak
Lauren Chafe
Brenda Duffy, KC
Valerie Hynes, KC
Michael Ladha, KC
Sheilagh Murphy, KC
Dean Porter
Jonathan Regan
Alex Templeton
David Williams

Appointed Benchers: Ross Elliott
Linda Harnett
Glenda Reid
Allan Skanes

Regrets: Gladys Dunne
Desmond Parsons
Carey Majid, KC
Doug Wright

Law Society Staff: Brenda B. Grimes, KC

Aimee N. Rowe

The President stated that a notice of the Benchers' Convocation was provided to all Benchers in accordance with the Rules of the Law Society. A quorum of Elective Benchers and Lay Benchers being present, the President declared the Convocation regularly constituted.

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

The President noted that she had recently attended the swearing in ceremony for the Chief Judge and Associate Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Newfoundland and Labrador. Andrew John and Irene Joe of the Miawpukek First Nation were invited to provide remarks. They noted the impact that Chief Judge Fowler's work had with First Nations, particularly his engagement with restorative justice processes. Andrew and Irene highlighted the positive steps the Provincial Court has taken with respect to justice for Indigenous people.

The President noted the importance of engaging with Indigenous communities and ensuring they always have a seat at the table.

2. Excusal of Benchers unable to attend Convocation

*On Motion by Scott Worsfold and seconded by Michael Ladha: that Benchers unable to attend Convocation be excused. **CARRIED.***

3. Motion to move any Agenda Item to the In Camera Agenda

There was no motion.

4. Adoption of Agenda

*On Motion by Allan Skanes and seconded by Dean Porter: that the Agenda be adopted. **CARRIED.***

ITEMS FOR DECISION/DISCUSSION

5. Education Committee Report:

Certificates of Fitness

Benchers were asked to approve Certificates of Fitness for:

Jillian Maxine Cleary
Alysha Stephanie Snow
Jane Rebecca Soucy
Lynn Ann Sullivan
Amelia Ann Martin Harris
Aylsa Sara O'Keefe
Olivia Jane Genge
Raylene Glenna Mackey
Alden Mariah Spencer
Christopher Edward Mallard
Robert Leonard Miedema
Jeffrey Thomas Mitchell
Cordelia Eveline Lynde Ayers
Timothy Douglas Roberts

*On Motion by Allan Skanes and seconded by Brenda Duffy, KC: that the Certificates of Fitness be approved. **CARRIED.***

6. Strategic Planning Work Plan

General Discussion

The Executive Director noted that most of the initiatives in the Strategic Work Plan are complete. She advised that she is confident that we will reach our target completion date of 2024.

Benchers inquired about the Access to Justice Committee's progress on advocating for increased technology in Court operations. The Chair of the Access to Justice Committee noted that a jurisdictional scan had been completed but the Court requested that the scan remain confidential.

The President noted that she would follow-up with the Assistant Deputy Minister of Court Services who may have information relating to the initiative and, more particularly, the financial impediments to moving it forward.

7. Practice Resource for Witnessing of Documents

Benchers were provided with a draft practice resource relating to the witnessing, commissioning and notarizing of documents along with a cover memo from the Executive Director noting that there is information to suggest that best practices relating to the witnessing of documents are not being followed.

Benchers inquired how the resource would be disseminated to the membership.

The Executive Director noted that it would be included in a broadcast and posted to the website.

Benchers thanked Law Society staff for their work on the resource and requested the inclusion of an additional point in the resource that members ensure that they are in possession of the final draft of the document being witnessed.

On Motion by Valerie Hynes, KC and seconded by Glenda Reid: that Benchers approve the practice resource entitled “Best Practices when Witnessing, Commissioning and Notarizing Documents” which was presented to Benchers for distribution to the members and posting on the Law Society’s website.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

8. President’s Report

A report was provided. There were no questions arising.

9. Education Committee Report – Student Admission, Transfers under NMA and Notice of Resumption of Practicing Status

A report was provided. There were no questions arising.

10. Benchers’ Minutes – For Public – 16 December 2022

The minutes were provided. They were previously approved by Benchers for posting on the Law Society’s website in advance of this meeting in accordance with the Openness, Transparency and Confidentiality Policy.

CONCLUDING MATTERS

11. Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Adjournment

The President noted that Benchers would move to the *in-camera* portion of the meeting and that the public portion of the Benchers' Meeting was adjourned.

*On Motion by Allan Skanes and seconded by Sheilagh Murphy, KC: that the in-public portion of the Benchers' meeting be adjourned. **CARRIED.***

SUZANNE ORSBORN