



**LAW SOCIETY**  
Newfoundland & Labrador

**17 APRIL 2023  
IN PUBLIC BENCHERS' CONVOCATION**

**MINUTES OF THE SPRING 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 MONDAY, THE 17<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF  
APRIL 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  
Gladys Dunne, KC  
Rod Zdebiak  
Lauren Chafe  
Brenda Duffy, KC  
Valerie Hynes, KC  
Carey Majid, KC  
Sheilagh Murphy, KC  
Desmond Parsons  
Jonathan Regan  
Alex Templeton  
Doug Wright
- Appointed Benchers: Ross Elliott  
Linda Harnett  
Allan Skanes
- Regrets: Michael Ladha, KC  
Dean Porter  
Glenda Reid  
David Williams
- 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 welcomed everyone to the meeting and formally acknowledged that the Island of Newfoundland is the ancestral homeland of the Beothuk and Mi'kmaq.

The President highlighted the importance of land acknowledgements and continuing our efforts toward reconciliation. She referred Benchers to the Federation Report included in the Benchers' meeting materials, which outlines the positive efforts the Federation of Law Societies of Canada has made toward truth and reconciliation.

### 2. Excusal of Benchers unable to attend Convocation

*On Motion by Gladys Dunne, KC and seconded by Desmond Parsons: 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 Renée Appleby, KC and seconded by Allan Skanes: 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:

Kelsie Leanne Lockyer  
Laura Francis Murphy  
Olivia Caitlin Bungay  
Zayd Majed Khraishi  
Stuart Hogan Wallace  
Jeffrey Joseph Wicks  
Hillary Victoria Winter  
Lindsey Carolyn Tulk  
Nicole Elizabeth Walker  
Nadine Blair Otten

*On Motion by Desmond Parsons and seconded by Alex Templeton: that the Certificates of Fitness be approved. **CARRIED.***

***Minutes – 24 February 2023 Call to Bar***

The President noted that she was unable to attend the Call to Bar and requested that the signature line in the minutes be amended to the Vice-President.

*On Motion by Scott Worsfold and seconded by Alex Templeton: that the minutes from the 24 February 2023 Call to Bar be approved. **CARRIED.***

***Amendment to Rule 6.06(5)***

Benchers were provided with a memo from the Education Committee proposing amendments to Law Society Rule 6.06(5).

Chair of the Education Committee, Desmond Parsons, advised that the proposed amendments are intended to:

- i) remove the necessity for applicants seeking to be admitted as Students-at-Law to provide a copy/photo of their law degree; and
- ii) extend the deadline to provide law school transcripts to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

It was noted that law schools often do not have the transcripts ready until after the filing deadlines for students. The amendments are intended to be pragmatic and create a more reasonable flow of information between law schools and the Law Society.

*On Motion by Desmond Parsons and seconded by Allan Skanes: that Benchers approve the amendments to Rule 6.05(5) as drafted. **CARRIED.***

## **6. Strategic Planning Work Plan**

### ***Strategic Initiative – Promote and Protect Equity and Diversity – Equity and Diversity Committee Presentation – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion***

Bencher, Carey Majid, KC, presented to Benchers on the topic of equity, diversity and inclusion.

It was noted that the promotion of equity, diversity and inclusion among the legal profession is essential as it:

- i) is the right thing to do (morally and legally);
- ii) promotes the administration of justice;
- iii) enhances the reputation of the profession as a whole;
- iv) helps maintain relevancy;
- v) promotes innovation and creativity;
- vi) creates an inclusive and welcoming profession that reflects community;
- vii) helps lawyers interact with clients, co-workers and members of the community;
- viii) helps improve the quality of legal representation (more aware of history/bias/barriers); and
- ix) helps provide mentorship opportunities, and allows others to be mentees.

Benchers agreed that they have a role to play in encouraging equity in the legal profession and pushing against public policies that negatively affect equity, diversity and inclusion. It was noted that members must be aware of institutional and structural biases that negatively affect clients in order to truly understand their needs.

### ***General Discussion***

The Executive Director suggested that, as most of the initiatives in the Strategic Work Plan are complete, it might be appropriate to start planning for the next strategic plan which should take effect following 2024.

She noted that some of the priorities included in the existing Work Plan are broader in scope and will likely continue as priorities with new initiatives under the next strategic plan (Promoting Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and Enhancing Public Engagement and Communications were used as an example).

With respect to Enhancing Public Engagement and Communications, the Executive Director advised that the Law Society is working with the Public Legal Information Association of NL to help promote awareness of the Law Society and its mandate to regulate the practice of law and the legal profession in the public interest.

With respect to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, the Executive Director noted that the Law Society has made significant efforts to foster relationships with Indigenous communities in the province, but that we have not yet created a relationship with the Innu Nation. She noted that we will continue to work toward the establishment of such a relationship.

## *ITEMS FOR INFORMATION*

### **7. President's Report**

A report was provided. There were no questions arising.

### **8. Education Committee Report – Transfers under NMA and Notice of Resumption of Practicing Status**

A report was provided. There were no questions arising.

### **9. Benchers' Minutes – For Public – 20 February 2023**

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*

### **10. Other Business**

There was no other business.

11. **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 Gladys Dunne, KC and seconded by Sheilagh Murphy, KC: that the in-public portion of the Benchers' meeting be adjourned. **CARRIED.***

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**SUZANNE ORSBORN**