



**8 DECEMBER 2025
IN-PUBLIC BENCHERS' CONVOCATION**

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 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 8TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2025, COMMENCING AT 9:30 A.M.

The following Benchers were present:

Elective Benchers: Rod Zdebiak, KC, President
Doug Wright, Vice-President
Gladys Dunne, KC, Past-President
Lauren Chafe, KC
Johnathan Earle
Derek Ford
Greg French
Valerie Hynes, KC
Carey Majid, KC
Mark Mills
Sheilagh Murphy, KC
Steve Scruton
Lorilee Sharpe
Alex Templeton
John Whelan
David Williams

Appointed Benchers: Ross Elliott
Linda Harnett
Allan Skanes

Regrets: Jonathan Regan
Monika Rumbolt

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.

*Unless otherwise specified in the minutes, all motions were carried by a unanimous vote of Benchers.

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.

2. Excusal of Benchers unable to attend Convocation

On Motion by Ross Elliott and seconded by Gladys Dunne, KC: 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 David Williams: that the Agenda be adopted. CARRIED.

ITEMS FOR DECISION/DISCUSSION

5. Strategic Planning Work Plan

General Discussion about Strategic Work Plan

The Executive Director, Brenda B. Grimes, KC, referred Benchers to the Strategic Work Plan that is posted on the portal which is updated prior to every Benchers' meeting. She noted that there have been some jurisdictional scans completed and some are underway, but that they will not be presented to Benchers until recommendations in relation to the initiatives proposed are ready.

With respect to the priority to Promote Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, Ms. Grimes noted that the Executive Director, the President and Benchers, Johnathan Earle, plan to travel to Labrador at the same time as the Executive Director of Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, around mid-January, 2026, to help broaden the Law Society's connections there.

Strategic Initiative – Enhance Competence – Provide Education Relating to the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Practice of Law

Benchers were provided with a memo from the Executive Director which included an overview of AI in the contemporary legal environment, the types of AI used in legal practice and their applications, the advantages and risks/limitations of AI in legal practice and best practices for responsible AI adoption.

The Executive Director thanked the Director of Admissions and Education for his work on the memo. She noted that it will provide a foundation for ongoing discussion and future resource development.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

6. President's Report

A report was provided. There were no questions.

7. Education Committee Report – Notice of Resumption of Practicing Status and Transfers under NMA

A report was provided. There were no questions arising.

CONCLUDING MATTERS

12. Other Business

There was no other business.

13. 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 Steve Scruton and seconded by Gladys Dunne, KC: that the in-public portion of the Benchers' meeting be adjourned. CARRIED.

ROD ZDEBIAK, KC