



LAW SOCIETY

Newfoundland & Labrador

**13 April 2026
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 13TH DAY OF APRIL 2026, 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
Greg French
Valerie Hynes, KC
Carey Majid, KC
Mark Mills
Jonathan Regan
Steve Scruton
Lorilee Sharpe
Alex Templeton
David Williams

Appointed Benchers:

Ross Elliott
Linda Harnett
Allan Skanes

Regrets:

Derek Ford
Sheilagh Murphy, KC
Monika Rumbolt
John Whelan

Federation Council
Representative:

Ian S. Patey, KC

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

It was noted that the Benchers unable to attend had provided reasonable explanations.

On Motion by Gladys Dunne, KC and seconded by Johnathan Earle: 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 Valerie Hynes, KC and seconded by Lorilee Sharpe: 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 posted on the portal which is updated prior to every Benchers' meeting. She noted the following updates:

Access to Justice

The anticipated date of completion of the jurisdictional scan identifying legislative/regulatory schemes for the regulation of other professions in the province has been moved to September, 2026.

Enhance Governance Structure

The jurisdictional scans relating to the disciplinary processes of other law societies in Canada and other regulators in the province is underway.

Promote Truth and Reconciliation

The Executive Director, the President and 5 Benchers would be travelling to Labrador to attend Jolene Ashini's (the first Innu woman from Labrador to obtain a law degree) Call to Bar.

The Executive Director, the President, Johnathan Earle and Jonathan Regan are travelling from Labrador to Nain to meet with Inuit leaders.

Ms. Grimes, KC noted that they plan to hold a legal clinic in Goose Bay and in Nain with the support of the Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Increase Organizational Effectiveness

Amelia White, the Law Society's Communications Specialist, is reviewing the potential risks and benefits of AI use, evaluating suitable tools for the use of staff, and intends to update the existing AI Policy. Ms. White is also considering what training may be necessary.

6. **Education Committee Report**

Call to Bar Minutes – 20 February 2026

Benchers were provided with the minutes of the 20 February 2026 Call to Bar ceremony. A few typographical/formatting errors were identified.

On Motion by Lauren Chafe, KC and seconded by Valerie Hynes, KC: that the minutes of the 20 February 2026 Call to Bar ceremony be approved (with correction of typographical/formatting errors). CARRIED.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

7. **President's Report**

A report was provided. There were no questions.

8. **Education Committee Report**

Notice of Resumption of Practicing Status

A report was provided. There were no questions arising.

CONCLUDING MATTERS

9. **Other Business**

Johnathan Earle noted that Benchers are encouraged to provide the President or the Executive Director with any input/ideas/contacts they believe may be helpful for the upcoming trip to Labrador.

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 Valerie Hynes, KC: that the in-public portion of the Benchers' meeting be adjourned. CARRIED.

ROD ZDEBIAK, KC