



**5 June 2026
IN-PUBLIC BENCHERS' CONVOCATION**

MINUTES OF THE SUMMER 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 5TH DAY OF JUNE 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
Derek Ford
Greg French
Valerie Hynes, KC
Carey Majid, KC
Mark Mills
Sheilagh Murphy, KC
Jonathan Regan
Steve Scruton
Lorilee Sharpe
Alex Templeton
John Whelan
David Williams

Appointed Benchers:

Ross Elliott
Linda Harnett
Monika Rumbolt (partial attendance – exact departure time not verified)
Allan Skanes

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

There was no motion.

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 John Whelan: 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:

Enhance Public Engagement and Communication – National Rule of Law Campaign

The “Ours to Protect” campaign has concluded. The final report indicates that the campaign received 26 million completed video reviews and 135 million impressions. The next phase of the campaign includes a virtual summit to help gather information on how to engage students and youth on the rule of law topic. The Executive Director noted that she would distribute a memo to Benchers on the final report and next steps.

Access to Justice

While not specifically noted as an initiative under the strategic priority “Access to Justice”, the Executive Director of PLIAN has inquired whether the Law Society would be interested in contributing to future legal clinics in Labrador. It was noted that a clinic was offered following the recent Call to Bar ceremony held in Labrador and it was received with appreciation.

A general discussion took place about options for expanding outreach in Labrador including support for clinics and potentially holding a Benchers' meeting in Labrador. It was noted that meetings had been held in Gander and Corner Brook in the recent past.

Benchers were generally open to the idea of supporting PLIAN's legal clinic initiative and holding a meeting in Labrador, subject to further information on financial implications, which will be provided by the Executive Director.

6. Education Committee Report

Certificates of Fitness for Call to Bar

Benchers were asked to approve the Certificates of Fitness for the students being Called to the Bar on 25 June 2026.

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

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

7. President's Report

A report was provided. There were no questions.

8. Education Committee Report

*Student Admissions
Transfers Under the National Mobility Agreement
Notice of Resumption of Practicing Status*

A report was provided. There were no questions arising.

CONCLUDING MATTERS

9. Other Business

There was no other business.

10. 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 Sheilagh Murphy, KC and seconded by Johnathan Earle: that the in-public portion of the Benchers' meeting be adjourned. CARRIED

ROD ZDEBIAK, KC