

 **Banack's Bencher News**

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RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT: New Rules adopted by June Convocation come into effect November 1, 2000. They are available for review on the Law Society website (www.lsuc.on.ca) and will be circulated to the Profession. Please remember that the revisions change a number of our professional obligations and should be considered immediately.

LAW SOCIETY DISCIPLINE PROCESS: The Treasurer appointed the Honourable Mr. Justice Griffiths to review the complaints, investigations and discipline processes of the Law Society to make recommendations for improvement. The Review is an important step to ensure that fairness and safeguards exist to permit cost-effective and timely resolution of complaints resulting in discipline proceedings. Once finalized, the Report is to be filed in Convocation and will be available for review.

LPIC: Electronically file your 2001 LPIC application by November 1, 2000 in order to receive a reduction of \$50.00 per lawyer.

ARTICLING: The articling term has been reduced to 10 months with 2 weeks' vacation starting with the new Bar Admission Course in 2001.

INTERNET LEGAL SERVICES: The Law Society has joined a nationally-coordinated Certifying Authority for lawyers through Juricert Services Inc., owned by Canadian Law Societies. Juricert is to provide lawyers with secure applications, communications and document exchange over the internet. The certification provides proof of identity and professional status to reduce the risk of internet fraud and digital vandalism while maintaining confidentiality. The pilot project and development phase began in August with the expectation that full service will happen later this Fall. For more information, contact www.juricert.com. If you are interested in participating in the pilot operations or in securing a registration form, information is available at this site, or send an email to support@juricert.com.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES: The Canadian Bar Association, at its Annual National Meeting in August, adopted a resolution endorsing the establishment of such practices which may be controlled by non-lawyers, thereby rejecting the position of the Ontario Branch that wanted to restrict MDPs to only those controlled by lawyers. The national position is even more surprising in view of

the overwhelming rejection of MDPs by the American Bar Association in July. The preservation of our core values must be safeguarded for the protection of our clients, especially if lawyers begin participating in practices controlled by accountants or other non-lawyers.

The Treasurer's Task Force tabled a Report in Convocation that deals with law firms entering into business arrangements with individuals having different professional or service qualifications. The issues are to be considered in October, however, if you wish to review the Report and offer any comments to be raised during the course of the debate, please call Mr. Jim Varro at the Law Society (416) 947-3434, for a copy of the Report.

PROFESSIONALISM: The initiative of our colleagues Marvin Huberman and Paul Perell, has resulted in the creation of "Chief Justice of Ontario's Advisory Committee on Professionalism" in which the Law Society has agreed to participate. The Committee is a cooperative venture within the Profession and includes the law schools. Its goal is to maintain and encourage professionalism, civility and a spirit of community and collegiality in the legal profession which contribute to a learned and proud profession. If you wish to be one of the 14 lawyers to be appointed to the Committee by the Law Society, please communicate directly with the Treasurer.

BUDGET 2001: In October, Convocation will grapple with next year's budget focusing on the Law Society's core mandate, the need to reform governance processes and ensure adequate funding for existing programs and new initiatives. Avoiding a fee increase will be virtually impossible. Difficult decisions face Convocation. Now is the time to make your views known. If you wish to comment on either revenues or expenses, send your views to the Chair of Finance at the Law Society, Fax #(416) 947-3302.

REQUALIFICATION: The time has not yet come. It was originally planned that lawyers out of private practice for five years would have to submit to a requalification process by this time. However, difficulties arose in identifying which lawyers were exempt from the requirement. Accordingly, except for those lawyers who identified themselves as being out of private practice, the program has been deferred for consideration in conjunction with the upcoming competence discussions within the Profession. If you wish to attend any of the Regional Consultation Meetings addressing competence issues, please contact Ms. Sperdakos at the Law Society, Phone # (416) 947-3300, for location details.

VIRTUAL LAW LIBRARY: The pilot project is up and running. This initiative will provide an outstanding legal research resource. At your leisure, visit www.canlii.org.