

Banack's Bencher News #82

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MAY 1, 2009: This is the final date to pay annual Law Society membership fees. Failure to pay fees will result in referral for suspension.

MAY 13, 2009: This is the date of the Law Society Annual General Meeting. All are welcome to attend.

THE HONOURABLE MARVIN CATZMAN: An award will be given annually in memory of the late Honourable Marvin Catzman to a member of the profession who has demonstrated a high degree of professionalism and civility. Justice Catzman combined those characteristics with an exemplary reputation for his knowledge of the law and his dedication to the highest ideals of the legal profession. He inspired all lawyers, young and old, by example and contributed to legal education by writing and lecturing with great insight and humour.

HONOURARY DEGREES: Convocation approved the award of the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa* on Madam Justice Frances Kitzly, Mr. Justice Sidney Linden, Major General Richard Rohmer, Madam Justice Harriet Sachs and Mr. George Thomson. The degrees will formally be conferred at the Call to the Bar ceremonies in June to be held in Ottawa, Toronto and London.

WOMEN IN LAW: May 6, 2009 is this year's special forum to discuss alternative careers for women in law. The Law Society and the Women's Law Association of Ontario will host the program featuring a panel of successful and influential women lawyers. It is designed for women lawyers who may be ready for a career change within the profession or those who may be interested in learning about the hidden opportunities both within and outside the practice of law. The notice can be found on the Law Society's website.

PARENTAL LEAVE: March 11, 2009 was the commencement date for the Law Society Parental Leave Assistance Program. The goal is to reduce hardship that arises when a practicing lawyer who is a partner in a small firm or is a sole practitioner takes parental leave. Eligible applicants can receive a fixed sum of \$750.00 per week, for a maximum of twelve weeks to cover, among other things, expenses associated with maintaining a practice during maternity, parental or adoption leave. The Law Society website includes Guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions and the Application Form. Questions may be directed to Roy Thomas, Director of Communications at 416-947-7619 or rthomas@lsuc.on.ca.

LAW SOCIETY GOVERNANCE: A Task Force has now undertaken the discussions with members of the Bar scheduled for Thunder Bay, London, Sudbury, Ottawa and Toronto. In addition, there will be meetings with representatives of various professional organizations. These consultations were approved by Convocation and will be reviewed in a forthcoming Task Force Report. An expressed concern has been the significant reduction in lawyer participation in Bencher elections. In 1987, over 56% of the profession cast ballots. In 2007, only 35% participated. It appears that the greatest reduction in participation has been among those lawyers most recently called to the Bar. The perceived relevance and effectiveness of the Law Society must be enhanced to retain the confidence of the profession and the public in our ability to remain a self governing profession.

PROFESSIONAL CORPORATIONS: Acceptable names for a professional corporation used for the practice of law by lawyers and the provision of legal services by paralegals was considered by Convocation. The requirements have been simplified in order that the rules relating to name requirements and marketing are consistent. It is generally now accepted that marketing and advertising is permissible if demonstrably true, accurate and verifiable, is neither misleading, confusing nor deceptive, and is in the best interests of the public and consistent with the high standard of professionalism, as provided in Rule 3 of the Rules of Professional Conduct and By-law 7, as amended.

TORONTO LAWYERS FEED THE HUNGRY: The program established in 1998 has provided meals on Wednesday evening, breakfast on Thursday and brunch on Sunday. In total, approximately 56,000 meals are provided a year. Recently, the Law Society Foundation received a *cy près* award of one million dollars, pertaining to a class proceeding against the Bank of Nova Scotia. The Law Society Foundation estimated that the cost of providing an additional Friday evening meal, based on approximately 250 guests, would range from \$60-70,000.00. At present, the Law Society contributes the value of approximately \$125,000.00 per annum, which would increase by an estimated \$5,000.00 to \$15,000.00 per year to provide an additional Friday evening meal. Convocation approved the use of the Law Society's facilities and staff resources to support the addition of a Friday evening meal. Accordingly, as a result of the hot meals served and the bagged meal provided for the next day, at least one nutritious meal is provided for the patrons over five consecutive days. Meal volunteers are always welcome.

CONVOCATION REPORTS: All reports to Convocation can be viewed at <http://www.lsuc.on.ca/news/>. In order to more fully understand the issues facing Convocation, you may wish to review previous editions of Banack's Bencher News at http://www.kmlaw.ca/publications/banacks_bencher_news_home.aspx.

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