

October 21, 2022

Good afternoon:

Re: Hassan Law Lawyers & staff support FOLA campaign & LiRN

I have been a frequent visitor to the Great Library at Osgoode Hall. I have been to many other county and district libraries. As a long time member of the LSO, OTLA, OACPL, Middlesex Law Association, practicing for over 43 years (or at least visited for 41 until Covid hit in March 2020 until just last week!), I visited law libraries almost daily. The London Middlesex Library was where I often met with my lawyer colleagues (both former and present in large firms and small) as well as articling and other students. As senior counsel of Hassan Law and having worked in partnerships and a large firm I was almost a daily visitor to the London and Middlesex County Law Library. We law association members and guests, read, researched, attended seminars, webinars, and social events for the profession including OBA & CBA.

Whenever I travelled to other courthouses in places around the GTA , Windsor, Chatham, Sarnia, St. Thomas, Hamilton, Halton, Ottawa, Goderich, Barrie, and many other courts including the court of Appeal and Divisional Courts, I always went to the library to do research, quietly review files for court, conduct research updates, read and just relax. Often I met colleagues almost daily in the MLA lawyer's lounge and we would discuss law and events in courts. I enjoyed time with many colleagues doing likewise on court breaks. The librarians some of whom were parttime in smaller libraries, were always helpful and attentive whenever on duty and hosted lawyers local and visiting. Our London-Middlesex County law librarians are great! If I need urgent research they unfailingly will help.

I love the Library so much that on the occasion of my 40th year of my call to the bar, I organized the creation of an Indigenous Medicine Wheel project at our office and then finished it at the London and Middlesex County Law library. This project involved installing small mosaic coloured glass tiles in a specific order and layout, under the guidance and supervision of Elder Brenda Collins. During this exercise we shared food, stories, and had good fun. I greatly enjoyed donating this Medicine Wheel installation. It was an important acknowledgement as a live project that engaged quite a few people with lawyers, librarians, students, and Indigenous guests who throughout the day completed this important piece of Indigenous spirituality. The Medicine Wheel remains in our Middlesex-Law Library today.

I have always loved libraries, but I especially love the London and Middlesex County Courthouse library and the librarians. Over the years I have gotten to know every librarian and assistant well. They are invariably thoughtful and helpful at all times.

While technology may change it is no substitute for all the things well informed librarians do to support the many needs of practitioners and the legal profession. As accessibility becomes more important librarians likely will acquire new skills and show leadership, at the centre of accessibility campaigns in our profession. Libraries do not just hold books and computers, the

librarians especially can help in any research or communication emergency at the courthouses, they can add a supportive voice on a bad day, and can bring a solution unexpectedly to a difficult problem. They often host important practice or professional meetings. Sometimes (well almost always they have good cookies)!

Ontario's libraries and librarians are essential as not all licensees and law firms can afford to resource their law firms technology or research needs or training. Librarians ensure they provide support. To do so law libraries and librarians require ongoing essential funding, training, resources and support. If all required staff are to help law students, articling students, lawyers and paralegals the justice system will remain accessible. Libraries enable each participant to do their job while serving the public interest. Law libraries and librarians are essential to the delivery of justice in Counties and Districts throughout Ontario.

Reducing budgets for libraries is a big mistake and on the contrary they should be bolstered and enabled to deliver the best in person or virtual accessible services for the public and licensees.

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