



NCLA NEWSLETTER



Covid-19 Effects on Legal Aid Ontario and Legal Clinics in Ontario

Marina Sparks, *Student at Law, NCLC & Sharee Bhaduri, Lawyer, NCLA*

Legal Aid Ontario

Legal Aid Ontario provides legal assistance to financially eligible (low-income) Ontarians. LAO provides funding to clients so that the clients can obtain legal assistance with family law, refugee and immigration law, criminal law, mental health law, and clinic law matters. Legal Aid Ontario funds 79 general service and specialty legal clinics throughout the province.

Recent Developments due to COVID-19:

The pandemic has negatively affected funding for Legal Aid Ontario, in a way that is perhaps not well-known. While most of the funding for Legal Aid comes from governments (both provincial and federal), a significant proportion of annual funding comes from The Law Foundation. The Law Foundation of Ontario collects the interest that is generated on the trust accounts of lawyers and paralegals and uses these funds to support Legal Aid Ontario. A large proportion of legal firm trust account funds are generated from real estate transactions.

The pandemic affected these funds in a two-pronged way. Firstly, real estate transactions slowed during the first part of the pandemic. At the same time in response to the pandemic, the Bank of Canada lowered interest rates from 1.5% to 0.25%. The combined effect of these two things mean that The Law Foundation will receive less funds from trust accounts, and will therefore have less funds to send to Legal Aid Ontario.

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The amount of funding available could drop from more than \$91 million in 2019-2020 to less than \$30 million in 2020-2021 ([Alyshah Hasham, "Legal Aid Ontario facing up to \\$70 million funding drop amid Covid-19 'perfect storm'" Toronto Star, Monday July 13th 2020](#)).

Legal Aid Ontario already received a funding cut in the 2019 Ontario provincial budget. It remains to be seen how Legal Aid will cope with any additional loss of funding. The reduction in Law Foundation revenue could have a hugely adverse effect on the marginalized and vulnerable members of the population in Ontario in their quest for access to justice.

Legal Clinics

Legal clinics like the Northumberland Community Legal Centre provide legal services to people living in poverty and to other groups that have been historically marginalized. Legal clinics focus on areas of law that have immediate effects on these groups, such as tenant's rights, social assistance, disability, other government benefits, employment law, worker's compensation, etc. [Legal clinics usually serve a geographic area, but some serve specific communities \(elderly, disabled, etc.\)](#)

Legal clinics provide summary legal advice to individuals who are experiencing these types of legal issues but may take on a client's case and represent at various legal forums such as administrative tribunals, Labour Board, Small Claims etc. Legal clinic staff will also sometimes act as Tenant Duty Counsel at Landlord Tenant Board hearings, providing basic information and legal advice to tenants.

Legal clinics provide public legal education to individuals (in addition to informing clients of their legal rights) and to the public through brochures, public legal education seminars/webinars, newsletters and other memoranda. These materials assist both clinic staff and clients by setting out the substantive content of the law in clear, straightforward language that avoids legalese. Legal clinic staff also possess a good knowledge of local resources available, and are able to make referrals where appropriate.

Legal clinics and the pandemic

Legal clinics have been impacted by COVID much like other organizations: in-person services have been reduced for safety, and staff are only in office during limited times to ensure social distancing is possible. Yet the need for legal clinics has only increased as a result of COVID-19.

Firstly, the pandemic created new legal issues for legal clinics to address. Many low-income individuals are confused about how COVID emergency benefits impact their regular social assistance benefits. Still more have lost employment and are facing eviction during a global pandemic. The pandemic has made existing inequalities all the more apparent, as

more vulnerable members of the population are much more affected:

"The current COVID-19 pandemic is both revealing the extent of already-present discrimination and inequality among our client communities, but also unleashing additional discrimination both latent and blatant. Equality issues around racialized communities, economic well-being, identity, ageism, youth, migrant workers and many others are being exacerbated in areas of housing, employment, income and access to services." ([Marion Overholt, "The Work of Legal Clinics in Trying Times" May 29 2020](#))

Secondly, the pandemic has created a situation where various tribunals have downloaded the responsibility for access to justice in the poverty law world to legal clinics. With most of the administrative tribunals moving to an online videoconference mode for hearings, legal clinics are finding more and more clients who are simply unable to navigate the technological systems to be able to participate. When a client is unable to connect to remote hearings, they can be evicted, or lose their social assistance, or be denied disability benefits, all without having a chance to participate. While there are systems in place for printing and filing forms online, not all clients have access to the necessary technology or the literacy skills to be able to use these tools. It is falling to legal clinics to provide the necessary resources for electronic filing and accessing information online, as well as to provide the means to allow clients to participate in remote hearings. NCLC, like many other legal clinics, has created solutions that will allow such clients to be able to have their "day in court".

Legal clinics by their very nature are adaptable and versatile, making them well-suited to tackle the increased needs of clients during this difficult time. In response to COVID-19 safety concerns, legal clinics have adapted how services are offered. Clinic staff encourage clients to meet with them remotely, and, where in-person meetings are required, clinic staff take increased safety precautions that include COVID-19 screening questionnaires and sanitizing procedures. Public legal education seminars have moved online and take the form of webinars.

Legal clinics are deemed as an essential service, and so have continued to operate even during shut-downs and lock-downs. Legal clinics depend on Legal Aid Ontario for funding and as noted above, Legal Aid is facing its own fiscal challenges as a result of the pandemic. COVID-19's effects reach much farther than the health sector. Indeed, the pandemic has and continues to pose enormous challenges to access to justice, and particularly so for the most vulnerable segment of Ontario and for the legal services that support them.

Transcripts in the Time of Covid

Nathan Baker, *Nathan Baker Law*

Bail in the time of COVID is an interesting thing. An accused person appearing by video for their bail hearing has been the norm in many court locations for years. However, up until a year ago, the rest of the players in the courtroom drama would be appearing in person. The shift to online hearings has been an example of the opportunities and great work that can be accomplished by a system defined by its hard-working participants. There remain a number of new issues along with these new times and new technologies.



Almost all bail hearings are being conducted with participants attending virtually over Zoom or similar platforms. There are some advantages to this. Lawyers can now attend at locations further from their office or in multiple jurisdictions in a day without having to travel. Sureties too, can attend via a phone or video link which can give greater access to a bail hearing in a shorter time. However, there are drawbacks to this as well. It is much more difficult, almost impossible, for a Justice to determine the credibility and reliability of a surety where that surety is testifying by means of an audio connection alone. The quality of connections can be an issue all its own.

A [recent article in the Toronto Star](#) highlighted the problems which courts face. In rural jurisdictions especially, lack of access to stable internet or strong cell signals can affect the sound quality of participants in a hearing. The increased demands on internet connections in courts, struggling to deal with multiple online courts with individuals connecting from Crowns' offices, judicial officials, and court staff in the court all stress a system which was not designed for such high usage. Upgrades are ongoing but until they are complete, the system can falter at times.

Audio via Zoom meetings is mono-channel. In courts, each location in court has a separate

microphone and a separate channel that can be isolated when preparing transcripts. This was lost when hearings moved online. The court transcriptionist's bane of multiple parties talking over each other grew has grown into an, at times, insurmountable hurdle. Interference and background noise further complicate matters. Accurate recordings of proceedings are integral to the justice system. The answer to a question can be the difference between guilt or innocence at times. Whether a condition was worded one way or another in a bail release can have long ranging effect on an accused party but also on the people that such conditions are imposed to try to protect.

The ability to obtain an accurate transcription of a hearing is a key component to judicial review. Simply put, appeals require transcripts. They rely on them as they set out the facts which courts rely on to justify decisions and recount the decisions themselves which are to be reviewed. Access to judicial review of decisions is foundational to our system of justice. Appeals have been allowed and mistrials declared when part of a case was not properly recorded. This problem is serious. In a time when all court time is precious, the risk of needing to use an increasing amount of it to deal with this issue is a risk that needs to be mitigated.

The steps taken to allow matters to be dealt with in new ways have been impressive. Change is difficult but has been largely attained due to the stresses of COVID. Many of these changes have been beneficial but that does not mean they are not without issue. The justice system cannot rest on its laurels at this time but must continue to push ahead to make things continually better. The adaptation to new technologies by lawyers, judges, and other justice participants has been significant. The problems that are now faced can be dealt with through better use of the technology already adopted. The new systems now in place do not require the kind of sea change which was necessary last March but does require the kind of ongoing investment in improvement to make sure that being good enough does not get in the way of an even better system.



Free Range Children and Parental Liability in the COVID Era

Warren WhiteKnight, *Bergeron Clifford LLP*

My sister ratted me out to my parents when I was 10 or so. I and the kid across the street had figured out a way to climb into the loft space of a neighbour's garage by chimpanzee-ing our way across attic rafters that joined the garages in a multi-unit building. I was exhilarated by the fact that only my buddy and I and possibly Indiana Jones could have made such a discovery, but much to my chagrin my sister was terrified I would fall and took it upon herself to inform my folks. Little did they know that we'd been doing this for months during the summer break when I wasn't allowed in the house during daylight hours, and my folks had no idea where I was in the neighbourhood 90% of the time.

When my well-meaning and tearful sister informed my parents of my antics, they were not impressed for a variety of reasons that didn't make any sense to me at 10 years old. Fast forward to the present and I'm a father of four children and I masquerade every day as a plaintiff's personal injury lawyer; suffice to say that my parents' concerns do hit home a bit more these days.

If I had fallen, or been caught from below by the automatic door chain mechanism when it opened and we spied on the neighbour from 10 feet overhead, or any other ill-outcome had come home to roost, would my parents have been to blame if a lawsuit had ensued?

Not morally to blame. But legally? Likely so.

So what should we all do? It's 2021 and the world is in the second year of a pandemic and we want kids to be kids. Unfortunately these negligent supervision cases often arise in the case of tragedies – a kid who borrows a motorboat without explicit permission, or is riding their bike through a busy intersection to the corner store. Where is the boundary between permissible freedom and negligent lack of supervision?

In Ontario the case law has established that a parent will not be found liable for the acts of their child based solely on the basis of the parent and child relationship. A parent can however be held liable for a failure to supervise or instruct their child where there is a causal connection with damage caused by or to the child. Succinctly, if the failure to supervise is unreasonable in the circumstances and meets



the normal test of negligence then a parent can be liable.

It's important to note that age is a relevant factor. While there is no bright line it is intuitive that the younger the child is the more the law will expect a parent to supervise, and there is a perfect nexus of propensity for mischievousness as a child becomes more independent and capable yet is still too young to have much insight (coincidentally around the ages of 8-12). It is also intuitive that as a child approaches the age of majority the child will be expected to conform with adult societal norms (disclaimer: Indiana Jones is not a normal adult), and thus only in much clearer and extreme circumstances will a parent be liable for the conduct of a teenage child.

A related but separate note is that the law is ever evolving to catch up with societal trends, and the legal principles for parental responsibility have recently been tested in cases involving online activities such as harassment and bullying. It's 2021 and just because your kid is in the basement and isn't chimpanzee-ing in the neighbour's attic no longer means you know what they are up to.

In plain English what this all means that if a parent knows or ought to know of a desirable but dangerous activity that their kid is undertaking, they have a legal obligation to supervise and instruct. These are tricky waters to navigate, but the stakes are ever so high.

Librarians Working Together

CALL-L, *Listserv*

Question: *In our firm library, we are often asked to search for/obtain court documents from other provinces and territories. To ensure we have the most up-to-date information, I would appreciate if you could fill in information from your jurisdiction.*

Recently Sarah Richmond, a law librarian working at a firm in Vancouver inspired law librarians across Canada to collaborate via the Canadian Association of Law Libraries listserv to generate a list of where to find Canadian court records and dockets.

Meris Bray, Librarian at Windsor Law, converted the table into a webpage you can see here: [Canadian Court Records/Dockets](#).



FUTURE STUDENTS

ask.UWindsor



MENU



UWindsor Home > Paul Martin Law Library > Canadian Court Records/Dockets

Canadian Court Records/Dockets

> Supreme Court of Canada

> Federal Courts

> Alberta

> British Columbia

> Manitoba

> New Brunswick

> Newfoundland and Labrador

> Northwest Territories

> Nova Scotia

> Nunavut

> Ontario

Library Catalogue
Faculty of Law Digital Repository
Lexis Advance Quicklaw
WestlawNext Canada
HeinOnline

THE GLOBE AND MAIL*

Today's Library Hours

MONDAY, MAY 24, 2021 - CLOSED

Circulation Services

Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
E-mail: lawcirc@uwindsor.ca

Reference Services

Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

LiveChat or popup below
E-mail: LawReference@uwindsor.ca
Remote Access to e-books
Open Access Collections

Course Reserves

Search Course Resources Lists

Finding Ontario Court Information Online

Susannah Tredwell, *SlawTips*

Ontario now allows legal professionals to search for [Superior Court of Justice court cases online](#). To search, you will need to set up a [ONE-key account](#). (There is no cost to set up an account.)

You can search by either party name (i.e. surname or business name) or by case number.

Information provided includes the parties, the name of the lawyer representing the person or company (if represented), the claim amount (for civil matters), the date the case was opened, the most recent order type and date (for civil matters), the next appearance type and date (if a future appearance has been scheduled), and whether the case is subject to a publication ban

Note that the service “will not provide information about cases that are subject to statutory, common law or court-ordered public access restrictions.”

What Would You Be Without Us? (or) What Have You Done for Us Lately?

Ciara Ward, *BAH, MLIS*

I asked my colleagues this question, the day after everyone knew about the LIRN budget cuts. What would lawyers working in Ontario or even our own law associations be without us (Ontario courthouse librarians)? Do you know? I'm not sure I do. We have a symbiotic relationship where you need us in order to thrive, as much as we need you.

Everyone is talking about library advocacy and there are a number of individuals and entities claiming to be working to promote lawyer competency and Access to Justice (or A2J, the flashier acronym), but who has been championing your courthouse libraries, and their staff? Especially considering libraries in rural areas. These libraries, and their staff work to provide research and reference services, access to legal materials and databases that have prices which are out of the reach of solo and small firms, as well as facilitating continuing education programming, along with networking and mentorship opportunities.

Right now, we all have fatigue. We're tired of the pandemic, and of work, and budgets, and even the day-to-day things. But you know what fatigues us (courthouse librarians), year after year, without fail? The constant expectation of having to prove our worth. Particularly when many of us work for wonderfully supportive boards, with a local bar that understands and truly appreciates the value we provide on a weekly (and in many cases daily) basis to their practices.

Recently [David Whelan of the Great Library wrote an article](#) about the province of Alberta's decision to close its government library. In his article, The Post-Expertise Library, David writes that "the chasm between appreciation and understanding rankles me. People love their libraries but aren't willing to pay for the very things that make them lovable." Which I think is a perfect description for what is happening at the moment with Ontario's Courthouse Libraries. Not many would openly deny the usefulness of having a fully stocked library, complete with database subscriptions and helpful staff – but they also don't want to pay for that expertise (nor do they fully understand what this means, or the costs associated). If you want to understand the full weight of a collections budget, just ask a librarian. Any librarian.

In 2020, freshly elected LSO Benchers wished to deliver swift and tangible change to the lawyers of Ontario – and what is the easiest and quickest way for them to demonstrate action to those who elected them? Demand lower annual fees of the LSO, who in turn

reduced lawyer fees. One of the things reduced was their annual competency fees which went from \$182 to \$159. Remember, every action has an opposite and equal reaction, and your money has to come from somewhere. This time it's coming from your most valuable resource.

A 10% overall cut to Ontario courthouse libraries annual budgets, with some libraries being hit with a full 10% reduction, and others, based on overall budget size, hit with slightly smaller cuts. But cuts are cuts. You can't advocate for one library, and not for all of them, we all hold equal value for our local bar. We are all effected, and now we are all at a disadvantage.

Just prior to having the budget cuts confirmed an article titled [The Dangers of Library Science Denial](#), written by my colleague Joan Rataic-Lang (TLA's Library Director) was published. At the beginning of the article Joan states: "They warned us when I was studying for my master's degree in library and information studies that libraries are always the first to suffer when budgets are cut. We were told to always be prepared to justify our existence."

This is depressingly accurate; in fact, I was told the same thing during my second week of 'library school' (MLIS program). We have always been, and most likely will continue to be, in a constant state of 'we will lose funding/they're going to close libraries'. It's exhausting. It's unmotivating. It's unfair to staff, and to library patrons. How can you expect innovation of someone who is occupied not only with their regular duties, but the added pressure of proving value?

I was recently invited to attend a virtual brainstorming meeting to coordinate advocacy efforts. Before the meeting participants were asked to envision what we thought libraries would look like years in the future. I think most librarians would say there's no library without proper staff, and I think most of us say this because we're physically in the libraries while court is in session. We are there while you're on break and need to look something up, when you need to note something up quickly, when you need research help because you don't have access to all the tools you need to do your job, because maybe those tools are outside of your overhead budget as a small or solo practitioner. We're there when a judge pops in and asks to check out our annotated Family Law Rules or Criminal Code. And yes, we're also there when a new associate needs a safe harbour and some Kleenex before going out and facing aggressive senior counsel. We do all of these things. And often times associations in smaller communities are penalized for this. Larger libraries believe our sense of community to be a weakness, when really, it's our strength.

I would hope that most people realize by now that [libraries are more than books](#). "If you

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perceive a library as a shelf of books, it may seem antiquated or outdated ... that is to miss the point fundamentally. I think it has to do with nature of information. Information has value, and the right information has enormous value.” Statistics often do not give the most complete picture of success. I can tell you how many physical items were signed out from my library, how many new or updated volumes I purchased, how many questions I answered, how much time I spent reviewing books with each publisher. I can even tell you the amount spent on our Bell telephone and internet bills for any year out of the last decade.

These numbers would not tell you how many hours within that year that I spent tied up on the phone with technical support. How much time I spent going down the rabbit holes of publisher websites to find out of print or hard to find volumes. Statistics wouldn't measure the time I took to speak to my lawyers about their area of law and what types of resources they find useful. My library is small-to-medium within the Ontario courthouse system; we are located on the 401 corridor in a town surrounded by rural Ontario. Some of my members are an hour or more away, all located in the same county, with us as their closest library – if our funding is cut, or we are closed, how does that help Access to Justice? What would my local bar do? Type a question in a chat box on a kiosk located in their closest courthouse? Phone a reference hotline? Email a person who doesn't know them, what type of law they practice, and what types of cases they generally take on, and what kinds of materials they prefer to use? A person who wouldn't be able to anticipate their needs the way their local librarian would?

Since taking on this position, I have spent a huge amount of time thinking, and talking, and strategizing with other Ontario courthouse library staff about how to demonstrate the value of our libraries. Every professional conference I have ever had the privilege of attending has had at least three sessions on this exact topic. If we're all jumping on the “love your library campaign” we have to ask ourselves why libraries are constantly required to prove their value. You love your library? That's great, but why aren't any of you speaking up? Why is it up to us, to have a voice loud enough for you to hear over the dollar signs, telling you that this year you get to save on competency fees, while your access to the resources that improve your competency are being greatly impacted, with the potential for greater cuts in the future.

There is a popular [quote from a lecture](#) given by one of my favorite authors, Neil Gaiman, “Google can bring you back 100,000 answers. A Librarian can bring you back the right one.” In the same lecture he also says “libraries are about freedom. Freedom to read, freedom of ideas, freedom of communication. They are about education ... and about access to information.” He is speaking about public

libraries (the most visible of any type of library), but it still applies. They face the same cuts, the same struggle of having to ‘prove your worth’, only their struggles are much louder, because their service/user base is much larger.

There are roughly [55,000 lawyer licensees practicing in Ontario](#). That is the most out of any of the provinces/territories in Canada. Conversely, there are 48 courthouse libraries, and just over 70 library staff members. If you polled the members of individual law associations, I guarantee they would have nothing but kind words and positive feedback to offer regarding their staff. They would all have stories to share of a time when library staff helped them out. This is what I mean when I say that we need you as much as you need us. We are your connection between access to justice, the courthouses, the law associations, and the lawyers. If you do not have your libraries, with your staff, then access to justice will suffer.

Personally, I like to believe that “my” lawyers know the value of my small-medium law association library. Most of them, if not all of them, understand the value that is added to their practices by having access to a library and competent staff who can assist with available resources and research. Our value is obvious, and we (your courthouse librarians) shouldn't have to continually demonstrate it, because we are your most underrated, and underestimated, resource. So I ask again, what would you be, without us?



From the Library

As summer begins the library is gearing up to do a full inventory of the collection and large scale weeding project – so keep an eye out of the huge list of withdrawals later in the summer!

At this time the NCLA Library is still closed, but accommodations can be made for those who require access. As a reminder of the non-print subscriptions in the library:

- Rangefindr
- HeinOnline
- LexisNexis Advance (formerly Quicklaw)
- Westlaw (Criminal Source, Family Source, Law Source, O'Brien's)

Message from FOLA

Katie Robinette, *Executive Director FOLA*

Happy Summer 2021 Northumberland County lawyers!

With patios open, people beginning to get together in larger groups, and masks coming off (at least outdoors and while eating), we are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

Over the summer, FOLA's weekly meetings with the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG), the Courts, the Law Society, and other provincial law associations (the OBA, the Advocates' Society, the Ontario Trial Lawyers' Association, etc) will move every other week. As such, FOLA's Weekly Updates will now become "Updates" and will be issued twice a month. That said, FOLA will continue to ensure that all Associations are alerted to Court and government notices as they are issued. As well, Court notices will continue to be posted on our [Courts](#) page, MAG notices will continue to be posted on our [MAG](#) page and all FOLA Updates (past and current) can be accessed here.

As you know, FOLA remains quite concerned about the LSO's cuts to Law Libraries and continue to build out our [Library Action Centre](#). In addition to letters to Benchers, FOLA's Board and LiRN Working Group members are calling and emailing individual benchers to explain the importance of Law Libraries and urge them to reinstate funding and commit to sustainable funding.

We have also used the results of our Law Library Use Survey results to produce a White Paper on the importance of County & District Law Libraries. That paper is still being finalized and should be ready for circulation to Presidents just after Canada Day. Our White Paper, along with accompanying Talking Points, should help your President and interested members advocate for sustainable funding. In the meantime, all members are encouraged to visit our [Action Centre](#). We have a curated list of ready-to-be-used messaging, Tweets, and images as well as a Bencher contact list (with email addresses, phone numbers, and Twitter handles) for cut and pasting into social media posts or downloading for reference. Please do visit regularly! Many of the Benchers listen and react to grassroots voices and even though Bencher elections seem far off (2023), the campaign for re-election has already begun!

And speaking of Bencher elections, rest assured you will be hearing more from FOLA in the near future about how we will be working with Law Association members to ensure that the voice of the small and sole practicing lawyer is heard by all candidates!

Regarding the Law Society, you may have heard that at the June 2021 Convocation, the Competency Committee's Task Force presented their paper "[Renewing the Law Society's Continuing Competence Framework](#)". The Report details the Law Society's mandate to regulate the competence of lawyers and paralegals and provides an overview of how competence regulation has evolved to keep pace with regulatory best practices. The Report also provides an overview of the Task Force's work plan, a working definition of competence, and proposed themes and principles which may inform new approaches to competence programs and requirements.

Most importantly, the Report includes comments on the importance of LiRN and of providing supports to small/soles.

The Law Society has issued a [Call for Comment](#) on the paper and has set a deadline of Nov. 30, 2021. We encourage you to participate – either directly on your own, as an Association, or through us. FOLA will be spending the summer preparing a Submission and if you would like to share any comments with us for consideration in our paper, please email them to Katie at katie.robinette@fola.ca by October 10th.

Don't forget to visit our [Member Rewards](#) page to take advantage of deals! And if you have any suggestions for companies you'd like to see listed, let us know! Email Katie at katie.robinette@fola.ca and we'll look into any and all suggestions!

And finally, we are currently accepting nominations for our [2021 FOLA Awards](#). Please do take a moment to access our [forms](#) and nominate someone today!

Remember – if you never want to miss our submissions, initiatives, and news please remember to sign up for our [newsletter](#)!

Katie W. Robinette
Executive Director, FOLA
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FEDERATION OF ONTARIO
LAW ASSOCIATIONS

FÉDÉRATION DES ASSOCIATIONS
DU BARREAU DE L'ONTARIO



Christine Roth Named Regional Director for the Ontario Bar Association: *Cobourg Lawyer to Represent Central East on Board of Directors*

Cobourg lawyer Christine Roth has been named Central East Regional Director for the Ontario Bar Association (OBA). She will begin her term on Sept. 1.

“I am proud to represent the Central East on behalf of the OBA and am excited to help lawyers in this region take advantage of the many opportunities and services the OBA provides,” said Roth, who operates Roth Law Offices. “The past couple of years have presented many challenges and changes, and the OBA has been there with innovative ideas, advocacy, services and solutions that are helping move the profession and the justice system forward in a way that will be of tremendous benefit to lawyers in the Central East. I look forward to bringing the input of the bar here back to the Board to improve services even further.”

The role of regional director is to represent their regions on the OBA Board of Directors. This includes consulting with local lawyers to gather issues, ideas and concerns regarding the practice of law in the region, regulatory requirements, substantive law, access to justice and other justice sector issues. Input from regional directors helps ensure local lawyers have access to relevant OBA tools, services, government advocacy and other assistance.

Ottawa lawyer Karen Perron will take over the role of OBA president in September, while Ranjan Agarwal, of Toronto, and Kelly McDermott, of Durham Region, will move into the roles of 1st vice-president and 2nd vice-president, respectively.

For more information, visit www.oba.org

About the Ontario Bar Association

Established in 1907, the OBA is the largest voluntary legal association in Ontario representing over 16,000 lawyers, judges, law professors and law students. The OBA provides continuing professional development and advocates for improvements to the law in the interests of the profession and public.

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From the President

The five months since I have become the president of the NCLA have come and gone in a blur. It is amazing what can happen in five months. In the past five months I have helped my husband renovate a derelict building into my lovely new office space. I learned I have a shocking affinity for guesstimating how much insulation is needed for a given space just by eye-balling it. It's honestly uncanny. I have opened my own law firm and handled all the wonderful/terrible things that come along with that. Striking out on your own is not easy. I have been very lucky to have the support of so many great people along the way. I have attempted to potty train a toddler. In that process I realized my negotiating skills are terrible. I also discovered if it's too quiet, a floor, somewhere, is being peed on. And never offer the candy up front. Never.

The NCLA has been very busy over the past few months. In June, the NCLA issued a statement in response to the #Fullstop campaign, which is a series of communications issued by a group of Law Society benchers aimed at ending the "woke ideology" and "EDI dogma" of the Law Society of Ontario. The NCLA was shocked and appalled by the insinuation that there is not systemic racism and bigotry within the legal profession in Ontario and that efforts to expand diversity and inclusivity are a wasted effort. The NCLA continues to be committed to inclusivity and diversity, not only within our membership but within our everyday community. I am thankful for the contributions various members made to our statement.



It is important to turn words into action when it comes to setting an example. To highlight the importance of inclusion and diversity in our community, the NCLA has developed a policy committee, headed by Teresa Williams of the executive committee, to draft NCLA policies to ensure our legal community is one free of harassment, sexism, racism and bigotry. We look forward to continuing to evolve and continuing to inform ourselves about these issues in the years ahead.

Morgan Payne
NCLA President

THE NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY LAW ASSOCIATION Board of Directors

President: Morgan Payne
Vice-President: Kady McCourt
Past President: Meaghan Adams
Secretary: Jessica Vriend
Treasurer: Scott McCracken

Director: Phillip Crannell
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