

POST-PLENARY REPORT NOVEMBER 2019 FOLA.CA



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While our over-arching theme of our November Plenary was igniting your membership, the message we all took home was the need for experienced lawyers to give back by mentoring the newer lawyers and for the newer lawyers to seek out and seize such opportunities.

This call for mentoring was first mentioned at our Wednesday dinner (at [Toronto's Arts & Letters Club!](#)) by our speaker Chief Justice Strathy, who reflected on the impact mentoring had on his early career. From being taken into court to observe trials and then to serve as lead on smaller cases was highlighted as instrumental in giving him much needed experience and confidence. He lamented that, for a host of reasons, he is not seeing this on a scale that is needed today. This was a welcome message as FOLA's own Chair, Mike Winward, has often mentioned mentoring as one of his top priorities. In fact, Mike took advantage of his time during the opening remarks on Thursday morning to reiterate this need and pointed to a presentation that delegates would hear later in the conference about the Law Society's Coach and Advisor Network (CAN).

After greetings from Margaret Waddell of the Toronto Lawyers Association (who also mentioned the importance of giving back citing the work the TLA does with [Lawyers Feed the Hungry](#) program), the Plenary got underway with a presentation by the Executive Director where three new initiatives were announced: [FOLA's Inaugural Lobby Day](#), our new [FOLA Awards](#), and a new [Member Rewards](#) program featuring our first partner, Hilton Hotels. More about those initiatives can be found on our website (just click the hyperlinks). Note that FOLA's Membership Rewards program is just now being built out and FOLA welcomes any and all suggestions for additional partners!

Continuing with the Thursday morning, we then dove into what was likely the most anticipated panel of the Plenary: the LIRN Update and vote on the Unanimous Shareholder Agreement (USA). On the panel were former FOLA Chair Jaye Hooper, LIRN PRC Chair Nathan Baker, and FOLA's LIRN Counsel Harold Van Winssen. Due to some very diligent advance work from FOLA's Regional Chairs in advance of Plenary to discuss the Agreement and address any questions or concerns, there were few questions raised from the floor and FOLA is pleased to announce that the LIRN USA was unanimously passed by the Presidents. The session closed with a reminder from Nathan and Jaye that this in no way means the end of FOLA's involvement in the Library network. Nathan took advantage of his time on the panel to call for volunteers to serve on FOLA's new LIRN Committee (which will have between 6-8 members), which will work to ensure the new LIRN Board and eventual Executive Director will always be informed as to the needs and interests of Law Associations and their library staff. If you are interested, please do let Katie know (Katie.Robinette@fol.ca). To stay informed on LIRN, please visit our [LIRN webpage](#).

Next up were our Committee Reports (videos coming later, but written reports and presentations can be found on our website [here](#)), followed by a presentation titled "[Into the Weeds: An Overview of Cannabis and the Law](#)" by lawyer Ruth Chun.

Returning from lunch at the Law Society where we heard about [how smart cities can engage communities](#) from Sasha Sud, Director, Smart Cities at MaRS, we launched into [Media 101](#) with noted PR specialist Bob Pickard. Delegates then broke off into prearranged groups and headed into workshops that, depending on which group they were in, covered membership engagement and increasing non-dues revenue.

With delegates regrouping for a very special key-note speech by the Honourable Doug Downey, Ontario's Attorney General, we were treated to a candid half hour talk about the need to (to name a few) reform the

Judicial appointment process, improve transparency in the system, modernize systems, and leverage new technology. You may have already noticed, but the AG's talk generated some press and FOLA's Chair, Mike Winward, was interviewed by a number of media outlets, including the [Globe & Mail](#), Toronto Star affiliate [QP Briefing](#) (an inside Queen's Park daily), and [CBC Radio](#)!

On the heels of the Attorney General were back to back Partner Presentations where FOLA delegates heard about [CPDOnline](#)'s deal for FOLA members and Law Associations and from Lawyers Financial where Dawn Marchand announced that they are launching a [Defined Benefit Pension Plan \(DBplus\)](#) for Law firms of all sizes!

And just before breaking for dinner, was lawyer and coach Lana Saleh who gave a very energetic talk about how to improve client/lawyer communications.

Capping off a long day was Malcolm Mercer, Treasurer of the Law Society, who addressed our delegates and a number of Benchers and guests. Treasurer Mercer touched on a few topics but did take the opportunity to stress the importance of law association participation in [The Access to Justice Group](#) (TAG)'s Access to Justice Week's activities each year.

For those not yet tired, Plenary guests headed over to the 2nd night of our open hospitality suite (courtesy of [LawPRO!](#))

Bright and early on Friday morning, the delegates and attendees broke up into groups for their Regional Breakfasts before being treated to an in depth look at legal trends as found in Clio's latest annual [Legal Trends Report](#).

This was followed by back to back presentations from the Law Society: a) our always anticipated Briefing and Q&A with Diana Miles, Law Society CEO; and b) an overview (and much needed plug!) for the Law Society's [Coach & Advisor Network](#) (CAN) by Kerry Boniface, the Law Society's Director of Practice Supports and Resources.

After a quick presentation by FOLA partner [GoAhead Tours](#) (where we were reminded of the importance of prioritizing experiences over things and were given a brief moment to dream a little), we heard from [LawPRO's Dan Pinnington](#) about claims trends and upcoming program changes.

Before wrapping this report up, four quick mentions:

1. That our Yoga enthusiasts were once again treated to Thursday and Friday morning Yoga sessions (now a Plenary regular!!);
2. Photos are available [here](#); and
3. Videos are coming soon!
4. And a quick reminder that there are still spots available on our trip to the Galapagos and Ecuador! Visit [here](#).

And finally, as a reminder, mark your calendars for our Spring Plenary which will take place in Niagara Falls from May 13-15 2020.