

## **President's Report – February 2010**

It is hard to believe that I am actually sitting down to write what will be my final President's Report. I have certainly enjoyed this past year and being involved in so many of the MLA activities and I thank you for the opportunity to serve in this role. Although I will now pass the torch to Stephen Taran (sorry I couldn't resist as I have Olympic fever), I will continue my involvement for another year as Past President.

A special thank you to all of the members of our Board of Trustees who have completed their terms, namely, Adrien Cameron, Denise Marshall, Evelyn ten Cate, Michel Castillo, Paul Scott and secretary, Maura Thompson. We truly do appreciate their efforts in helping our association run smoothly.

### **MLA Annual General Meeting and New Board of Trustees**

Our Annual General Meeting took place on February 18, 2010 followed by a reception in our Lawyers' Lounge.

I was pleased to announce those individuals who will make up our Board of Trustees for the upcoming year: President Stephen Taran, Vice President Tracy Leckie, Treasurer Jennifer McGill, Jeanine LeRoy, Bill Woodward, Charlie Walters, Sylvia Loyens, Greg Van Berkel, Lindsay Kirk, Lianne Armstrong, and newcomers Ed Corrigan, Michael Cormier, Larry Blokker, Dagmara Wozniak and Matthew Dale.

We were fortunate to have John Starzynski and Rod McLeod, the Executive Director and Board Chair respectively of the Ontario Lawyers Assistance Program address our members. Not only did they inform us of the services offered by OLAP but also shared their very moving personal stories. I certainly urge you to take advantage of this resource should you require such assistance or know another lawyer who does. I would also encourage anyone who may be interested in acting as a peer volunteer in the program to contact OLAP.

### **Year in Review**

#### **a) Court House Law Library**

Our librarians, Gail Brown and Cynthia Simpson and our library assistant, Vanja Simic, offer invaluable support to our members. Although the library receives the majority of funding from Library Co., our membership continues to supplement the budget each year as we strive to make the best resources available to all of our members.

#### **b) Continuing Legal Education**

The MLA continues to emphasize our role in this most important task. I am quite sure that we offer some of the best programming outside of the Toronto area and are one of the most active local law associations in this venture.

The MLA presented nine programs last year and also assisted with three others. In total, our programs included the participation of 120 volunteer presenters and more than 600 participants.

We could not achieve our goals without the assistance of our Director of Continuing Legal Education, Paula Puddy.

c) Social Events

We are very lucky to have such a collegial bar in our region. In an effort to maintain that, the MLA continues to be responsible for hosting a number of social events for our members.

This year, we celebrated the MLA's 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with an evening of live jazz at Aroma Restaurant. I was so pleased to see such a fantastic turnout of members of all ages and practice specialties.

We also hosted a sold-out Golf Tournament at Firerock Golf Course. The success of this annual event certainly makes early registration a must!

As part of our Straight from the Bench conference, we again enjoyed a wonderful dinner to kick-off the event with comedic entertainment.

Our Courthouse Holiday Party was as always well attended and we again succeeded in showing our appreciation on behalf of all of our members for our local court staff.

Finally and most recently, we held another Family Skate at the JLC. Approximately 100 members and their families enjoyed two hours of skating. The kids particularly loved watching themselves on the big scoreboard screen. Although there was no admission fee, more than \$300 was raised for the London Lawyers Feed the Hungry program. Thanks to all who attended and donated.

d) Launch of New Website and Electronic Newsletter

2009 saw the launch of the MLA's new website and electronic newsletter. Both provide improved platforms for us to keep our members informed.

e) Continued Support of our Legal Community

The MLA continues to support local initiatives including the London Lawyers Feed the Hungry, UWO law school scholarships, the sponsoring of a local high school moot team and the elementary school age program of Art in the Courts. Participation in other events included the local Call to the Bar Ceremony, the UWO Law School Graduation, Opening of the Courts and Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Epitaph.

f) County and District Law Presidents' Association

I, along with Steve Taran, attended the two annual CDLPA Plenary Sessions held over the past year. Steve, Tracy Leckie or I also participated in monthly CDLPA Southwest Region conference calls.

CDLPA continues in its efforts on behalf of all Ontario lawyers in areas including Legal Aid, law libraries, LSUC governance, rule amendments, civil justice review and the promotion of our profession outside of the Toronto area, just to name a few.

g) Passings

I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the passing of certain of our members, Angus McKenzie, Grant Evans, Jim Adams, Ronald Caldwell and Paul Carter. All will be missed.

**New Regional Senior Justice**

We welcome Mr. Justice Ducharme to the role of Regional Senior Justice and look forward to working with him.

A special thank you to Madam Justice Leitch for her many years in this role and playing a pivotal role in ensuring that our region ran smoothly.

**Appointment of Justice Duncan Grace**

Congratulations to Mr. Justice Grace on his recent appointment to the Ontario Superior Court in Toronto.

**Upcoming Continuing Legal Education**

Future programs will include topics such as the HST, Bill 133 and our annual Mentor Dinner, the Straight from the Bench Conference and the MFLA Conference. Watch our newsletter and website for further details.

**Future Social Events**

Future social events include the annual Court House Rocks on March 26, 2010 and in April, the Straight from the Bench dinner featuring comedian Derek Edwards.