

Business & Careers

Bencher election comes at important juncture



Gary Mitchell
The Coach

If you are a practising lawyer in Ontario and a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada, chances are you haven't voted in a bencher campaign in the past. That's according to readily available statistics that show less than 40 per cent of eligible members typically vote in bencher campaigns.

With all the challenges and changes the legal profession faces, this year more than ever you should be paying attention, and getting out to vote. As you know, I am a business development coach and my columns here are based on topics around the "business of law." There is no better argument for voting than your business.

I've always maintained that successful

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Janet Minor
Law Society of Upper Canada

lawyers give back — to their communities, and to their profession.

Here is one example from bencher candidate Steven Benmor to illustrate why you should care: "I want to volunteer as a bencher because I care...I really care... about the future of our profession. In the

next few years, the law society's benchers will be tackling issues such as non-lawyers owning law firms, paralegals competing with lawyers, articling students and young lawyers facing unemployment, women leaving law, a court system hamstrung by self-represented litigants, a weak Legal Aid system, the graying of the bar and civility problems. The role and mandate as lawyers is about to be challenged in a radical way. I am eager to work on these issues, while preserving the dignity, importance and relevance of our legal profession."

So much of what they do impacts your practice and business, whether at a large firm or small or solo practice. It's in your best interest to look at who is running and why, and what they feel are the most important issues. Then cast your vote accordingly.

The LSUC created the bencher election working group in June 2011 to review the bencher-election process, and in particular issues that arose during the 2011 election related to: a) the nomination process; b) candidacy and the region specified for election; c) the length of the election period, including the voting period; d) information on the progress of voting; e) campaign materials and methods; f) distribution of and access to the e-mail to launch voting; and g) accommodation issues relating to online voting.

"I am optimistic that this bencher election will achieve greater diversity and attract new voices to the convocation table. I am glad to be able to see that past policy work is helping to achieve this, for the good of the profession and the public," said Janet Leiper, bencher and member of the bencher election working group.

Regional bencher Adriana Doyle said: "There are serious emerging issues facing the legal profession. There will be lots of discussions and input from members. Benchers will be making many important decisions over the next four years. There's ABS, access to justice, LPP and the dwindling articling opportunities, keeping fees in check, and the library being the hub of a lot of associations struggling with budget

cutbacks. These issues and many more are going to be discussed and debated by the people you elect, so you should care. We cannot remain stagnant. Our world is changing and we must keep up. These are exciting times for the legal profession. I've always been involved from the beginning of my career, because I care. While making sure the public interest is met we must also ensure our members can practice and have the support of the law society."

"Our profession and industry is in the midst of tremendous transitional pressures being led in part by globalization, changing demographics and client needs," said Janet Minor, LSUC treasurer. "It's a very significant time to be a bencher. We have a number of very complex and important issues to face and it's critical that we have a good bench. By good, I mean thoughtful and engaged people who are committed to weighing these issues and have excellent knowledge of the profession.

"We need a well-rounded group of benchers who adequately represent the diversity of our profession, practice areas, geographical areas, different sized firms, different backgrounds and genders. We need good representation of this diversity in order to make the kind of decisions we will face over the next four years."

This is your future. This is your business. This is your livelihood. There are many changes coming your way and this is how you personally can have an impact on the direction of this profession. The Law Society has hired Computershare, a third party company, to conduct the election. Computershare will provide voting information to all eligible voters during the second week of April, 2015, by e-mail and regular mail. Make sure you vote.

Gary Mitchell is the principal at On Trac Coach, and co-founder of Legal A Team, a marketing and management alliance focused on providing Big Firm support to smaller law firms and solo practice lawyers. His second book, Raindance Two: A Blueprint for Growing your Practice is now available. He can be reached at gary@ontraccoach.com or 604-669-5235.



JUDICIAL VACANCY ONTARIO COURT OF JUSTICE HALTON

The Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee advises the Attorney General of Ontario on the appointment of Judges to the Ontario Court of Justice, and invites applications for a judicial position in Halton.

This appointment, while primarily a family law position, may also involve presiding over criminal law matters. This position also involves travel within the region as assigned by the Regional Senior Justice and/or the Chief Justice.

The minimum requirement to apply to be a Judge in the Ontario Court of Justice is **ten years completed** membership as a barrister and solicitor at the Bar of one of the Provinces or Territories of Canada.

All candidates must apply either by submitting 14 copies of the **current (April 2014)** completed Judicial Candidate Information Form in the first instance or by a short letter (14 copies) if the current form has been submitted within the **previous 12 months**. **Should you wish to change any information in your application, you must send in 14 copies of a fully revised Judicial Candidate Information Form.**

If you wish to apply and need a current Judicial Candidate Information Form, or if you would like further information, please contact:

Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee
Tel: (416) 326-4060 Fax: (416) 212-7316
Website: www.ontariocourts.ca/ocj/jaac/

All applications, either sent by courier, mail or hand delivery, **must** be sent to:

Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee
c/o Ministry of Government Services Mail Delivery
77 Wellesley Street West, Room M2B-88
Macdonald Block, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N3

Applications must be on the current prescribed form and must be TYPEWRITTEN or COMPUTER GENERATED and RECEIVED BY 4:30 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 2015. CANDIDATES ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE 14 COPIES OF THEIR APPLICATION FORM OR LETTER. A Fax copy will be accepted only if 14 copies of the application or letter are sent concurrently by overnight courier. Applications received after this date WILL NOT be considered.

The Judiciary of the Ontario Court of Justice should reasonably reflect the diversity of the population it serves. Applications from members of equality-seeking groups are encouraged.

Join eHealth Ontario's Senior Team

eHealth Ontario is seeking a General Counsel & Corporate Secretary to join its senior management team. An independent agency of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, eHealth Ontario is responsible for enabling health care providers to establish and maintain electronic health records for Ontarians.

Key responsibilities include supervising the 12 member Legal Services department responsible for legal advisory functions, corporate secretarial and compliance matters and agreements with external parties. Reporting to the CEO, and working closely with the Board and senior executive peers, the General Counsel & Corporate Secretary will provide ongoing advice and counsel on major issues, strategic decisions and initiatives.

Priorities include:

- ▶ Establishing the strategic approach and framework and defining clear standards around legal instruments for interacting with a wide-range of outside partners;
- ▶ Overseeing the strategic design and subsequent execution of instruments, policies and practices to ensure the Board is governed using appropriate governance standards and in a way that complies with all governing legislation and regulation; and
- ▶ Building collaborative working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders.

The ideal candidate will have significant experience in private practice, corporate practice or government and strong knowledge of contract law and corporate governance. Management experience of a mixed team of professionals is highly relevant.

For more information visit: www.ehealthontario.on.ca/joinus

