



Is the Law Society of Alberta Acting "In the Public Interest"?

Law Society of Alberta Plenary Session
Thursday, January 28, 2010

The Law Society of Alberta declares at every turn that it acts "In the Public Interest". What do we mean when we say that? And what is the Law Society doing to give effect to that bold commitment? This plenary session will explore the principled basis for acting "In the Public Interest". The following are the session co-chairs and panellists for this Plenary.

Session Co-Chairs:

**Peter Michalyshyn, QC, President,
Law Society of Alberta**

Peter Michalyshyn, QC received his arts degree (1982) from the University of Alberta, pursued a journalism degree (1983) from Carleton University and then returned to the University of Alberta to earn a law degree (1988). In 1989, he was admitted to the Alberta bar, and began his law career as an associate with Alex Pringle & Associates. Mr. Michalyshyn practised as Crown Counsel for the Constitutional Law Branch with Alberta Justice from 1992-1994, and, following this, practised with Chatwin Cox. He became a partner in 1998, forming Chatwin Cox Michalyshyn.

Mr. Michalyshyn was elected Bencher to the Law Society of Alberta in 2004. The Law Society Committees that he served on included: Executive, Conduct, Civil Practice Advisory, CPD, Unauthorized Practice, Finance, Credentials & Education, Insurance, Practice Review, and Appeals. He has lectured for Legal Education Society of Alberta, Canadian Bar Association Alberta, Alberta Civil Trial Lawyers Association (ACTLA), and Canadian Defense Lawyers (CDL).

He has served as an Executive member for several CBA sections (Constitutional Law/Civil Liberties; Civil Litigation; Insurance).

**Rod Jerke, QC, President-Elect,
Law Society of Alberta**

Rodney Jerke, QC, born in Edmonton, Alberta, received his science degree with distinction from the University of Lethbridge, and his law degree with distinction from the University of Alberta. He was admitted to the Alberta Bar in 1980.

Mr. Jerke's practice focuses on civil litigation at trial and appellate levels. He has conducted numerous trials and appeals, and handled a variety of litigation files, including land disputes, serious motor vehicle accidents, commercial disputes, constitutional and administrative law cases, fraudulent preference and fraud actions, foreclosure, bank litigation, insurance litigation, environmental claims and professional negligence claims. Mr. Jerke pursues an interest in international justice and human rights issues as an extension of his practice in civil litigation and appellate work by speaking engagements, hosting international visitors, and leading educational travel seminars to developing countries. He was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1998.

As Bencher for Southern Alberta, Mr. Jerke has served as Chair for the Professional Responsibility Committee, Pro Bono Committee, Conduct Committee, Equality, Equity and Diversity Committee, and Access to Justice Committee. Mr. Jerke is Past President of Pro Bono Law Alberta but continues to serve as Chair of the Pro Bono Law Alberta Advisory Board. He is currently President-Elect of the LSA.

Panellists:

Professor Alice Woolley joined the Faculty of Law at the University of Calgary in 2004. She specializes in the area of legal ethics and professional regulation, and has written numerous articles on topics such as access to justice, billing, good character regulation, regulation of extra-professional misconduct, ethics teaching and civility.

She is also the lead editor and co-author of the first national casebook in legal ethics, *Lawyers' Ethics and Professional Regulation*, and author of the forthcoming Canadian version of Monroe Freedman's seminal American textbook, *Understanding Lawyers' Ethics*. Prior to joining the Faculty she practised law in Calgary, specializing in energy regulation, judicial review and civil litigation.

Gordon Turriff, QC, served as President of the Law Society of British Columbia for 2009, was a Bencher since 2002 and is now a Life Bencher. Before he began his Law Society work, he was very active with the Canadian Bar Association, having served on the B.C. Branch executive committee for four years and on the national and provincial councils for over 16 years. He is a founding member and former director of the British Columbia Law Institute and a former director of the Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia.

Mr. Turriff is senior counsel practising in the area of civil litigation in the Vancouver office of Stikeman Elliott. He is a pre-eminent lawyer in Canada in the field of litigation costs and remuneration for professionals including lawyers, trustees, receivers, monitors, and others. He was a full time visiting assistant professor and an adjunct professor between 1979 and 1991 in the UBC Faculty of Law. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts (1971) and law degree (1974) from the University of B.C. and was admitted to the BC Bar in 1975. He was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2002.

Yvonne Stanford served as an appointed non-lawyer public representative to the Benchers from 2000 to 2009. She brought extensive expertise in multi-cultural community agencies, human rights, and social action to the board. She was previously a YWCA Calgary director, and executive director with the south central region of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Her consulting experience includes human rights education with Oxfam Canada and board decision-making with Calgary Legal Guidance. She has consulted for the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association and Churchill Park Day Care Society. She was involved in the Convention on the Rights of the Child with Oxfam, and the State of Alberta's Children report with the committee on race relations. Her volunteer work supported organizations such as the Coalition for Equal Access to Education, Dignity Foundation, Women's Centre of Calgary among others.

For the Law Society of Alberta, she served on many committees, including Conduct, Continuing Professional Development, Credentials and Education, Finance, and Equality, Equity and Diversity (she was chair in 2004), and Professional Responsibility among others.