



Linda R. Rothstein

Toronto Region

Toronto

In April 2007 I was privileged to be elected for the first time as a benchers. It gave me the opportunity to become engaged in the many challenges that confront our profession and to take steps to address them.

I am proud of my work, as a member of the Governance Task Force, bringing much needed reforms to the composition of Convocation. It was a long and tough fight but we eventually brought about changes, including a much needed term limit of 12 years for benchers. I hope this will foster renewal in our ranks. But Convocation is still too large, our decision making processes are often cumbersome, and it is time for our work to be more transparent. We should consider webcasts of Convocation.

There are many pressing issues that must be addressed by the next Convocation. My two priorities are access to justice and the discipline process.

In 2010, the Access to Justice committee persuaded Convocation to support the Civil Legal Needs Study so that we can identify how best to deploy resources to address the under-representation of middle and lower income Ontarians in the judicial system. I supported funding for this important project. This long overdue initiative is but one small step. It is time for the Law Society to take a leadership role, by partnering with Legal Aid Ontario, the Law Foundation of Ontario, Pro Bono Law Ontario and others to address the legal needs of Ontarians. If we don't, four years from now little will have changed and the public will stop believing that our profession cares about the lack of affordability of legal services.

The discipline process is one of the Law Society's core functions. Much time and many resources are devoted to it. But for members who find themselves practising in a vacuum, and struggling with their practice and professional responsibilities, there are not enough ways to address the Law Society's concerns quickly and affordably. We need to consider innovative approaches: access to duty counsel early in the investigative process, increased use of alternative dispute mechanisms, and more experienced lawyer-adjudicators from the profession to sit with benchers on discipline.

I practised happily in a large firm for almost 20 years and, for the last 10 years, in a small one. I have been lucky to travel frequently across the Province to meet with local members of the Bar. I believe I have come to understand the problems lawyers face inside and outside of Toronto, in large firms and in small ones. I will continue to press for change. I am prepared to push hard for reform. It takes energy, enthusiasm and just plain doggedness.

I would like to commit that energy to the work of the Society for 4 more years. I would appreciate your support.

- Married with four children
- Called to the Bar of Ontario (1982)
- Managing Partner, Paliare Roland Rosenberg Rothstein
- Member, Governance Task Force (2007-2011)
- Member, Retention of Women Working Group (2007-2008)
- Co-chair, Justicia Project - Medium Firms (2008-2011)
- Chair, Professional Regulation Committee (2008-2010)
- Co-chair, Tribunals Committee (2010-2011)
- Vice-Chair, Finance Committee (2010-2011)
- Past President, The Advocates' Society (2005-2006)
- Awarded Law Society Medal (2005)
- Awarded Toronto Lawyers' Association Award of Distinction (2008)
- Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers
- Fellow, International Academy of Trial Lawyers
- Commission Counsel, Inquiry into Pediatric Forensic Pathology
- Best Lawyers in Canada: Best the Company Litigation, Corporate and Commercial Litigation, Administrative and Public Law, Labour and Employment Law