

10th June, 1992

MINUTES OF SPECIAL CONVOCATION

Wednesday, 10th June, 1992
3:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

The Treasurer (James M. Spence), Bellamy, Cooper, Farquharson, Feinstein, Graham, Howland, Jarvis, Krishna, Lamek, Lamont, Lawrence, Legge, Lerner, McKinnon, Mohideen, O'Brien, Palmer, Pepper, Rock, Scott, Thom, Wardlaw, and Yachetti.

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A Special Convocation was held in Convocation Hall, Osgoode Hall, on Wednesday, 10th June, 1992 at 3:00 p.m. The purpose of the Special Convocation was to elect The Honourable Lincoln Alexander, an Honorary Bencher of the Society.

Mr. Alexander accompanied by his wife arrived at the Benchers' Entrance at 2:30 p.m. and were met by the Treasurer and his wife and the Treasurer-elect, Mr. Allan Rock.

After a brief visit in the Treasurer's office, the Treasurer, the Treasurer-elect and the Secretary, Mr. Richard Tinsley greeted the Vice Regal party at the Benchers' Entrance.

The Treasurer, the Treasurer-elect, the Vice Regal party, Mr. Alexander, Benchers and staff then proceeded to Convocation Hall.

Also present for the Special Convocation were Associate Chief Justice J. W. Morden and Mrs. Morden, The Hon. R. R. McMurtry, Chief Justice Charles L. Dubin, The Hon. Sidney L. Robins and Mrs. Robins, Mr. Michael Quigley and Ms. Dale Philp, Ms. Anne-Marie Stewart and Mr. John Rosen; and many of the Benchers' spouses and guests.

The Treasurer called Convocation to order and said:

"This special Convocation of The Law Society of Upper Canada is called for the purpose of confirming the election of The Honourable Lincoln Alexander as an Honorary Bencher of this Law Society.

The Benchers of the Law Society are honoured to conduct this Convocation in the presence of our many distinguished guests today. On behalf of the Benchers, I express our greetings to His Honour, the Honourable Henry Jackman, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, the Honourable Charles Dubin, Chief Justice of Ontario and the Honourable Frank Callaghan, Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice (General Division).

I am very pleased to extend a welcome today to our colleague and fellow member The Honourable Lincoln Alexander on this auspicious occasion. As Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, The Honourable Mr. Alexander has been a guest in Osgoode Hall on many occasions in the past and we are honoured, sir, to have you here today with us in Convocation Hall. I would also like to express a special word of welcome to Convocation to Mrs. Alexander.

10th June, 1992

The Benchers of the Law Society of Upper Canada are charged by law with the responsibility to govern the legal profession in the public interest. The office of Benchers carries with it a responsibility to ensure that the legal system serves the needs of the people. In the furtherance of our duties we may elect Honorary Benchers to Convocation. I now invite Mr. Lamek to report on the office of Honorary Benchers, and then Mr. Yachetti to present the report of Convocation."

Mr. Lamek reported on the office of Honorary Benchers and said:

"Your Honour, Chief Justices, The Honourable Mr. Alexander, Treasurer, distinguished guests, fellow Benchers.

The Benchers of the Law Society are authorized by law to elect such persons as they deem appropriate to the office of Honorary Benchers. By custom, we look back to His Late Majesty King Edward VII as the first Honorary Benchers by reason of the recognition accorded to him by the Law Society on his visit to Osgoode Hall in 1860 as Prince of Wales. We have been honoured in the more than one hundred and thirty years which have passed since then by the acceptance of the office of Honorary Benchers by fourteen men and women of exemplary distinction and accomplishment. These have included two Governors-General of Canada, two Prime Ministers, a Chief Justice of Canada and a Premier of Ontario. Our present Honorary Benchers include Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, The Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher and our former Secretary and Under-Treasurer, Kenneth Jarvis, who is with us today. Most recently we were honoured when His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales became an Honorary Benchers last autumn, in the presence of The Honourable Mr. Alexander as Lieutenant-Governor, on the occasion of the presentation of the first Education Equity Awards of the Law Society."

Mr. Yachetti then reported on the election of Honorary Benchers by Convocation and said:

"Mr. Treasurer;

On April 24, 1992 at a Convocation of the Benchers of the Law Society, on motion duly made by Mr. McKinnon and seconded by Mr. Lamont, Convocation elected The Honourable Lincoln Alexander an Honorary Benchers of the Law Society of Upper Canada, such election to be effective upon confirmation by the Treasurer in Convocation.

Treasurer, I have the honour to request that Convocation now receive the citation and that you then confirm the election of The Honourable Lincoln Alexander as an Honorary Benchers."

Mr. Lamek then invited Mr. Rock, the Treasurer-elect of the Law Society to present the citation.

Mr. Rock read the citation and said:

"Mr. Treasurer;

During the course of his extraordinary career in law and in public affairs, the Honourable Lincoln Alexander has personified three of the ideals that are valued most highly by the legal profession: commitment, courage and service.

Following his graduation from McMaster University and Osgoode Hall Law School, he practised law in Hamilton, and was soon well known in the legal community for the quality and breadth of the service he provided to his clients.

10th June, 1992

He left a secure and successful practice for the uncertainty of elected office, and was sent by his community to the Parliament of Canada in five successive general elections. As a Member of Parliament, he spoke out courageously on issues of public concern, typically taking the side of the individual against the state. He served in the Cabinet with distinction as the Minister of Labour, and left the House of Commons with heartfelt expressions of acclaim from all sides.

He brought his energy and dedication to provincial responsibilities, first as Chair of the Workers' Compensation Board during the period when that important tribunal faced both challenge and change, leading the way by introducing innovation to ensure its continued success.

In 1985, The Honourable Lincoln Alexander was appointed as the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario. For six years, he served in that capacity with his characteristic vigor and his infectious optimism. As the representative in Ontario of Her Majesty the Queen, he worked tirelessly, travelling our immense Province to represent our Head of State in communities large and small and winning the warm and genuine affection of his fellow citizens - an affection that has endured beyond his term in that high office and will be his, we know, until the end of his days.

The Honourable Lincoln Alexander's long career of service has been aptly described as a journey of pride and excellence. It is a journey which he has invited people of all circumstances to share and to make their own. In doing so, he has helped us all, not least the lawyers, to see our public responsibilities more clearly, and we are greatly in his debt."

The Treasurer then confirmed the election of The Honourable Lincoln Alexander as an Honorary Bencher of The Law Society of Upper Canada and said:

"Mr. Alexander;

As Treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada and on behalf of the Society and of the members of the legal profession of this Province, I wish to express to you, sir, our grateful recognition of the honour you do us in coming today to this Convocation, to be made an Honorary Bencher of the Law Society.

By virtue of the authority vested in me by Convocation and the statute in that behalf I hereby confirm the election of The Honourable Lincoln Alexander as an Honorary Bencher of The Law Society of Upper Canada."

Mr. Rock handed the presentation folder to the Treasurer who handed it to Mr. Alexander.

The Treasurer said:

"In our time, the matters of ceremony and honours which engage our attention here today are sometimes not well understood. The question is quite properly asked what purpose such activities are intended to further. Today we have an opportunity, an opportunity which you have made possible by accepting election as an Honorary Bencher, to understand better the excellent public purpose which these acts may serve. In a day when, through the pressures which abound, it is easy for lawyers, like other citizens, to forget the task of public responsibility which is set before us, your long career of distinguished public service provides us with an example for our guidance. In particular, your service as Lieutenant-Governor, the representative of our head of state, reminds us that the public responsibilities to be borne by lawyers as officers of the court have deep and ancient roots in our society. The claim which those

10th June, 1992

responsibilities impose upon us is grounded in the enduring ideals of the law which have evolved throughout our constitutional heritage and are reflected in our Charter. In that heritage, all legal authority, at every level from the highest down, is fused with the duty of service. By your presence here today you call us to a renewed commitment to that duty of service, a duty which you have performed throughout your career with such distinction and for which we thank you today.

Mr. Alexander, we would be grateful if you would now address us."

Mr. Alexander then addressed Convocation. He spoke of a very difficult and lonely road he followed in order to gain acceptance and employment as a black Canadian. He said that we live in a country greatly blessed and we should be proud notwithstanding our many difficulties. Mr. Alexander said there was more hope for human equality in this country than in any other but that there was much work to be done.

The Treasurer then called upon Ms. Fatima Mohideen.

Ms. Mohideen thanked Mr. Alexander and said:

"Mr. Alexander, on behalf of The Law Society of Upper Canada I wish to express to you our heartfelt thanks for your accepting election as an Honorary Bencher of this Law Society and for addressing us in Convocation. We, your fellow Benchers look forward to the association with you which we have been privileged to initiate here today and we wish you and Mrs. Alexander to know that you are welcome here among the Benchers in Osgoode Hall."

The Treasurer said:

"Thank you Ms. Mohideen. I wish to invite our guests to join with the Benchers in a reception on the west lawn of Osgoode Hall after His honour, the Lieutenant-Governor and The Honourable Mr. Alexander and Mrs. Alexander and the platform party retire. Convocation will now rise."

CONVOCATION ROSE AT 3:30 P.M.

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The Benchers and their guests then moved to the reception on the west lawn.

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Confirmed in Convocation this day of 1992.

Treasurer