



**Bencher**  
Election

**Élection**  
du Conseil  
2019

# Voting Guide for Paralegals

[www.webvotedirect.com/lsoparalegal-parajuriste](http://www.webvotedirect.com/lsoparalegal-parajuriste)  
Voting closes April 30, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. EDT.

# Guide électoral - Parajuristes

[www.webvoteendirect.com/lsoparalegal-parajuriste](http://www.webvoteendirect.com/lsoparalegal-parajuriste)  
Le vote se termine le 30 avril 2019 à 17 h HAE.



**Law Society**  
of Ontario

**Barreau**  
de l'Ontario



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## Voting Information

### Conduct of Election

The 2019 Bencher Election will be conducted in accordance with the [Law Society Act](#) and By-Law 3 made pursuant to the *Law Society Act*. The election will be conducted in both French and English. See [By-Law 3](#) for complete details.

The Law Society has hired Computershare, a third party company, to provide the online voting site and telephone voting for the election.

### Voter Anonymity

Voting is by secret ballot. Computershare will randomly assign personal identification numbers to every eligible voter. Only Computershare knows the numbers assigned to eligible voters. This number is required to access the internet voting site and telephone voting.

An email communication from Computershare will be sent to all eligible voters which will include the control number and a link to the internet voting website. The control number will also be posted to each eligible voter's Law Society Portal account. The internet voting system provides the online Voting Guide, ballot and voting instructions, which will provide detailed information on how to vote online.

Voters who do not receive, or who lose or delete, their control number must contact Computershare at 1-866-301-2518 or 514-982-8711 if outside Canada or the United States. Voters will be asked to provide their licensee number and other personal identifiers to receive their control number.

### Eligible Voters

People who, on April 5, 2019, are paralegal licensees whose licences have not been suspended are eligible to vote in the bencher election.

### Candidate Information

This Voting Guide provides voters with information about the candidates running in the bencher election. The candidates provide their biographical information, email address and election statements, which reflect their views only.

### Casting and Counting Votes

Voters can cast five votes in total. Voters need not cast all five votes, but cannot exceed five votes. Voters may only vote for a candidate once.



## Voting Information

### Online Voting

To vote online, voters must go to the election website through the link provided by Computershare, where they will be prompted to enter their control number. Once they are logged into the system, the list of candidates will be displayed. Voters select candidates by clicking the boxes next to the candidates' names. The system will not permit voters to vote for more than five candidates. It is possible to submit a ballot with no candidates selected. Once voters have finished selecting candidates of their choice, voters will then be prompted to review their selections and make any changes they wish to make prior to final submission of their votes.

### Telephone Voting

To vote by telephone, voters will call the dedicated election telephone number, 1-866-301-0994 (toll free) or 514-982-8712 if outside North America. Once connected, voters will be prompted to enter their control number to access the voting system. Voters will be prompted to select the candidates of their choice by entering the two-digit numeric code that appears beside each candidate's name in the Voting Guide.

The system will not permit voters to vote for more than five candidates. Once voters have finished selecting candidates of their choice, the system will review their ballot, and ask voters to confirm their selections before recording the votes.

### Voting Deadline

The deadline for voting is April 30, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. EDT. The internet and telephone voting systems will shut down at precisely 5:00 p.m. EDT on April 30, 2019.

### Announcement of Results

Tabulation of votes will begin after 5:00 p.m. EDT on April 30, 2019. The election results will be announced by press release and on the Law Society's web site at [www.lso.ca](http://www.lso.ca) once votes have been tabulated.

### Voting Assistance

If you are an eligible voter and you did not receive an email from Computershare with your voting instructions, or if you require assistance with voting or accessing the voting site, please call Computershare's toll-free help line at 1-866-301-2518, or 514-982-8711 if outside Canada or the United States. The help line is available Monday to Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EDT. It closes at 5:00 p.m. on April 30, 2019. As noted above, voting instructions are also available in each eligible voter's Law Society Portal account.



## Voting Information

### Contact Us

For more information, please contact the Law Society at 416-947-3404, 1-877-947-3404 or by e-mail at [bencherelection@lso.ca](mailto:bencherelection@lso.ca).



## Procédure électorale

### Tenue de l'élection

L'élection du Conseil de 2019 se déroule conformément à la [Loi sur le Barreau](#) et au [Règlement administratif n° 3](#) pris en application de la *Loi sur le Barreau*. L'élection est tenue en français et en anglais. Consultez le Règlement administratif n° 3 pour avoir tous les détails.

Le Barreau a retenu les services de Computershare, une société indépendante, pour tenir l'élection en ligne et par téléphone.

### Anonymat des électeurs et électrices

Le vote est secret. Computershare assignera au hasard des numéros d'identification personnelle à chaque électeur ou électrice admissible. Seul Computershare connaît les numéros assignés aux électeurs et électrices admissibles. Ce numéro est requis pour accéder au site de vote en ligne et par téléphone.

Computershare enverra une communication par courriel à tous les électeurs et électrices admissibles qui contiendra le numéro de contrôle et un lien au site Web de vote en ligne. Le numéro de contrôle sera également affiché dans le compte du portail du Barreau de tous les électeurs admissibles. Le système de vote en ligne donne aux électeurs et aux électrices accès au guide électoral, au bulletin de vote et à des consignes d'utilisation détaillées du scrutin.

Les électeurs et électrices qui ne reçoivent pas leur numéro de contrôle, l'ont perdu ou effacé doivent contacter Computershare sans frais au 1 866 301-2518 ou, de l'extérieur du Canada et des É-U, au 514 982-8711. On demandera aux électeurs et électrices de produire leur matricule de titulaire de permis et autres identificateurs personnels pour recevoir leur numéro de contrôle.

### Électeurs et électrices admissibles

Les personnes dont le permis de parajuriste n'est pas suspendu au 5 avril 2019 peuvent voter.

### Renseignements sur les candidats et candidates

Le présent guide électoral contient des renseignements sur les candidates et les candidats qui se présentent à l'élection. Tous les candidats et candidates ont été invités à envoyer une biographie, une adresse courriel et une déclaration électorale qui n'exprime que leur opinion.

### Vote et dépouillement du scrutin

Les électeurs disposent d'un total de cinq voix. Au moins un vote est requis pour voter à l'élection. Les électeurs ne sont pas dans l'obligation de voter pour cinq candidats et candidates, mais ne peuvent pas voter pour plus de cinq membres. Les électeurs ne peuvent pas voter pour la même personne plusieurs fois.



## Procédure électorale

### Vote en ligne

Pour voter en ligne, les électeurs et électrices doivent se rendre sur le site électoral à l'aide du lien fourni par Computershare, où on leur demandera d'inscrire leur numéro de contrôle. Une fois qu'ils et elles seront dans le système, la liste des candidats et candidates s'affichera. Les électeurs et électrices choisiront les candidats et candidates en cliquant sur la boîte à côté de leur nom. Le système ne permettra pas de voter pour plus de cinq candidates et candidats. Il est possible de soumettre un bulletin de vote sans inscription. Une fois que les électeurs auront terminé leur choix de candidats, on leur demandera de revoir leurs sélections et de faire des changements s'ils le désirent avant la soumission finale de leurs votes.

### Vote par téléphone

Pour voter par téléphone, les électeurs et électrices doivent appeler le numéro dédié à l'élection, 1 866 301-0994 (sans frais) ou 514 982-8712 de l'extérieur de l'Amérique du Nord. Une fois connectés, on leur demandera de saisir leur numéro de contrôle pour accéder au système de vote. Les électeurs devront choisir les candidats en composant le code numérique à deux chiffres qui apparaît à côté du nom de chaque candidat dans le guide électoral.

Le système ne permettra pas de voter plus de cinq fois. Quand les électeurs auront fait leur choix de candidats, le système récapitulera leurs choix et leur demandera de confirmer avant d'enregistrer leurs votes.

### Dates limites pour voter

La date limite pour voter est le 30 avril 2019 à 17 h HAE. Les systèmes de vote par Internet fermeront à exactement 17 h HAE le 30 avril 2019.

### Annonce des résultats

Le décompte des votes commencera après 17 h HAE le 30 avril 2019. Les résultats seront annoncés par communiqué et sur le site Web du Barreau à [www.iso.ca](http://www.iso.ca) une fois que les votes auront été comptés.

### Assistance pour voter

Si vous êtes un électeur admissible et que vous n'avez pas reçu un courriel de Computershare vous donnant les consignes de vote, ou si vous avez besoin d'assistance pour voter ou pour avoir accès au site de vote, veuillez appeler la ligne d'aide de Computershare sans frais à 1 866 301-2518, ou 514 982-8711 de l'extérieur du Canada ou des États-Unis. La ligne d'aide est ouverte du lundi au vendredi, de 8 h 30 à 20 h HAE. Elle ferme à 17 h le 30 avril 2019. Comme indiqué ci-dessus, les instructions seront également affichées dans le compte du portail du Barreau de chaque électeur admissible.



## Procédure électorale

### **Pour communiquer avec nous**

Pour plus de renseignements, veuillez appeler le Barreau au 416 947-3404, 1 877 947-3404 ou communiquer par courriel à **[bencherelection@lso.ca](mailto:bencherelection@lso.ca)**.

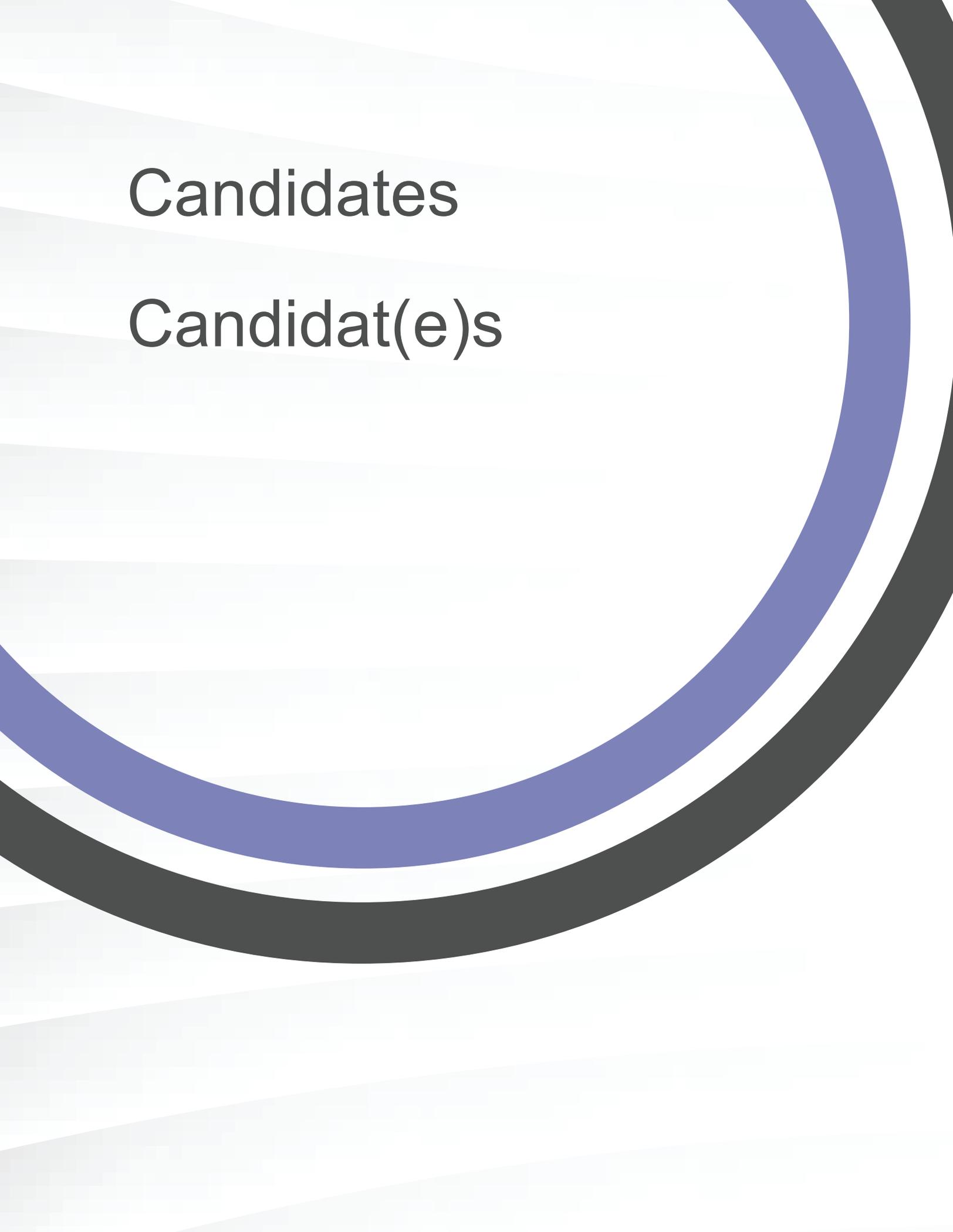


## List of Candidates / Liste des candidat(e)s

The two digit code beside each candidate's name is for the purpose of telephone voting. Please refer to the Voting Information for details.

Le code à deux chiffres à côté du nom de chaque candidat s'applique au vote par téléphone. Veuillez lire les renseignements sur la procédure électorale pour des détails.

- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>01. Michael Allan Brown</b>   | <b>10. Marian Lippa</b>       |
| <b>02. Robert Burd</b>           | <b>11. Michelle Lomazzo</b>   |
| <b>03. Paula Callaghan</b>       | <b>12. Josh McDougall</b>     |
| <b>04. Benjamin J. Canniff</b>   | <b>13. Sean L. O'Connor</b>   |
| <b>05. Tony Caruso</b>           | <b>14. Stephen H. Parker</b>  |
| <b>06. Cathy Corsetti</b>        | <b>15. Holly Robertson</b>    |
| <b>07. Haida Gebru</b>           | <b>16. Robert H. Romero</b>   |
| <b>08. Barbara Gordon-Elliot</b> | <b>17. Melissa Widdifield</b> |
| <b>09. Shelina Lalji</b>         | <b>18. Ian G. Wilkinson</b>   |



Candidates

Candidat(e)s



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## Michael Allan Brown

michael.brown@vianet.ca



There have been many changes in the Law Society since I have been licensed. The most notable being the change in name, from the Law Society of Upper Canada to the Law Society of Ontario.

With these changes, I believe that we must incorporate all licensees, from all parts of the province in order to truly reflect the way justice is accessed and to represent the needs of all those who serve the interests of our citizens.

My goal is to be a regional representation to those in the North, while serving the needs of my fellow Paralegals in all parts of the Province of Ontario.

In a climate where Access to Justice is difficult for most of the Province, we must look at the role that a Paralegal can play in bringing Justice to more of our citizens. This can be accomplished through measured increases in the duties and responsibilities of Paralegals and in the continuation of regulation, mentoring, support and feedback that a Law Society Bencher can bring.

We can achieve this through cooperation and consultation with the many interest groups and partners in law. If elected Bencher, I would work hard to put the needs of Paralegals first to broaden our scope of practice.

Licensed in good standing with the Law Society of Ontario since March 2018.

Located in Sudbury, Ontario

Background in WSIB, Criminal Law, Labour Management, Grievance Procedures, Emergency Medicine.

Experience in working in a medium full-service law firm.

Member of the Ontario Paralegal Association.



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## Robert Burd

robertburd@hotmail.com



Licensed since 2008  
Providing legal services in Provincial,  
Municipal law and Summary Conviction since  
1991  
Owner and President of NOT GUILTY PLEA  
Paralegal Services  
President of the Licensed Paralegal  
Association 2007-2014  
Co-Founder of the Ontario Paralegal  
Association  
First elected to the Law Society of Ontario in  
2010  
Chair of the Paralegal Standing Committee  
2018 to present  
Current or previous member of the following  
Law Society Committees: Professional  
Development and Competence, Professional  
Regulation, Compensation, Government and  
Public Affairs, Priority Planning, Equity and  
Indigenous Affairs, Paralegal Standing and  
Tribunal  
Current or previous member of the following  
Law Society working groups; Challenges  
Facing Racialized Licensees, Strategic  
Communication, Mental Health, Indigenous  
Review Panel and Strategic Planning  
Coach Minor Hockey 2010 to present  
Single Father

I have been a Bencher since 2010 and in that time participated in almost every committee at the Law Society. Currently I am the Chair of the Paralegal Standing Committee. During my nine years we have accomplished a considerable amount, not only for the paralegal profession but for access to justice. Many of these accomplishments would not have happened if not for strong advocacy and the relationships I have established. In order to be effective, you have to first build trust and relationships with your fellow paralegal benchers then develop credibility and respect amongst our lawyer colleagues and the staff of the Law Society. This does not happen over night and thankfully the Paralegal Benchers have established these relationships. The credibility and respect I have earned has allowed many of my submissions to be adopted in policy and decision making. This is true change.

Currently, I am focused on expanding the scope of practice for paralegals into family law to help cure the access to justice issues. I am playing a key role in maintaining paralegals providing legal services in summary conviction from the threat of Bill C-75. I recognize that paralegals in immigration need an expanded scope to properly assist the public. I am also commencing a comprehensive study of paralegal education and regulation. Looking ahead, I will continue to build relationships and ensure the paralegal voice is heard.

I have been involved in paralegal regulation since the early 1990s. I was a board member of the key stakeholder organizations that made representations to the government and the law society. I am a co-founder of the Ontario Paralegal Association (OPA). I was the president of the Licensed Paralegal Association (LPA) until the Amalgamation of the Paralegal Society of Ontario and the LPA to form the OPA.

I have invested more than 25 years in the paralegal profession to ensure that we continue to play a role in access to justice in the Province of Ontario. I am as energized as I have ever been and I seek your support. I am Robert Burd and I am a proud paralegal.



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## Paula Callaghan

callaghanparalegal@gmail.com



I am a paralegal in private practice in Ottawa. I am currently the Chair of the Paralegal Committee and sit on the Membership Committee of the County of Carleton Law Association. I have also been an Instructor at Herzing College.

I firmly believe in giving back to the profession and my community and I tirelessly volunteer my time between legal committee and charity work. I also offer pro-bono services to persons with disabilities for Reach Canada. I have had the pleasure being a student host and continue to mentor new licensees. Outside my practice I have acted in 8 plays for various charities.

I have two wonderful boys, two crazy dogs and a very patient husband!

### **Why vote for Paula?**

As a long-standing member of this community with strong ties to its healthcare, social, and legal institutions I will provide a strong **regional voice** to advance the needs of the Ottawa Valley and its surrounding townships if elected as Bencher.

### **Why my experience counts?**

I run a private practice in Ottawa which has provided me with significant experience in Small Claims Court, Criminal Court, Provincial Court, and before various administrative tribunals. I have acquired a unique understanding of the challenges facing the paralegal profession, and how paralegals play an integral part in providing access to justice. I have conceived attainable regional and provincial goals for the betterment of our profession.

As a former paralegal instructor, I am motivated to review the current curriculum to ensure proper mentorship, oversight, and practical training for our future colleagues.

I have a wide range of committee experience with the County of Carleton Law Association, Ontario Paralegal Association and the former Paralegal Society of Ontario. My breadth of experience at the highest level of governance in our profession has enhanced my ability to build and promote professional, collegial, and collaborative relationships amongst all levels of our legal community. I have gained the requisite knowledge and experience on a political and strategic level to successfully fulfill the role of Bencher. Provincially, I have consulted with two former Attorney Generals regarding the paralegal profession, our scope of practice, and the challenges facing paralegals within the current legislative framework. I have contributed to working groups on various response papers issued to the Law Society of Ontario and the Ministry of the Attorney General.

**As a Bencher, I will be able to further advance the needs and desires of our profession by ardently advocating from within.**

### **PLATFORM PRIORITIES**

- Continued practice in criminal summary offences under proposed changes under Bill C-75
- Support initiatives for expanded scope of practice, within our current scope
- Expedite the development of the new Family Law license
- Advocate for regional Bencher seat(s)
- Regional licensing exams
- Reduction of LSO fees for new licensees
- Student placement enhancement
- Law association library access
- Immigration



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## Benjamin J. Canniff

bncanniff@aol.com



**Ben was born in Chatham-Kent and raised in Windsor, Ontario. He has a Bachelor Degree from the University of Windsor, and became a licensed paralegal in 2011. That same year, he opened Caniiff Paralegal serving residents and businesses in Windsor and Chatham-Kent.**

**He continued to work in the industry being mentored by a seasoned lawyer and in 2016, began working in the paralegal program at St. Clair College.**

**Ben has spent many years as a charter member of Windsor-Walkerville Rotary Club, working on committees, collaborating on special projects, and organizing fundraising events.**

**Ben also volunteers for United Way of Chatham-Kent.**

Fellow Colleagues,

I have a profound respect and admiration for the time honoured traditions of our legal system and recognize the Law Society as one of the most highly regarded institutions in Ontario. I will bring integrity, professionalism, respect and dignity to this esteemed position.

New initiatives need to be implemented in order to train and educate paralegals who wish to expand their practices and focus on areas of law that are in desperate need of access to justice. Through proper education and regulation, in direct collaboration with the Law Society, licensees need to be able to establish themselves in various areas of specialization. I strongly believe in this model to promote access to justice for the many individuals and families who deserve proper, professional, effective representation despite the magnitude of their matter or their financial means.

Broadening the scope of practice through education, regulation and training will establish the modern paralegal to be recognized as especially competent and professional in their respected areas and give the public further relief from over burdened social services and other challenges barring access to justice.

I intend to work in collaboration with others to recognize and support the challenges, ideas, visions, and concerns of the paralegal profession moving forward in a timely manner.

I am extremely excited and motivated to progress the paralegal profession in Ontario through effective leadership, positive direction and by building a strong, well respected foundation for the future of our unique profession.



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## Tony Caruso

tony@tonycaruso.ca



**Tony Caruso, B.A. has political experience working as an Appointee Official for the City of Niagara Falls where he now runs a paralegal practice.**

**Being no stranger to lobbying government for change, in 2006, he lobbied the Federal Government for (and won) the right for students to claim tax deductions for text books and bus passes.**

**Most recently, Tony went to Parliament by himself and met with Andrew Sheer and the Ministry of Immigration to lobby for (and again win) the inclusion of Immigration Law into the scope of the paralegal profession federally.**

**Lobbying the LSO next to allow Immigration Law into the paralegal scope of practice is one of the primary factors driving Tony to run for Bencher.**

Every year, colleges push out thousands of new graduates all eager to serve the Province. But sadly, lack of opportunity sucks them straight into the already-bloated areas of LTB and POA Court. What a colossal waste of talent!

Meanwhile, my opponents have repeatedly refused to acknowledge any benefit to reclaiming Immigration law back into our scope of practice despite how vocal I've been about it. I even went to Parliament to advocate for this, but not one other representative (nor bencher) came to support me.

And sure -- there's been endless talk about expanding our profession to include Family Law, but where are the results for that?

The whole reason behind Ontario opening up the profession was to provide greater access to justice for our citizens, but now we're actually at risk of losing Summary Criminal matters from our scope. Why are we going backwards?

How does it make sense that paralegals still aren't even able to accept Legal Aid?

The fact that the profession is not evolving at the same rate at which it is growing is nothing short of an emergency. Please help me effect change now by voting for Tony Caruso as your Bencher this coming election. Thank you



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## Cathy Corsetti

cathy@corsetti.ca



### **Why Vote Cathy for re-election**

I have a clear understanding of what the role as a Bencher requires, and what it takes to expand and promote the Paralegal Profession. It was my privilege to be elected in 2010, again in 2014 and hope to continue in this role for my final term in 2019.

I plan to continue to represent paralegals with my passionate and respected voice. I have built relationships with my fellow Benchers, stakeholders and Law Society staff and am excited to continue the work that I have started.

As the new Family Law License is being developed, I have been able to have a strong, reasoned paralegal voice on the Access to Justice Committee and the Family Law working group at the Law Society. My role as Vice Chair on both committees has allowed me to advocate the importance of Paralegals as this new License is being developed.

### Accomplishments as a Bencher:

During my terms, and under my leadership I was instrumental in having paralegals included in the LSRS, MAP & CAN.

Other initiatives that I was closely involved in were: creating the Distinguished Paralegal Award and New Licensee reception.

Amending legislation so all 5 elected paralegals are benchers, becoming commissioners of oath and officers of the court.

Enhanced the P1 Licensing exam to include substantive content.

### Re-election Platform

When re-elected, the following issues will continue to be my priorities:

- Paralegal education that will enhance expansion of the current Paralegal scope of practice, appeals in Small Claims and LTB
- Investigate expanding scope within P1's immigration work
- Continue to advocate on Bill C75 with regards to Paralegal Scope in summary convictions
- Expand student placement hours and permit court attendances by students
- Amendments to legislation to include paralegals
- Examine technology use in providing legal services
- Maintain efficient regulation, to ensure stable annual fees
- Continue to build on relationships with paralegals & stakeholders across Ontario.

To learn more about me follow me on LinkedIn & Twitter @cathycorsetti, Facebook- Re-elect Cathy Corsetti 2019 Bencher Election.

Send me an email or check out my election page at [www.re-electcathy.ca](http://www.re-electcathy.ca)

-Graduated Humber College in 1977 and have been practising for 41 years  
-Awarded an Honorary Degree from Humber College Business School in 2015  
-Elected in 2010 & re-elected in 2014 as a Bencher  
-Committed mentor, speaker, student placement provider, CPD instructor  
-Trained Law Society Adjudicator  
-Member of Coach & Advisor Network & Ontario Paralegal Association  
-President & Co-founder of Corsetti Paralegal employing 5 paralegals  
-Married 40 years to my business partner. Our daughter is a high school teacher, our son a Toronto Police Officer & I am a very proud Nana to two wonderful granddaughters.



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## Haida Gebru

VoteHaida@gmail.com



**Haida is a paralegal. More importantly, she is:**

**A leader, an advocate, a mediator and a problem solver. She has worked in government and appeared in court.**

**She has a degree in Political Science, certificates in Mediation, Adjudication and a graduate certificate in Paralegal Studies.**

**A passionate volunteer who speaks two languages and has tutored disadvantaged youth at home and has worked with Habitat for Humanity abroad.**

**Someone who wants to make a difference in the paralegal profession. Electing Haida as bencher will make a difference for paralegals. It's time for a change.**

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this candidate page are those of the author and do not reflect the views or position of the candidate's employer or the Law Society of Ontario.

Time for Change!

"My name is Haida Gebru, I am a licensed paralegal with the Law Society of Ontario, and I am running for Bencher. It is time for change!"

Our profession faces many challenges. With challenges come opportunities to: increase scope of practice, increase practice hours for training, increase incentives for internships, coaching, advising and mentorship, and to research and examine new technologies to assist the profession.

The legal field is continuously evolving, and professionals must meet and provide high standards of services. Educational opportunities to meet these standards will be important.

Professionals could benefit from increased public awareness that would allow the public to make more informed decisions.

It's time for change.

Vote Haida Gebru for Bencher!



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## Barbara Gordon-Elliot

barbara.gordonelliott@gmail.com



**I am a lifelong learner of the law. However, I did not pursue a career in the legal field until 2012. The first half of my career was spent in print production management; which included founding a successful print brokerage firm.**

**Since becoming a paralegal, I have split my time providing legal services with a focus on tribunal work and lecturing paralegal students at Sheridan College. I am passionate about providing opportunities for aspiring paralegals to develop their advocacy skills beyond the walls of the classroom; whether it be at a mooting competition or a networking event.**

**Personally, I am happily married with two adult children.**

After a lifetime of focusing on a career that enabled me to provide for my family, I find myself in the unique position of finally being able to choose a path that will fulfill me as a person professionally. The criteria that will satisfy this need is for the work to be challenging, interesting, rewarding and most importantly, I want to make a difference.

I had not heard of paralegals prior to 2010. Nine years later, not only am I a paralegal, but I am also a professor at the college that I graduated from. I am honoured to be a small part of a paralegal candidate's development. It is invigorating to share the passion for the law and this profession with like-minded individuals on a weekly basis.

I am grateful to the many paralegals who have laid the ground work and who did the heavy lifting to bring the profession to where it is today. I want to continue their hard work by becoming a bencher to ensure that the paralegal profession exceeds the expectation of each individual who chooses to embark on becoming a member of our profession.

I realize the responsibility that a bencher holds when fulfilling the mandate set out by the *Law Society Act*. An effective bencher must be able to dedicate an enormous amount of time and commit to actively participating in the development of meaningful policies that will ensure that the legal profession continues to morph, expand and improve.

Balancing the need for access to justice and affordability of acceptable quality of legal services is going to continue to be a challenge that the benchers will have to continue to address moving forward. I believe that I have the ability, desire and most importantly, the time required to effectively represent the paralegal community for the office of bencher for the Law Society of Ontario.



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## Shelina Lalji

shelina@slpc.legal



### **SHELINA LALJI – My Commitment to You**

You may not recognize my name, as I have been working in the trenches to advance our profession. I am aware of the challenges we face:

- Advancement of the profession
- Scope of practice
- Inclusion of seasoned and new Paralegals at LSO
- Efficient regulation
- Education
- Acceptance of our profession in the Legal Community and the resulting job market
- Regular communication between the Paralegal Standing Committee and Paralegals

None of the above sounds new? You are right! We have been hearing about them for the last 2 Bencher Election cycles.

My commitment to you is that if elected, I will:

- Begin my mandate by engaging with Licensed Paralegals, so we can collectively work on the focus areas and setting priorities for the next 4 years.
- Work on being fully inclusive and understanding of the needs of seasoned paralegals, new paralegals and the public we serve.
- Strive to ensure that past successes are transformed to new opportunities.
- Work towards creating a culture of inclusion, diversity and a sense of community.
- Ensure a medium of regular communication between the Paralegal Standing Committee and the Paralegals
- Donate any remuneration received from LSO to a charity.
- Work relentlessly in the interest of our profession and the public we serve

Given my solid business history, paralegal experience and pulse on the public we serve, I want to be your candidate for Paralegal Bencher.

I am ready to put all my experience to work in advancing our profession. The time has arrived for a fresh perspective, so we can continue to grow and impact the legal community.

- **Shelina Lalji is the founder and President of Shelina Lalji Professional Corporation, founded in 2015.**
- **A newborn and a toddler did not stop Shelina from pursuing her dream and graduating, with honours, from the Paralegal program at Yorkville College. In 2008, with her Licence in her arsenal, she ventured to work in civil matters with some of the largest retailers in Canada. She worked in various executive positions within a paralegal firm before establishing her own company.**
- **Her tenacity, combined with her committed and creative approach, has enabled her to integrate new and innovative practices within her business. Shelina invests herself in all matters she undertakes.**
- **Shelina passionately works with families across Ontario, to eliminate the cycle of poverty.**



**Bencher**  
Election

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2019

## Marian Lippa

lippalegal@gmail.com



**20+ years of legal experience in Criminal, Civil, LTB, HTA and POA and as a Paralegal for the PPSC.**

**Own and operate a successful practice and past walk-in legal office assisting all income levels.**

**Achievement of honours in my legal education with opportunity to teach in private and community colleges.**

**An active mentor to Paralegals and students through co-op, mentoring, CPD's, lectures and as a Director of the Paralegal Society of Ontario and Ontario Paralegal Association.**

**My Superior Court action representing the rights of all Paralegals in Ontario was met with notoriety, praise by my peers and the legal community resulting in a successful legislative amendment to recognize Paralegals as Officers of the Court. R. v. Lippa, 2013 ONSC 4424.**

As a proven and fearless advocate for the Paralegal profession, I have fought to improve the respect for Paralegals in my highly publicized court action R.v.Lippa, 2013 ONSC 4424.

Since my tenure as a Bencher over the past 4.5 years, I have fought successfully for expanded scope of practice for Paralegals in Family Law as well as our legislative declaration as Officers of the Court. I have spoken up for our profession both within the LSO and with the legal profession to ensure fairness and recognition. We are on the heels of legislative change which threatens our scope of Criminal Law with Federal Bill C75 amending sentencing term of Summary Convictions in the CCC.

I continue to move forward to raise the standard of education for all Paralegal students including increasing the length of instruction to allow for a deeper understanding of legal theory. As well, to expand the education scope of choice to include law school specialized degree programs for Paralegals. This is critical to the success of future generations of Paralegals to work in Family Law. A standard of education that will give us the ability to compete at the same level of competency in areas of law which we share in common with the lawyers.

I have pressed on with the LSO to increase placement hours to create a lengthier articling program to ensure our students are given real and practical hands on experience to afford them skill set they need to be successful. My passion for this profession has been channeled through my mentoring of numerous Licensed and student Paralegals to ensure effective training.

I have more than 20 years of legal experience as a Paralegal in a wide area of law, including as a legal instructor and have served as a Paralegal with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada. Running a successful independent practice for many years, my advocacy for the profession and access to justice has afforded me a broad understanding of the legal needs of the people of Ontario.

There is much work still to be done!



**Bencher**  
Election

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2019

## Michelle Lomazzo

michelle@lomazzoappeals.com



### **Paralegal Experience:**

- Paralegal for more than 30 years focusing on WSIB law
- Appointed Bilingual Paralegal Adjudicator with the Law Society Tribunal for the past 6 years
- Past Adjudicator for the Rental Housing Tribunal
- Paralegal Past Affiliate Executive Member of the Ontario Bar Association WSIB Bar Section; 6 years

### **Proven Professional Leadership**

- President & founder of Lomazzo Worker's Compensation Appeals Professional Corporation
- Paralegal presenter for CPD programs at the Law Society, the Ontario Bar Association & College programs
- Mentor to paralegals & students through co-ops, shadowing & training
- Paralegal Advisory Committee member since 2008 at St. Clair College
- Member, Ontario Paralegal Association
- Nominated for the Law Society's 2019 Distinguished Paralegal Award
- 30 years governance experience sitting on Boards of Directors

### **Why vote "X" for Michelle Lomazzo?**

In my 30-year career as a paralegal, I have earned a record of success. I have the respect of my paralegal colleagues as evidenced by the 2019 nomination to the Law Society for the Distinguished Paralegal Award. I fight for the rights of my clients to produce positive outcomes and I will do the same for you when elected.

Over the past six years as an appointed Bilingual Paralegal Adjudicator with the Law Society Tribunal, I have adjudicated paralegal discipline matters. In doing so, I have established effective working relationships with both paralegal and lawyer benchers and Law Society staff, while protecting the public interest.

I am a past Paralegal Affiliate Member of the Ontario Bar Association, WSIB Bar Section and was an Executive Member of the committee for 6 years.

My passion for the paralegal profession has been channeled through my commitment to training and mentoring. I am an active presenter at numerous CPD programs and am a regular guest speaker in College Paralegal programs.

I listen to the concerns of paralegals and have 30 years + experience in governance, sitting on various Boards of Directors including the hospital board for the past 7 years, the Homeless Shelter for Women, Citizen Advocacy & Family Services.

I know how to effect change as a result of my experience on boards and will do the same when elected a Paralegal Bencher.

### **Election Platform**

When elected, I will fearlessly advocate for paralegals to improve the profession by:

- Promoting regional representation for paralegals to ensure all paralegals concerns across the province are represented
- Improving the standard of paralegal education programs
- Promoting the role of paralegals in the legal community by improving the professional relationship between lawyers and paralegals
- Promoting Access to Justice by expansion of the scope of practice into areas such as Family Law
- Reviewing licensing exemptions to reduce union exemptions
- Promoting mentoring for new licensees

Join me as we make collective strides in advancing the paralegal profession. Your vote for me, Michelle Lomazzo, is a vote for the betterment of the profession.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/michellelomazzo>

[www.lomazzoappeals.com](http://www.lomazzoappeals.com)

[www.michellelomazzo4forbencher.ca](http://www.michellelomazzo4forbencher.ca)



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## Josh McDougall

joshm@yourlegalservices.net



All too often we don't challenge the norm, don't question the status quo and don't fight to break the ceilings over our heads. I am of the opinion that only when we stand up for our beliefs and strive to achieve more, can we truly be in pursuit of excellence. 2019 marks an unprecedented time in the history of Paralegals, with many new and exciting possibilities ahead including our expanding scope and the possible digitization of legal services, it is always important to remember our role within the access to justice and our communities, but also, our role towards each other. Although the role of a bencher is to govern in the public's best interest, it is my view and contention that a harmonized approach among all practitioners, paralegals especially, and a strong focus on adequate and competent representation is paramount to the interest of the public. It is my further belief that as paralegals have just over 10% of the elected bencher positions, that a strong personality and a rational approach will help streamline issues being faced by fellow practitioners before convocation. Concerns effecting licensees from all practice areas and firm sizes should be addressed at every possible juncture and be assessed with the utmost attention, as it only serves the public interest more to have topics concerning licensees addressed, and resolved in an expeditious manner, so as to improve not only the experiences of the public but also the public's access to the legal services we can provide. I look forward to working with you all, and being your voice at the table.

Born and raised in the heart of the Niagara Region, Josh grew up in a single parent household learning both the value and importance of hard work, integrity and ambition. Josh started his career path in sales and marketing, and used the experience gained to advance a 6 year career as a Financial Representative, and a licensee of FSCO. Josh then opened a Sales and Marketing Company, focused on providing marketing and outsourcing solutions. Since childhood Josh dreamt of a career in the legal field, but needed to direct his focus to the custody of his daughter. A decade past, relationships and experience were gained that allowed Josh the opportunity to follow his ambitions and dreams in the legal field.



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## Sean L. O'Connor

trialagent@gmail.com



I was born in Scarborough General Hospital in 1963 and began boxing in grade 9 at Bancroft Ontario. I graduated from High School in 1980, after having been elected Student Council President and Captain of the School Rugby team.

I graduated from community college 3 times and hold diplomas in Mechanical Engineering Technology 1983, Business Administration 1996 and a post graduate diploma in Advertising 1998. I received the Ontario-Gold Medal for Business and Advertising at the OCMC in 1998.

I am the Director of both ParalegalServices. legal Professional Corporation and TicketSave Legal Services Professional Corporation. I am the Founder and Director of [www.basketsforbabies.com](http://www.basketsforbabies.com) charity fundraiser, and I am currently a Director at the Ontario Paralegal Association (OPA)

Now, more than ever the public image and perceived-value of the Paralegal scope of practice is enjoying a high-speed elevator effect due to media coverage and industry commentary from stakeholder scrutiny. This beneficial and measureable examination will continue to rise exponentially for some time to come. Undoubtedly it will accelerate the necessity for academic competency as we absorb new legal-fields into our permitted scope of practice.

The profession, and the market-branding, of a Paralegal is not only the talk of the legal community right now; but, in the majority of business-houses and family homes across the Canadian map. Truly, the profession of a Paralegal is present in the majority of the inhabited Canadian geography. Any nay vote against the expansion of the profession today, is soon to be a yea vote for the expansion of the profession tomorrow; and that tomorrow soon cometh.

As a Bencher: I verily pledge to work along-side my fellow Benchers diplomatically and without ceasing for the expansion of the paralegal scope of practice as a public-right to access to justice. I will join or assist in the creation of whatever: committee, team or program is necessary to further our scope of practice, and to polish the trustworthy reputation of the paralegal profession.

I believe in accountability, responsibility, profitability, inclusivity, and volunteerism; I will work to further these pillars of the Paralegal profession in both our legal community and the fabric of society at large.

On Election Day, the professions opportunities are many but the available seats are few; vote for expansion and strength in the profession; my name is SEAN L. O'CONNOR, and I am your candidate for Law Society Bencher 2019

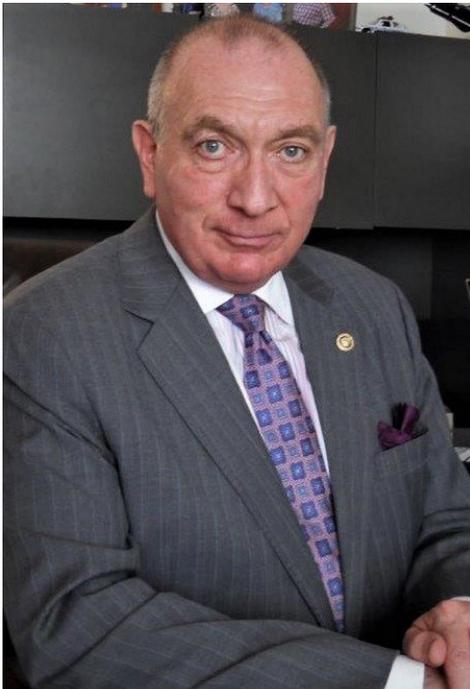


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## Stephen H. Parker

parkerlegal@rogers.com



Prior to defending drivers in 1986, I served as a police officer for 15 years. I have been practising in the POA courts for over 32 years. I was appointed in 2006 to the original Paralegal Standing Committee which worked to establish the paralegal competencies, rules of conduct and regulations. I was licensed in March of 2008. I later served on the working group with the Law Society to revise the competencies for the new paralegal licencing exam. I was the first President of the Ontario Paralegal Association between 2014 and 2018, where I was instrumental in the cancelling of the Attorney General's proposed AMPS for moving violations and I also participated in the Family Legal Services Review.

I have been involved with the Law Society and the development of paralegal regulation in various capacities for the past 18 years. Having worked with the Law Society, I know how they work. I believe I know how they think. That helped in my early committee work. This will be a huge advantage going forward.

### Education

I have always felt that the current, Basic Entry Level Competencies fall far short of what should be required. I want to see the curriculum for paralegal studies include much more time spent on subjects such as the rules of evidence, trial/tribunal procedure and the art of examination and cross-examination. I don't consider the compressed courses currently offered by some colleges provide the competences required.

### Licence Exemptions

Since my initial involvement, in 2002, with the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Law Society and continuing with my time on the original Paralegal Standing Committee, I have argued for the elimination of licence exemptions. There are still a few remaining; not the least of which is the exemption for prosecutors. With the pending downloading to municipalities of Provincial Offences Act Part III prosecutions, this provides the ideal opportunity to eliminate this exemption and to require all non-lawyer prosecutors to be licensed as paralegals.

### Bill C-75

Bill C-75 has created a huge access to justice issue with the maximum penalty increase of summary convictions going from 6 months to 2 years less a day. I hope to be able to convince the Law Society that the licensing & regulation of paralegals in Ontario is the type of programme envisaged under s. 802.1 of the *Criminal Code*. And it would be in the public interest for the Law Society to lobby the Attorney General to obtain approval.

### Family Law

I will continue to pursue the provision in the Bonkalo Report that paralegals should be able to represent a party before the Ontario court of Justice on family issues, pursuant to the permitted scope of practice.



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## Holly Robertson

holly@hamiltonjustice.com



In my 5th year as a Paralegal and owner/operator of an expanding Firm, I have gained significant knowledge and perspective of what it means to be a Paralegal in the Brant County/Hamilton/Niagara regions.

If elected, I intend to bring attention to relevant issues as they relate to both the public interest and the Paralegal profession. I intend to work tirelessly toward mutually beneficial solutions that bring reasonable access to justice to the forefront. I intend to clarify and solidify our legal entitlement to Paralegal-Client privilege, which should be our right by virtue of our profession and in the interest of both Paralegals & the Public. Privilege is currently not defined for Paralegals.

My areas of focus will be expanding our scope of practice in to family law which will be in the best interest of the public through permitting accessible and affordable access to justice.

I aspire to further extend our scope within the Small Claims & Administrative justice system, permitting Paralegals to represent our clients through the Divisional Court - Appeal process. I believe it is in the best interest of the public to permit Paralegals to represent their clients throughout the entirety of their action and I intend to pursue that right for our clients.

Member of the LSO since 2014.

Owner/operator of a successful and expanding practice after working for an accomplished Hamilton civil litigation lawyer. Graduated with distinction from Paralegal education.

Areas of passion include employment law & human rights matters however, I have experience assisting the public and many Paralegal colleagues in a variety of jurisdictions.

Strong believer in mentorship, experienced coach/mentor for Coach & Advisory Network for Lawyers & Paralegals since its inception. Developer & instructor of LSO accredited professionalism CPD & active participant in the Hamilton/Niagara Paralegal Network.

Sincere & competent advocate for Paralegal rights & reasonable access to justice for the public.



**Bencher**  
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## Robert H. Romero

romero@dalessioromero.com



Robert Romero began his career in the early 1990's representing clients related to Criminal, *Highway Traffic Act*, *Provincial Offences Act*, Civil Litigation and Statutory Accident Benefits matters.

Robert was licensed by the Law Society in 2008. Since 2010, Robert has been practising as a paralegal partner at D'Alessio Romero Law Firm Professional Corporation with his two lawyer partners. The law firm focuses on Family, Wills and Estates, Civil Litigation and Statutory Accident Benefits matters.

Robert is passionate about his work and his unique experience managing clients, the law firm, and working closely with various lawyers, paralegals and articling students on a daily basis gives him the comprehensive insight into the immediate and future needs of the general public and the legal profession.

It's time for change. We are creatures of habit who are usually reluctant to consider, or adapt to, change as we prefer to remain complacent for the sake of maintaining tradition or the status quo. However, as our society's need for affordable and accessible legal services grows, our legal profession must continue to evolve under the umbrella of our modern times to meet those important needs.

Paralegals are here to stay. Formal recognition of the importance and value of paralegal services began 34 years ago. Although paralegals have faced many challenges along the way, it has always been the public's demand for affordable and competent paralegal services that has allowed the profession to succeed with the benefit of licensing and regulation by the Law Society of Ontario.

Let's work together. Lawyer and paralegal Disciplinary Decisions confirm that we are not a perfect profession. However, by working together with the benefit of a well-defined scope of practice, proper training, education and experience, we can try to perfect the competency of the legal services we offer to the public with confidence, integrity and respect.

My Promise for your vote is that as an elected Bencher, I will exercise my fiduciary obligation and uphold my duty of loyalty to the Law Society to ensure that it fulfills its mandate to regulate the legal profession and carry out its legal obligations through its functions, duties and powers with regard to the principles enumerated under the *Law Society Act*. Nevertheless, it will be my honour, through Committees and Task Forces, to present all relevant paralegal views and concerns to ensure that the Law Society's mandate responds to those needs, including the need to:

- increase the number of paralegal Benchers in Convocation for a stronger unanimous voice;
- expand our roles and duties as Benchers;
- amend legislation that tends to unnecessarily downplay the role of paralegals;
- increase public awareness about paralegal licensing, regulation and insurance;
- increase the effectiveness of paralegal education and training; and
- expand the paralegal scope of practice to meet the current needs our society with competent, affordable and accessible legal services.

Thank you.



**Bencher**  
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## Melissa Widdifield

melissa.widdifield@cj-law.ca



### **MY PRIORITIES: MENTORSHIP, EDUCATION, COLLABORATION**

Paralegals are an integral asset to access to justice. As such, it is essential that we serve the public with the greatest possible level of competency. To that end, if I am elected, I will prioritize mentorship, education, and collaboration. By ensuring that our education continues to develop, and prioritizing a strong mentorship program, I believe we will be better equipped to assist those members of the public who need us most. I firmly believe that if we focus on bettering ourselves, growing our knowledge-base, and working together – both our reputation as paralegals, and our ability to assist the public, will soar.

The mentorship programs we currently have, are not working. How often is the “Coach and Advisor Network” accessed by paralegals? From speaking with new licencees, it is clear that I am not alone in my concerns. Current opportunities fall short. I believe that if we encourage stronger programs, we will all be better prepared to provide high-quality services in the ever-growing and complex legal world. This will continue the strength, reputation and success of our profession.

In addition to educational programs, programs that address stress management, diversity/inclusion, and respectful workplaces – will likewise make us a stronger and more effective community of professionals.

### **WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE ME: MY STRONG RECORD**

I began my career in a high-profile criminal defence firm in Toronto. I have since worked with several criminal defence lawyers who have mentored me in both summary conviction criminal matters and provincial offences work. My career within these law firms has also given me the unique opportunity to assist counsel at the Superior Court of Justice and the Court of Appeal.

I see how good mentorship can be invaluable. Their mentorship has made me a better, more competent, paralegal.

I have already used these experiences to mentor other paralegals. During my time on the board of directors for the Ontario Paralegal Association, I made myself available to advise and guide members when they required assistance. I hope to continue giving back to our profession by serving as your paralegal bencher.

In 2012, I received my Paralegal license.

My career has been in criminal, provincial offences and regulatory work.

I was elected to the board of directors for the Ontario Paralegal Association in 2016. I did this so I could advocate for the profession. While I did my best to advocate, I learned that real change must happen from within. Paralegals need a voice at the Law Society which will strategically help bring positive change. We need a Paralegal Standing Committee of benchers which are unified.

I work with lawyers and I advocate for paralegals. I am at the intersection of both sides of the debate. This puts me in the best position to speak for the advancement of the profession.



**Bencher**  
Election

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## Ian G. Wilkinson

iangwilkinson@legalcentre.ca



- Paralegal 25 years in operation as sole practitioner (since 1992)
- Licensed in 2007 under the grandfathering provisions of the Access to Justice Act
- Classical arts education – Hon.B.A. Law/Political Science, Public Admin, & LL.B.
- I opened a street-side legal clinic with other legal professionals in 1995. Before regulation in 2007, I franchised paralegal offices eventually having eight offices in Southwestern Ontario.
- In 2004, I began law school at University of London, England graduating in 2010. I currently provide legal services along the 401 – 403 corridor in southern Ontario.

Family law, Small Claims Appeals, POA & Criminal & Immigration are all priority issues. Other issues include longer placements, practice specializations, LSO transparency & Fees and especially the Statement of Principles (SoP).

The SoP is fundamentally different than other issues. It's more than checking a box on the Annual Report. It speaks to who we are and what we represent. Compelled speech is an anathema to everything we stand for as members of the legal profession.

The irony of trying to force someone to have principles should itself be enough to give pause. But really, this discussion should begin and end with 'It's not what you think that's important, it's what you do'. Do we really have to go any further than that?

But despite what they claim, the LSO really is advocating compelled speech and thought. What is a statement other than speech? What are your principles other than your thoughts?

Besides, compelling a written SoP does nothing for the goals of reducing discrimination. There's no correlation. If there is a cogent argument it should be easy to make. If not, then what's the point? So try to convince me but don't try to force me.

Why was this done in a such a clandestine way? By slipping this in as part of a package of 'progressive' reform, the proponents clearly didn't want an open vote. Legislators do that when they can't defend the merits of their proposals.

It's disingenuous to enforce compliance by calling it an 'Administrative Suspension'. If someone is suspended the LSO at least should be forthright about why. And this is put forward as a matter of principle?

If there is any special obligation as a member of the legal profession, it is to speak against such abuse of power. If we, as advocates for individual rights and freedom of speech don't speak against this kind of perniciousness, then who will?

We are being told 'Say UNCLE or you're suspended'. We deserve more respect than that.

Please read more about this issue at [www.StopSoP.ca](http://www.StopSoP.ca).

**Vote**

**The deadline for voting  
is April 30, 2019 at 5:00  
p.m. EDT.**

**Votez**

**La date limite pour  
voter est le 30 avril  
2019 à 17 h HAE.**



**Law Society**  
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**Barreau**  
de l'Ontario