

MINUTES OF SPECIAL CONVOCATION

Friday, 25th October, 1991
11:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

The Treasurer (James M. Spence), Bastedo, Bellamy, Brennan, Campbell, Carter, R. Cass, Clement, Cooper, Copeland, Cullity, Farquharson, Feinstein, Fennell, Furlong, Epstein, Goodman, Goudge, Graham, Ground, Henderson, Hickey, Howie, Howland, Jarvis, Kemp-Welch, Kiteley, Lamek, Lamont, Lax, Legge, Lerner, McKinnon, Manes, Martin, Mohideen, Murphy, Murray, O'Brien, D. O'Connor, Palmer, Pepper, Peters, Richardson, Rock, Ruby, Scace, Scott, Somerville, Stewart, Strosberg, Thom, Topp, Wardlaw and Weaver.

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A Special Convocation was held in the Great Library, Osgoode Hall on Friday, 25th October, 1991 at 11:00 a.m. The purpose of the Special Convocation was to elect His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, an Honorary Bencher of the Society and for the presentation by His Royal Highness of the first education equity awards of the Society.

His Royal Highness arrived at the Benchers' Entrance and was met by the Treasurer and the Chief Justice of Ontario, The Honourable Charles L. Dubin. They were welcomed by The Honourable F. W. Callaghan, Associate Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice-General Division and Mrs. Mollie Callaghan, The Honourable Howard Hampton, Attorney-General for Ontario, Mrs. Anne Dubin and Mrs. Kathie Spence, The Under Treasurer Donald A. Crosbie, Q.C. and Mrs. Betty-Ann Crosbie and the Secretary Richard F. Tinsley. Also in attendance were His Honour Lincoln Alexander, The Honourable Otto Jelinek, Minister of National Revenue and Mrs. Leate Mary Jelinek, Premier Bob Rae and Mr. Chippingdale. His Royal Highness was escorted to the Great Library.

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 His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales as an Honorary Bencher of this Law Society and for the presentation by His Royal Highness of the first education equity awards of the Law Society. I now call on Mr. Howie, a Bencher and the Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee of the Law Society for the Report of Convocation."

Mr. Howie said:

"Mr. Treasurer on September 27, 1991 at a Convocation the Benchers of the Law Society on motion duly made and seconded Convocation approved the election as an Honorary Bencher of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales such election to be carried into effect at this Convocation. I wish to record that His Royal Highness is the fifth member of the Royal Family to honor this Society with association as an Honorary Bencher since the year 1860 and is the third Prince of Wales to do so. Most recently Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was elected an Honorary Bencher in 1974 and the Law Society was honored to send a representative to Her Majesty's ninetieth birthday celebrations in London last year. Each member of the Royal Family who has become an Honorary Bencher signed the Roll of the Law Society and those signatures are kept and marked in the Roll which His Royal Highness has already signed immediately prior to these proceedings. Treasurer, I have the honor to request that you now confirm the election of His Royal Highness as an Honorary Bencher."

The Treasurer said:

"May it please your Royal Highness 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 today our grateful recognition of the great honor you do us in coming to this Convocation to be made an Honorary Bencher and to present the first education equity awards of the Law Society. The Benchers of the Law Society bear the responsibility under law for the governing of the legal profession in the public interest. The office of Bencher carries with it a responsibility to ensure that the legal system serves the needs of the people. By virtue of the authority vested in me by Convocation and the statutes in that behalf I hereby confirm the election of your Royal Highness as an Honorary Bencher of The Law Society of Upper Canada."

Your Royal Highness, Chief Justices, members of the Judiciary, Benchers and honored guests. In recent times the Law Society has involved itself in the effort to achieve fuller recognition of the needs and rights of persons in our Society such as members of native and minority groups. The effort to bring about that recognition is entirely in keeping with our traditional concern that the benefits of the lawful community should be made available to all. It also reflects our awareness of the increasingly multicultural character of Ontario and Canada, a reality now also increasingly reflected in the composition of the

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Benchers of the Law Society. One contemporary form which this concern takes is the effort to ensure that persons in disadvantaged groups have educational and employment opportunities in the law. Through such an effort we may encourage a fuller participation by persons in such groups in the work of the law. Over time the benefits of the law will as a result be more widely enjoyed in our Society. As a first step in that effort we have established a fund to provide financial assistance to persons in native and visible minority groups for their legal education. The initial fund is derived from arrangements which we have made with the publisher of our Ontario Law Reports, Butterworths, whose generosity we are pleased to acknowledge. Your Royal Highness we are grateful you have accepted our invitation to present today the first awards of this kind to be known as the Education Equity awards of The Law Society of Upper Canada. To present the recipients of the first Education Equity awards to your Royal Highness I call upon two of our Benchers, Mr. Strosberg, the Chair of the Equity Committee and Ms. Stewart, a Lay Bencher and a member of the Committee.

The first recipients of the awards were:

Karen Cunningham

Ms. Karen Cunningham is a first year law student at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto. A Dean's Honours List student, she graduated first in her class from McMaster University with an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. She has been the recipient of a number of prestigious awards throughout her academic career.

Seema Kalia

Seema Kalia is a second year student at Queen's University Law School in Kingston. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Anthropology and has outlined articles and publications among them "Race Bias in the University Classroom". She has also conducted research into children's issues.

Wennie Li

Wennie Li is a first year student at the University of Western Ontario Law School. She completed her Bachelor of Arts at York University where she received first class standing. Prior to immigrating to Canada in 1987 from Calcutta she worked as a volunteer in Sheshu Bhavan, an establishment of Mother Theresa's for homeless and abandoned children.

Diana Parsons

Diana Parsons, a member of the Tlingit Nation, is a first year student at the faculty of Law, University of Ottawa. She has a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from the University of Alberta and has completed a portion of her post-graduate studies in psychology. She has extensive experience as a community volunteer in a sexual assault clinic.

Larry Wells

Larry Wells is a native student from Alberta and is in 3rd year at the University of Windsor Law School. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Law and Society and has been involved in a number of community activities. Currently he is a volunteer with Reaching Out, a bail verification program in Windsor, and is also chairperson of a community project for adult and young offenders.

Michelle Williams

Michelle Williams is a first year law student at the University of Toronto. A Deans Honours List student she received a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work. She has worked as a counsellor with the John Howard Society and has provided counselling and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and abuse.

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His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales then addressed Convocation.

"Lieutenant Governor, Chief Justices, Treasurer, ladies and gentlemen. I am really most touched and grateful to the Benchers of The Law Society of Upper Canada for the honor you have done me in electing me. I haven't yet heard whether it was unanimous or not. As an Honorary Bencher of their Society I am most conscious that it is an honor which many other members of my family and most recently my grandmother Queen Elizabeth have also been proud to receive and both my grandmother and I are Honorary Benchers of Gray's Inn in London so in that sense it is even more appropriate I think. And as an Honorary Bencher of Gray's Inn perhaps I have a bit of a qualification for standing here today but not much else I can assure you. But the honor you have done me today also confirmed the fact that I must hail from the most legally qualified family in the world. Between us all we could boast a positive faculty of law graduates. We could start a practice operating from a particularly salubrious office block in central London. A move which would send shivers down the spines of countless law

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societies throughout the Commonwealth. We could litigate and mitigate, expostulate and adumbrate, perhaps, ladies and gentlemen, even titillate. The possibilities are limitless. But have no fear, I have taken legal advice and ascertained that we could be prosecuted under the Trade Descriptions Act so my idle daydream will come to nought. So ladies and gentlemen no one can doubt the importance of the rule of law in the lives of a free people. In the long tradition of the law which forms part of Canada's heritage the informing ideal is that the law must serve the good of all people. To do that and to preserve our hard won democratic rights and institutions the independence of the practice of law must be rock solid. We often I think, take much of our democratic way of life for granted. We may criticize it, resent it, ridicule it, pressure groups of one kind or another may seek to alter it. It may even produce apparent inequities. But ultimately a system of law which is seemed to be just and reasonable under difficult circumstances is what protects us from the dangers of authoritarianism from whatever source. In this place with its long traditions of judicial independence and impartiality there is good reason to feel confident that our freedoms and rights are in safe hands. In becoming an Honorary Benchers I am conscious of the task of service to which the Law Society was summoned by its charter almost two hundred years ago which remains its duty today. I find it especially gratifying to be elected an Honorary Benchers at a time when the Society is taking a major new initiative concerning members of native and visible minority groups. The granting of the first Education Equity awards today to the recipients marks an auspicious beginning and I am very pleased to congratulate the winners whom I look forward to meeting shortly when I hope they have got over the ordeal and the horror of having to face this particular presentation. But ladies and gentlemen, it seems to me entirely fitting that your Society should be playing its part in assisting with the fuller recognition of the needs and rights of minority and native peoples. I hope that the steps that have been taken today will provide a useful pointer for the future labors of this Society and for all those seeking to improve the rule of law in Canada. Ladies and gentlemen you have done me a great honor and I thank you most warmly."

The Treasurer then said:

"Thank you your Royal Highness. As this acclaim shows very well your Royal Highness has today done a great service for the work of the law in Ontario."

CONVOCATION ROSE AT 11:30 A.M.

His Royal Highness joined the Benchers, the recipients of the education equity awards and guests in Convocation Hall (Dining Room) for a reception.

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Confirmed in Convocation this day of , 1991.

Treasurer