

President's Holiday Message 2020

Dear Members and Friends of the Law Society of Nunavut,

As we enter the final month of 2020, on behalf of the entire Executive I would like to thank everyone who has supported the life and work of the Law Society of Nunavut this year. As with any organization, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our operations this year. Our mandate is to regulate the legal profession in the public interest. This has taken on a new meaning this year, when protecting the public now includes social distancing, limits on gatherings, and masks.

We have risen to the challenges by modifying our operations. We amended the Rules of the Law Society of Nunavut to allow for electronic voting and electronic special meetings. For the foreseeable future our professional development activities will be held online and by teleconference. Through a partnership with the Advocates' Society, our resident bar now has access to a digital archive of professional development programs and members can access our first online training recordings delivered through our prevention of workplace harassment access to justice project. We have waived the Restricted Appearance Certificate fee for new members who are currently unable to take their oaths due to travel restrictions.

Earlier this year we completed a comprehensive review of the articling and admissions process. As the Nunavut Law Program students are currently in their final year, we will have the largest cohort of articling students in our history in 2021-22. Based on this review, we are making changes to our policies and procedures and preparing resource documents for articling principals and articling students. This group will also be the first Nunavut participants in the new CPLED Prep bar admission course.

As a result of recent rule amendments, members of the Barreau du Québec are now eligible for full membership in the Law Society of Nunavut through the Territorial Mobility Agreement. If you are a member of the Barreau du Québec and are licensed in Nunavut as a Canadian Legal Advisor, you may change your status to full member during the annual renewal process. We hope that this rule amendment helps to address a growing demand for legal services in French in Nunavut.

We have also extended indemnification coverage to lawyers providing pro bono legal services to not-for-profit corporations and societies, to address a significant deficit in access to justice. Not-for-profit corporations and societies play vital roles in Nunavut but are often unable to afford legal counsel to assist with by-laws, mandatory filings, and funding applications.

Our new website launched in 2020 and is now open for online membership renewals since December 7. You can also find the membership directory and lawyer referral service on the website.

As a demonstration of our ongoing commitment to our community, the Law Society has donated to the Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Helpline Society and purchased several items for the first Uquutaq Society Men's Transitional Housing which opened last October.

On behalf of the entire Executive Committee, I extend a sincere thanks to all our staff and volunteers. I wish you the warmest of holiday greetings and look forward to a time when we can all gather together again.

Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday,

John L. MacLean

President

