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October 2025 Issue

Thank you to all the contributors and advertisers for supporting this month's edition of the *Snail*.

Want to contribute to the next issue?

The deadline is noon on **December 25, 2025**

Send submissions to:
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President's Message



Contributed by:
Jacqueline Fortner / MLA Board President

Dear Members, as fall is now upon us, it is bittersweet to welcome you all back to your desks and the courtroom. The start of this season marks not only a return to the courtroom but also a renewed opportunity to come together as a community of legal professionals.

This past summer and early fall have been nothing short of inspiring, thanks to your enthusiastic participation in our events. On September 23, 2025, we celebrated our 197th Opening of the Courts ceremony, a truly memorable occasion attended by the

Honourable Doug Downey (keynote speaker), alongside Regional Senior Justices Howard and Edwards, and many esteemed members of our judiciary. The energy in the room was palpable, and I'm deeply grateful to our dedicated committee members, speakers, Cynthia Simpson, Pamela Lee, and our tireless student volunteers for making this event a resounding success.

Our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs have continued to be well-attended. The Health Law Conference on September 18, 2025, was a tremendous

success, sparking thoughtful discussions on issues in the field. A thank you to all who attended, as well as our organizers and speakers who poured their expertise into making it so impactful. Looking ahead, I'm thrilled to invite you to our upcoming CPD events: the inaugural AI Conference on October 6, 2025, where we'll explore the transformative role of technology in law, and the Real Estate Conference on October 29, 2025, diving into the latest trends shaping property law. Be sure to secure your spot through the MLA website!

Beyond professional development, our social events have truly brought our community to life. This summer, we laughed and connected at the Women's Networking Event in July, swung clubs and shared stories at the MLA Golf Tournament, savored meaningful conversations at the Mentorship Dinner, and toasted to friendship at the Summer Social in August. My deepest thanks to everyone who joined us and to those who worked behind the scenes to make these moments unforgettable. I'm especially excited about our upcoming Courthouse Rocks event on October 3, 2025, at Rum Runners—join us for an evening of live music and camaraderie! And please mark your calendars for our Holiday Social on December 11, 2025, where we'll gather to celebrate the season with joy and gratitude.

As we dive into this new court session, I warmly invite you to stay engaged with the Middlesex Law Association. Whether it's sharpening your expertise at a CPD event or raising a glass with colleagues at a social, there's a place for you here. Let's make this season one of connection, growth, and shared purpose. Here's to a court session filled with inspiration and unity!

Jacqueline Fortner, MLA President

Practice Resource Centre News



Contributed by:
Cynthia Simpson and Shabira Tamachi
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National Judicial Institute – Model Criminal Jury Instructions

The National Judicial Institute is an independent institution that is committed to building better justice through leadership in the education of judges in Canada and internationally. It is overseen by a board of governors, chaired by the Right Honourable Richard Wagner, PC., Chief Justice of Canada, and its board has judicial representatives from across Canada.

We recently found out about the comprehensive set of [model criminal jury instructions](#), created by the Canadian Judicial Council's (CJC) National Committee on Jury Instructions, available at no charge on the National Judicial Institute's site. As stated on the introductory page, these jury instructions provide judges with standard language which they may use when speaking with members of

juries about their duties, the nature of the criminal charge before the court, and the legal rules which apply to the jury's deliberations. The model jury instructions can be downloaded in both Word and PDF formats.

There does not currently seem to be a free, online civil jury instructions manual, but CanLII does have an interesting article from the Canadian Bar Review FINISH!!! the Edson L Haines, Criminal and Civil Jury Charges, 1968 46-1 Canadian Bar Review 48, 1968 CanLIIDocs 29, <https://canlii.ca/t/t680>

LSO Library Catalogue and CPD Portal

The Great Library at the Law Society of Ontario has converted its former InfoLocate catalogue of resources to a new platform, the [LSO Great Library and Ontario Courthouse Libraries Catalogue](#). This is how you can search what we have in our collection here

and to also see what is available at the other county and district law association libraries and the Great Library at Osgoode Hall. Better yet, you can do it from the comfort of your home or office and then [email us](#) to request we put aside items for you. If we don't have a resource with your answer in it here, we can request a scan from another library's resource or even borrow the item itself.

The LSO's former AccessCLE collection of its CPD papers going back to 2004 has also moved to a new platform: [LSO CPD Materials](#). The benefit of this portal is that, while a search in the library catalogue will find papers and texts with your search terms in their titles, this site locates your terms in the papers themselves. This is a great way to start your research for information as LSO CPD papers will capture recent changes in the area of law.

All this information is available to you at no charge from your office at any time. Let us know if you need help finding information on either of these sites.

New Books

Allen, John. **Handling provincial offence cases in Ontario 2025**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Bowles, Brendan. **Conduct of lien, trust and adjudication proceedings 2025**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Carthy/Millar/Cowan. **Ontario Annual Practice 2025/26**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Gold, Alan D. **Defending drinking, drugs and driving cases 2025**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Greenspan, et al. **Martin's annual criminal code 2026**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Kamakaris, Tina. **Legal office procedures, 8th ed.**, Emond Publishing, 2022

Kenkel, Justice Joseph. **Impaired driving in Canada, 7th ed.**, LexisNexis, 2025

Lavender, T. Stephen. **2025-2026 Annotated Ontario Employment Standards Act**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

n/a. **Martin's Ontario criminal practice 2026**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Pitel, Stephen G.A. **Conflict of laws, 3rd ed.**, Irwin UTP, 2025

Segal, Murray D. **2025 Annotated Ontario Highway Traffic Act**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Siegel, Brahm D. **Consolidated Ontario family law statutes and regs 2025-2026**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Smith, Elliot A. **Canadian construction contracts guidebook, 2nd ed.**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Waisberg, Noah. **AI for lawyers: how artificial intelligence is adding value**, John Wiley & Sons, 2021

Wakil, Omar. **2025 annotated Competition Act**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Watt & Fuerst. **2026 Annotated Tremeeer's Criminal Code**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Williams, Christopher J. **Expropriation law in Ontario, 2nd ed.**, LexisNexis, 2025

Zuker, Marvin. **Ontario Small Claims Court practice 2026**, Thomson Reuters, 2025

Missing Books

Bourgeois, Donald J. **Charities and not-for-profit administration and governance handbook**, 2nd ed., LexisNexis, 2009

Bowles, Brendan. **Conduct of lien trust and adjudication proceedings 2024**, Thomson Reuters - **NEW**

Bullen, Edward et al. **Bullen & Leake & Jacob's precedents of pleadings**, 14th ed., Volume 1, Sweet & Maxwell, 2001

Bullen, Edward et al. **Bullen & Leake & Jacob's Canadian precedents of pleadings**, 3rd ed., Volume 3, Thomson Reuters, 2017

Fridman, G.H.L. **Law of contract in Canada**, 5th ed., Thomson Reuters, 2006

Harris, David. **Law on disability issues in the workplace**, Emond Publications, 2017

Honsberger, John. **Honsberger's bankruptcy in Canada**, 5th ed., Thomson Reuters, 2017

Hull, Ian M. **Macdonell, Sheard and Hull on probate practice**, 5th ed., Thomson Reuters, 2016

Knight, Patricia. **Small Claims Court: procedure and practice**, 5th ed., Emond Law, 2021

LSO. **Accommodating age in the workplace**, 2015

LSO. **Duty to accommodate in the workplace**, 2016

LSO. **Six-minute administrative lawyer 2018**

MacFarlane, Bruce A. **Cannabis law**, Thomson Reuters, 2018

Marseille, Claude, ed. **The law of objections in Canada: a handbook**, LexisNexis, 2019

n/a. **Martin's Annual Criminal Code 2024**, copy 3

Oosterhoff, Albert H. **Oosterhoff on wills**, 8th ed., Thomson Reuters, 2016

Osborne, Philip H. **Law of torts**, 5th ed., Irwin Law, 2015

Samfiru, Lior. **Termination of employment**, Emond, 2018

Sells, Berkley D. **Motions Court practice and procedure**, 2nd ed., LexisNexis, 2017



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Acknowledgment: MLA Awards Committee



Contributed by:
Middlesex Law Association

A special thank you to the members of our Awards Committee for their work in reviewing nominations and selecting this year's honourees. Their efforts ensure that the MLA continues to celebrate excellence and recognize contributions across our profession.

The MLA recognizes its members with five awards: Distinguished Service, Access to Justice, Rising Star, Philanthropy, and Distinguished Paralegal.

The MLA Awards

Award for Distinguished Service, which recognizes exceptional career contributions and/or achievements by MLA members to the legal profession and/or a law-related benefit to the community including mentorship related to the profession of law and/or leadership roles in the community. Those who will receive the award will have made a significant contribution to the profession of law, whether as a solicitor in effectively performing services in that position, as a barrister in attaining an excellent reputation in the courts, as an academic, or for a single act of notable distinction and/or innovation in the practice of law that advances the ideals of the profession.

Award for Access to Justice, which recognizes individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to providing commendable legal services to those in need through Legal Aid Ontario or through pro bono legal

services and/or offered academic contributions pertaining to the study of legal aid and/or created innovative measures or built links between lawyers and community organizations/advocates to promote better access to justice in Middlesex County.

Rising Star Award, which recognizes individuals who have distinguished themselves in the practice of law, who advances the ideals of the profession, demonstrating community involvement, and have been practicing for less than 10 years.

Award for Philanthropy, which recognizes exceptional contributions and/or dedication by MLA members to the community by supporting not-for-profit organizations and/or performing charitable services.

Award for Distinguished Paralegal recognizes a paralegal's exceptional career contributions and/or achievements to the paralegal profession and/or a law-related benefit to the community including mentorship related to the paralegal profession and/or leadership roles in the community. Those who will receive the award will have made a significant contribution to the paralegal profession, whether in effectively performing services in that position, as an academic, or for a single act of notable distinction and/or innovation that advances the ideals of the profession.

2025 Awards Committee



Leslie Jack (Chairperson) – Leslie is an associate lawyer at Shillington McCall LLP. Leslie is fully bilingual and completed a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) at the University of Toulouse 1 Capitole (2014). She also completed two Masters of Laws (LL.M.) at the University of Ottawa (2016) and at Osgoode Hall Law School (2020). Her practice focuses on insurance defence, including accident benefits, breach of fiduciary duty, and tort claims.

Since Leslie's call to the bar in 2021, she has worked for multiple regulatory bodies and major insurance companies focusing on investigations, regulatory compliance and regulatory litigation. When she is not serving her clients, Leslie is involved with Fanshawe College as a Professor at the School of Public Safety. Leslie is a committed community volunteer and currently a board trustee of the Middlesex Law Association, Wellkin Child & Youth Mental Wellness and Leads Employment. Leslie is also a member of the Canadian Black Lawyers Association, L'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario and the Canadian Defense Lawyers Association. Outside of the office, Leslie is an avid long-distance runner, most of her runs are with her long-haired Weimaraner.

► Members



John Brennan – John Brennan is a dedicated lawyer and principal of JBrennan Law, a practice specializing in Commercial Litigation, Shareholder and Partnership Litigation, 6 T he Middlesex Law Association *Snail* April 2025and Property Disputes. With extensive courtroom experience, John is known for his strategic insight, expertise, and strong commitment to advocating for his clients' best interests. Prior to establishing JBrennan Law, John was a Partner at a large full service regional law firm, where he provided representation in complex business disputes, commercial tenancy matters, estate litigation, employment disputes, construction litigation, intellectual property cases, and defamation claims, among others. His advocacy has seen him appear before numerous courts and tribunals, including the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Divisional Court, Ontario Court of Appeal, and C M Y C M Y Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. John CY has also contributed to legal education, serving as a Special Lecturer and Sessional Instructor in Economic Torts at the University of Windsor, where he enriched students' understanding of tort law with practical insights drawn from his professional experience. C M Y K Outside the practice of law, John maintains diverse interests including horticulture, art, and following current events, which he believes bring balance and perspective to his professional life. When not in the office you can find him hanging out with his son, travelling or enjoying an art gallery or concert.



Danielle D'Alonzo – Danielle is a Partner at Snow Lawyers Professional Corporation. She is a criminal defence lawyer and defends clients charged with criminal offences throughout Southwestern Ontario. Her practice has developed a particular focus on complex evidentiary and constitutional applications in both the Ontario Court of Justice and the Superior Court of Justice. Danielle is passionate about protecting the rights of her clients, which include some of the most vulnerable and marginalized members of our community. Danielle is the Secretary of the London Criminal Lawyers' Association, a member of the Ontario Criminal Lawyers' Association Women's Committee, and is co-chair of the Women's Mentorship Group for London criminal lawyers. Danielle also serves on the Board of Directors of Youth Opportunities Unlimited.



Doug Ferguson – Doug Ferguson has served his community and our profession at the national, provincial, and local levels. He has held leadership positions at both the Canadian and Ontario Bar Associations, founded the Association for Canadian Clinical Legal Education, and is currently serving with the National Action Committee on Access to Justice. In the latter role, he is organizing the first national conference on research in access to justice and data. Doug has served in many leadership roles in the London community, including

president of Covent Garden Market during its reconstruction. To pay back the gift of life he received from his liver transplant, he has chaired fundraisers for the Transplant Unit at London Health Sciences Centre and was a board member of Trillium Gift of Life Network. He is a former National President of the Liberal Party of Canada and was a candidate in the 2011 federal election. He is a past recipient of the MLA Access to Justice and Distinguished Service Awards. Doug was for many years the Director of Community Legal Services at Western Law and is currently in private practice and sitting as a Small Claims Court deputy judge.



Michael Lerner – Following Michael's call to the bar in law as a general practitioner in a one lawyer branch office of Lerner's LLP. During that time Michael's practice was that of a sole practitioner doing all types of law including but not limited to family law, criminal law, civil litigation, wills and estate law, real estate laws and appearances before provincial boards and tribunals. In 1988 Michael relocated his practice to the main office of Lerner's LLP where he has practiced solely as a litigator in a variety of fora. Currently Michael's practice focusses on appearances before administrative tribunals. His experience as a vice-chair of the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal and as a member of Law Society of Ontario discipline panels is a great asset in his current professional endeavours. During his professional life Michael has been honoured to have had the opportunity to make a significant contribution to a variety of community and charitable organization. ►



► **Kristi Sargeant-Kerr** – Joining Scott Petrie LLP in 2017, Kristi specializes in all aspects of condominium and real estate law, including development, governance, management, litigation and purchase and sale transactions. She made this transition after years of personal interest in the condominium field and a keen interest and involvement in mediation and arbitration at numerous administrative Boards and Tribunals.

Prior to her call to the bar in 2003, Kristi received her Honours B.A. from McMaster University before obtaining

her LL.B. at the University of Ottawa in 2002. Upon returning to London, she articulated and worked as an associate lawyer focusing on litigation from both a plaintiff and defence perspective. This extensive experience enables Kristi to assess a matter from many perspectives resulting in the most timely and cost effective outcomes for her clients.

Kristi is a former member of the Advisory Committee of the Condominium Management Regulatory Authority of Ontario (CMRAO) and is on the Board of Directors for the London and Area Chapter of the Canadian Condominium Institute (CCI), where she is the Secretary and former Education Committee Co-Chair. She also regularly contributes to their quarterly newsletters and presents on various relevant and timely condominium related topics.

In addition, Kristi is an active member of the Middlesex Law Association, the Ontario Bar Association, the Canadian Bar Association and a founding member of the London Chapter of the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund.

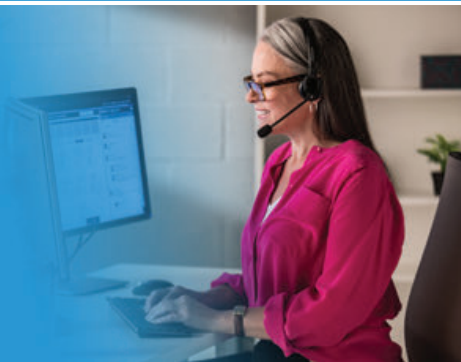


Gregory Woodward – Greg is an associate at Lerner LLP practicing in their dispute resolution & advocacy, and land development & municipal law groups. After completing his JD at Western University and being called to the Bar in 2024, Greg assists municipalities and applicants with applications under the Planning Act and Conservation Authorities Act, appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal and represented clients at the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

Prior to his legal career, Greg worked with the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation as a Property Inspector specializing in the valuation of commercial and industrial real estate. Outside the office, Greg enjoys playing a variety of sports including soccer, hockey and cycling, trying new recipes and spending time with his friends and family.

We are always looking for committee members. If you want to get involved in 2026, please reach out to a board of trustee.

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Michael Lerner

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Michael treats every client as his only client. Michael is the 2024 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award by the Middlesex Law Association.



David MacKenzie

dmackenzie@damlaw.ca
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Problem solving is a big part of Dave's day-to-day work as a litigator and owner of his own legal firm, David A. MacKenzie Law: www.damlaw.ca



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2025
MLA Awardees

Debbie Boswell

MLA Awardee



1. What does receiving this award from the Middlesex Law Association mean to you?

It means a lot to me. I'm from London originally but moved away for law school and work after graduation. Coming back home was a decision I put a lot of thought into, and this award feels like a great validation of the choice I made. I'm very grateful to the Middlesex Law Association for this award and proud of the work that I'm doing in London.

2. What part of your work or contribution are you most proud of?

I am most proud of the positive impact I have had on people's lives. Most of my work involves representing individuals at the worst time of their career. Whether they are facing a regulatory complaint or investigation, a workplace investigation, or the loss of their job, my clients are often experiencing very high levels of stress. Being able to provide compassionate, understanding legal advice is incredibly rewarding.

3. How has the legal profession changed since you began your career?

I first started practising in London in March 2019, so I had about a year of practice under my belt before the pandemic turned things upside down. The biggest changes I've seen so far are related to technology. We now make virtual court appearances and use an electronic case management

system and artificial intelligence. These developments are exciting, but they also bring new challenges.

4. What advice would you give to young lawyers or law students starting out today?

When I work with law students, I find many are uncertain where they want to end up in their career. Like them, when I was in law school, I had no idea what area of law I wanted to practise. I assure them that there's no rush to figure it all out, and that it's okay to change your mind. I have had colleagues who left Bay Street (or Wall Street) law firms to practise criminal defence. I also encourage

them to consider what the life of a lawyer practising in that area looks like. Do you like working with people? On teams? Going to court? Sitting alone in your office drafting? Different areas of law look vastly different in terms of the day-to-day reality.

5. How do you see your work making a difference for clients or the community?

The work that we do as lawyers is fundamentally about serving people and organizations in our community. Of course, we know that it is easier for some to access legal services in our community than others. I have tried to make pro bono work a significant part of my practice and consider it a real benefit for the broader community. For young lawyers, there are many great ways to get involved, and I would encourage everyone to explore

the opportunities available with Pro Bono Ontario or another similar organization.

6. Who has been a key mentor or influence in your career?

I have had the benefit of many great mentors during my career. I was lucky enough to clerk for four judges – Chief Justice Strathy and Justices Feldman and Blair of the Court of Appeal and Justice Karakatsanis of the Supreme Court. They were all wonderful mentors and examples to me. I will always remember Chief Justice Strathy's willingness to roll up his sleeves at Lawyers Feed the Hungry and serve meals to some of the most vulnerable members of society. I'm also grateful to my mentors at Lerner's. I have benefited greatly from working with senior lawyers such as Yola Ventresca and Carolyn Brandow, but I am also very grateful to my peers and mentees who have taught me so much.

7. What excites you most about the future of the legal profession?

There are lots of developments that excite me about the future of the legal profession. I expect that changes to the Rules of Civil Procedure and the increasing use of artificial intelligence will help improve access to justice. I also think that we, as lawyers, are more focused than ever on our obligation to society and, in particular, our role in upholding the rule of law. It's inspiring to see many lawyers reflecting on this and what we can do to protect the integrity of Canada's justice system.

Joe J. Hoffer

MLA Awardee



1. What does receiving this award from the Middlesex Law Association mean to you?

It is a sense of appreciation toward the members who played a role in the nomination and selection process which caused me to reflect positively on some of the accomplishments of a long tenure in our profession.

2. What part of your work or contribution are you most proud of?

The growth of the Housing practice at the firm; the clients who form the backbone of the practice; and the dedication and skill of the Licensees at Cohen Highley who have continued to excel in providing legal advice and service to those clients.

3. How has the legal profession changed since you began your career?

Technology has greatly improved how and when we interact with clients to provide advice, service and advocacy.

4. What advice would you give to young lawyers or law students starting out today?

Explore and pursue the work that interests you and focus on providing great service to the clients who retain you. Don't be afraid to change course when your gut tells you to or circumstances force you to.

5. How do you see your work making a difference for clients or the community?

Clients recognize that our service ethic supports the success of their operations and I think they feel they can trust and rely on us to provide good judgment, good advice and strong advocacy.

6. Who has been a key mentor or influence in your career?

There have been a few: Harris Cohen, Justice Killeen both now deceased but both of whom influenced my perception of how to best serve clients, the courts and the profession.

7. What excites you most about the future of the legal profession?

Anticipation of how the profession will evolve and adapt in the context of continuing challenges to the rule of law and a rules-based system of societal governance which is under attack by all forms of media and misinformation ... observing how the profession will adapt to these challenges is most interesting to me.

Carolynn Conron

MLA Awardee



1. What does receiving this award from the Middlesex Law Association mean to you?

It means a great deal to be recognized by my peers for service to the community. The practice of criminal defence can be all-consuming, and much of the community work happens behind the scenes. To have those efforts acknowledged is a reminder that the profession values service beyond the courtroom.

2. What part of your work or contribution are you most proud of?

I'm proud of helping to build bridges between the legal community and organizations that support people at their most vulnerable. Whether it's raising funds for supportive housing, working with the CMHA, or helping feed families through Lawyers Feed the Hungry, it's the impact on real lives that matters most.

3. How has the legal profession changed since you began your career?

Since I have started my career, I have gained more awareness now about mental health, equity, and the need for balance in our work. The profession has become more open to conversations that used to be taboo, which I think makes us stronger advocates and more sustainable as practitioners.

4. What advice would you give to young lawyers or law students starting out today?

Find your voice early. Don't try to mimic someone else's style or path. This is a profession built on resilience, integrity, and authenticity. Don't be afraid to ask for help; nobody succeeds alone.

5. How do you see your work making a difference for clients or the community?

In the courtroom, I fight for fairness. Outside of it, I try to help create conditions where people have access to dignity, housing, food, and mental health support. Both sides of that work are about giving people a chance to be heard and to rebuild.

6. Who has been a key mentor or influence in your career?

I've been fortunate to have many mentors who pushed me to think critically and fight hard but also to remember compassion and long-term reputation. Their examples showed me that being an excellent lawyer is inseparable from being a quality person.

7. What excites you most about the future of the legal profession?

I'm excited about the next generation. I see students and young lawyers who are bold, socially engaged, and unwilling to accept "that's how it's always been done." That energy is what will keep the profession relevant and responsive to the communities we serve.

Right to be Forgotten in Canada: Google & PIPEDA



Contributed by:
David Canton

A decision by the Canadian Privacy Commissioner against Google says there is a limited right to be forgotten in Canada under the PIPEDA privacy law. The right to be forgotten is an express right in the EU GDPR, but PIPEDA does not mention the concept.

A right to be forgotten means that in some circumstances an individual can demand that certain older information about them be deleted or no longer made available to the public.

Online reputation

This Google privacy investigation started with a complaint to the commissioner in 2017. The individual had been charged with a criminal offence regarding failure to disclose HIV status. The Crown stayed the proceedings soon after the charge was laid because they didn't believe the charge was appropriate.

The matter was reported in the press, and of course a Google search against the individual turns up these articles. The complainant felt those articles were "... outdated and misleading, and that because these articles are linked to their name in search results, the Complainant has experienced serious harms such as physical assault, lost employment opportunities, and severe social stigma."

Google de-listing Canada

The complainant wanted Google to de-list these articles from a Google search. If that happened the articles would still be available on the publisher's websites, but a Google search against this name would not show them. Google refused to de-list them.

Google does de-list certain things, such as abusive content, and sensitive personal info such as banking and credit card information. But Google decided this situation did not fall under their de-list policy.

After the investigation started Google took the position that it was exempt from PIPEDA. That issue was heard in the Federal Court, and the Federal Court of Appeal. They decided that Google was not exempt from PIPEDA.

The Commissioner released its findings in August 2025.

PIPEDA privacy

The Commissioner decided that in this circumstance the complainant's complaint was well founded, and Google should de-list the articles. Google has refused to de-list them despite the Commissioner's findings. Google questions whether PIPEDA actually includes this de-listing requirement.

So it sounds like we have not heard the end of this yet, and there is a good chance this will end up in court again.

Canadian privacy law

The Commissioner said "Individuals have the right, under Canadian privacy law, to have information about them de-listed from online searches for their name in certain circumstances when there is a significant risk of harm that outweighs the public interest in that information remaining accessible through such a search."

The decision listed these factors for the public interest test:

- a. Whether the individual is a public figure (e.g. a public office holder, a politician, a prominent business person, etc);
- b. Whether the information relates to an individual's working or professional life as opposed to their private life;
- c. Whether the information relates to an adult as opposed to a minor;
- d. Whether the information relates to a criminal charge that has resulted in a conviction or where the charges were stayed due to delays in the criminal proceedings;
- e. Whether the information is accurate and up to date;
- f. Whether the ability to link the information with the individual is relevant and necessary to the public consideration of a matter under current controversy or debate;
- g. The length of time that has elapsed since the publication of the information and the request for de-listing.

If you are interested in a deep dive on this subject you can read [the Commissioner's lengthy decision](#).

Although this may not be the last word on the subject if it gets in front of the courts again.

David Canton is a business lawyer and trademark agent at Harrison Pensa with a practice focusing on technology, privacy law, technology companies and intellectual property. Connect with David on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

MLA Board Members Serve on Associate Judge Hiring Panel

Contributed by:

Middlesex Law Association

The Middlesex Law Association is proud to share that two of our Board members, **John Brennan** and **Tahwila Husaini**, participated in the interview panel for the Windsor Associate Judge competition, held in London on July 3 and 4, 2025.

The Office of the Chief Justice invited regional bar associations to nominate representatives for this important process. The panel included judiciary members, Court Services Division

leadership, and representatives from local law associations.

Over the course of two days, panelists interviewed up to twelve candidates using a standardized set of questions. They reviewed materials in advance, independently scored candidate responses, and then worked collaboratively to establish a ranked list of candidates.

Why this matters

- It reflects MLA's strong role in supporting the administration of justice beyond Middlesex County.
- It ensures the perspectives of our members are heard in judicial selection processes.
- It demonstrates the expertise and commitment of MLA's Board members to the broader legal community.

We thank **John Brennan** and **Tahwila Husaini** for representing the MLA with professionalism and integrity in this significant appointment process.

Advocacy & Access to Justice

Contributed by:

Middlesex Law Association

Legal Aid

The MLA's Legal Aid Committee will be meeting with local MPPs this fall to raise concerns about legal aid funding and service capacity in Middlesex. We'll report back on outcomes in the next issue of *Snail*.

The Great Library

Concerns were raised about the future

of the Great Library in Toronto and the potential impact on law libraries across Ontario. This issue remains under discussion at the provincial level and is worth keeping on the radar.

Civil Rules Review

The Attorney General has announced further changes to Ontario's civil procedure rules, including new

discovery and disclosure requirements. These reforms are still being digested by the profession, and members may wish to review how they could affect litigation practice.

Courthouse Infrastructure

Conversations continue about technology upgrades and courthouse facilities to better support hybrid hearings and secure workspace for lawyers. While no concrete changes have been announced locally, these are issues to watch.

Community Spotlight: MLA Sponsors Western Induction

Contributed by:
Middlesex Law Association

Overview

On September 2, Western Law held its annual Induction Ceremony, welcoming nearly 200 new JD students. As part of the event, students signed and recited the Professionalism Pledge, affirming the ethical and practical responsibilities they undertake as future lawyers.

The Middlesex Law Association was proud to sponsor this event, reinforcing our commitment to supporting legal education and strengthening ties between the practising bar and the next generation. MLA President Jacqueline

Fortner delivered the welcome address on behalf of the Association, encouraging students to embrace civility, professionalism, and community engagement throughout their studies and careers. A special thank you goes to Carolyn Conron for providing on-site support. MLA Executive Director Pamela Lee was also in attendance.

This sponsorship is part of MLA's broader effort to highlight our profession's values and foster meaningful connections between law students and the practising bar.



Recent Practice Direction



Contributed by:
Cole Vegso, Siskinds LLP

In August 2025, the Superior Court of Justice for the Southwest Region (i.e. Southwest Ontario) published a useful [practice direction](#) regarding confirmation forms for civil and family proceedings. Specifically, the court seeks detailed confirmation forms to assist the justices determining those matters. Paragraphs 29 to 31 of the notice provides specific examples.

This practice direction is both a good reminder for senior counsel and a useful roadmap for junior counsel who often wonder what can properly be included in a confirmation form.

My takeaway is that a detailed confirmation is a good tool to strengthen one's position on the underlying court event (e.g. a motion)

through organization. This is akin to how a compendium, which is an organizational tool, can be used by counsel to make their submissions more persuasive. It seems the court will be fine with however the confirmation form is used so long as the practice is fair and it helps the court prepare for the matter.

This aligns with the general principle that a litigator should do what they can to make the court's job easier because it increases their odds of success.

As of Right: A Discussion on the New Interprovincial Labour Reforms



Contributed by:
Dominika Zwerello

This Labour Day, the Ontario government announced the historic implementation of “as of right” rules regarding Canadians’ ability to work interprovincially. The Law Society’s CEO welcomed the announcement, noting the societies long standing support of removing provincial barriers for lawyers to improve professional development and client services.

First introduced under the *Protect Ontario through Free Trade within Canada Act, 2025*, this reform supports Ontario’s plan to strengthen interprovincial trade and create a more flexible labour market.

For the legal profession, this represents a shift away from a patchwork of fees and examinations that have long restricted mobility. It presents lawyers with the opportunity to practice in Ontario with far fewer obstacles. The natural next step will be for other provinces and their law societies to adopt

similar measures, ensuring that this reform extends across Canada.

The Honourable retired Justice A. Ingram highlighted the need for greater mobility within the legal profession by recalling his time practicing in Nunavut. He described how charter planes were organized from Ottawa to Nunavut due to the shortage of legal representation. This experience, he noted, provided him with more valuable legal exposure in a short period than he might have gained in years of practice in Ontario, where lawyers and judges are far more numerous.

The current system is restrictive. While a few thousand dollars in fees may not present a challenge for senior partners with established practices, the same costs weigh far more heavily on young lawyers and sole practitioners. The truth is, these groups are often more willing, and more driven, to relocate or serve in underrepresented regions. In addition to

fees, lawyers must also complete further examinations. Although ambition may drive some to meet these requirements, the reality is that many young lawyers and sole practitioners are already stretched by the demands of earning their initial certifications and keeping their practices afloat, to find time to prepare for additional testing.

For provinces facing shortages of legal professionals, removing these barriers could prove immensely valuable. This development also aligns closely with s. 6 of the Charter, which guarantees every Canadian the mobility right to move to and pursue a livelihood in any province.

By reducing restrictions such as costs, and examinations, this new framework will make it easier for professionals to move where their skills are most needed. For employers, this means filling shortages more quickly and supporting major projects across the country. For workers, it creates new opportunities without the burden of extra fees and red tape. Ultimately, these reforms move Canada closer to a truly national labour market, where mobility is not restricted by provincial borders but guided by need and opportunity.

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Examination of the status of women in early Irish law and the study of Aidbred and related texts concerning lost and stolen property, presented by Charlene Eska of Virginia Tech

Discussions of the Irish law manuscript tradition and practices of law and learning in late medieval law schools, presented by Chantal Kobel of Maynooth University



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Recent Procedural / Rules Developments to Watch

Contributed by:
Middlesex Law Association

Criminal Rules (Ontario Court of Justice)

- **Rule 3.3 amendment (effective June 2, 2025):** changes to how documents may be served and filed in criminal proceedings. This may affect deadlines and methods of service. [Ontario Courts](#)

Civil Rules (Ontario Rules of Civil Procedure)

- **O. Reg. 50/25 (June 16, 2025):**
 - Introduces Rule 49.14 requiring disclosure of partial settlement agreements.
 - Clarifies that settlements involving parties under disability require judicial approval.
 - Creates new Form 49E (Terms of Partial Settlement Agreement). [Avoid a Claim summary](#)

- **O. Reg. 173/25 (August 8, 2025):** additional amendments filed — members should review the regulation text or commentary for details. [TLA summary](#)

Proposed / Under Review

- **Bill 46:** would repeal provisions from Bill 227 giving the Attorney General override power over Civil and Family Rules Committees. [Law Times coverage](#)
- **FOLA resolution:** calls for broader representation and data-driven reform in the CRR process, warning current approaches are too Toronto-centric. [FOLA statement](#)

New Member Orientation Guide — Now Available

Contributed by:
Middlesex Law Association

We're pleased to share that the MLA has created a New Member Orientation Guide — a resource designed to help new members understand what's available through their membership.

While it was created with new members in mind, the guide is a useful reminder for all members of the services, supports, and perks available to you year-round:

- 24/7 library access, including Westlaw, Lexis+, vLex, rangefindr, ProView, and more.

- Practice Resource Centre in the London Courthouse — workspace, Wi-Fi, coffee, privacy booths, lockers, and more.
- Discounts on MLA events and partner services.
- Automatic membership in FOLA for provincial advocacy.
- Networking and CPD opportunities across practice areas.

- Member directory listing, helping colleagues and the public find you.
- Courthouse security bypass lane for members.

The guide also highlights our history, governance, key events, advocacy work, and ways to get involved — giving you a complete picture of MLA today.

You can access the full guide on [your membership portal](#).

Bottom line: Whether you're brand new to MLA or a long-time member, this guide is your go-to resource for getting the most out of your membership.

Regulatory News — Law Society of Ontario

Contributed by:
Middlesex Law Association

Here are a few regulatory updates that may affect your practice:

Anti-money laundering (AML): As of October 1, 2025, title insurers will be reporting entities under the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, overseen by FINTRAC. [Law Society of Ontario](#)

Transparency changes: Convocation has approved more information in the Law Society directory — licensees can expect expanded public data in their profiles. [lso.ca](#)

Complaints & reviews: Amendments to By-Laws 9 and 11 give the Commissioner expanded authority to refer complaints back for further action if not satisfied with how they were handled. [lso.ca](#)

Governance reforms under debate: Proposals to reduce the proportion of elected lawyers in Convocation have raised concerns about weakening professional self-regulation. [folo.ca](#)

CPD requirements remain unchanged:

Lawyers must continue to complete 12 CPD hours annually (3 professionalism, including 1 EDI, + 9 substantive). [Law Society of Ontario+1](#)

New programs launched include:

Foundations of Sole Practice (mandatory for new sole practitioners) and expanded supports for paralegals. [lso.ca](#)

Regulatory Meetings: When conduct issues don't warrant discipline, the LSO may hold a Regulatory Meeting; the outcome is noted publicly. [lso.ca](#)

Opportunity for Experienced Family Law Lawyer

Are you a passionate family law lawyer looking to make a difference? Our dynamic and growing law firm is seeking a dedicated lawyer with 3+ years of experience to join our team.

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Rules & Health Law Update

Procedural & Rules Developments You Should Know

Contributed by:

Middlesex Law Association

1. Civil Procedures – Partial Settlements & Disability Rules

As of June 16, 2025, Ontario's O. Reg. 50/25 introduced new requirements for **partial settlement agreements** under Rule 49.14. Settlements involving parties under disability now require judge approval and additional disclosures. mcleishorlando.com

2. Health Sector Innovation – Ontario's More Convenient Care Act (Bill 11, 2025)

This new legislation is aimed at making health care more connected and accessible. Key changes include:

- Expanded authority for nurse practitioners to complete mandatory blood testing forms (a role formerly restricted to physicians) [Business Law firm | Stikeman Elliott](#)

- New oversight and reporting obligations for health care staffing agencies [Legislative Assembly of Ontario+1](#)
- Modifications to information access and coordination of care initiatives [Legislative Assembly of Ontario](#)

3. Primary Care Act, 2025 (Bill 13)

Ontario has passed a framework law establishing the government's vision for **primary care**. The Act sets province-wide objectives for access, coordination, digital health integration, and accountability via annual reporting. [Legislative Assembly of Ontario+1](#)

4. Health Canada Regulatory Modernization

At the federal level, Health Canada has signalled a push toward regulatory modernization:

- A new "red tape reduction" initiative aims to streamline processes and adopt a more risk-based regulatory approach. [BLG](#)
- Changes to the Food and Drug Regulations (the "Agile Licensing" amendments) empower Health Canada to impose **terms and conditions** on drug and medical device approvals, expanding flexibility and faster pathways for certain products. [Torys](#)
- Mandatory transition to **XML format** for product monograph filings began July 18, 2025, affecting new drug and biologic submissions. lifesciences.transperfect.com

5. Regulation of Physician Assistants

On April 1, 2025, amendments to the Medicine Act came into force, making **physician assistants (PAs) a regulated health profession** under the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Ontario. [Oha](#)

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The Unique History of London's Courthouse Rocks

"Hey brother, can you spare a dime?"

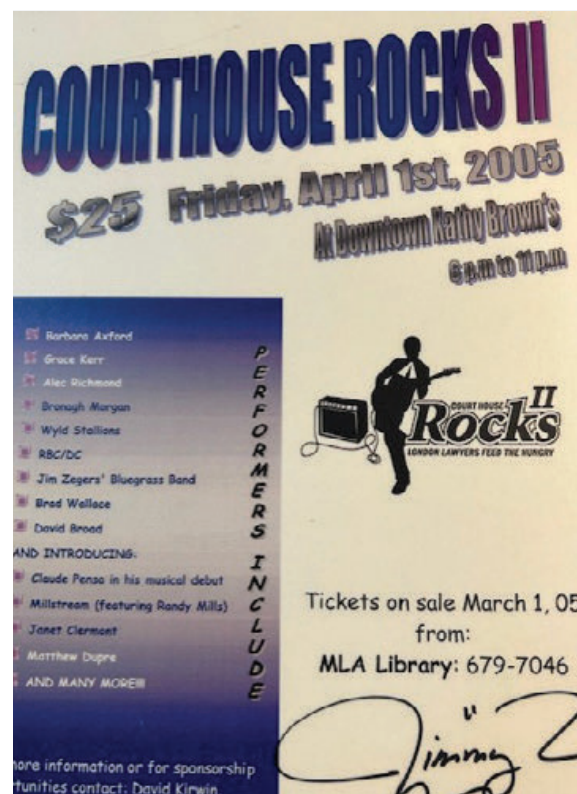
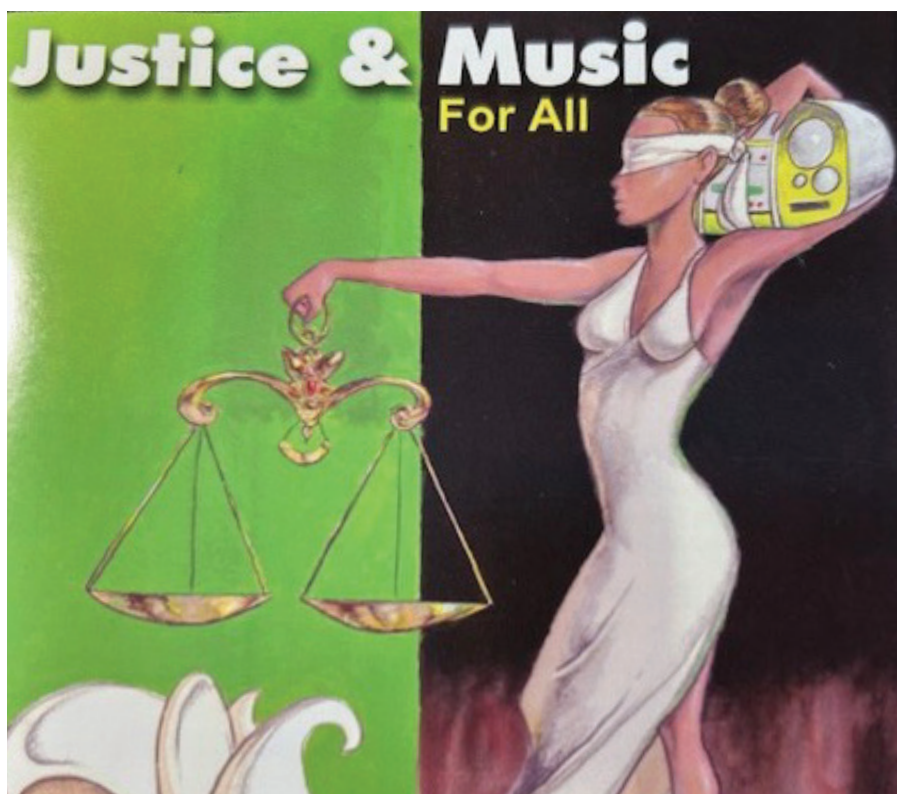
It was a cold, wet, rainy morning in November 2002 as I walked down Dundas Street from my office, heading to court. The preceding months had seen a slow yet surprising growth in the number of needy people on my routine walk down Dundas. I had forgotten my overshoes that day and cold icy water was seeping into my loafers and I could immediately relate to the discomfort of the poor fellow on the street, begging for money. I wondered what we could do as lawyers to help him out. Then it struck me! Why not ask the many talented lawyers that I knew in London, to come together to record a CD of original music with sale proceeds going to charity? I worked the phones and reached out to everyone that I knew with even an ounce of talent and they responded in a big way. The local bar really stepped up. A number of us headed to the recording studio between February and August, 2003 and "Music and Justice for All" was born.

The CD was an instant success and attracted media attention. Future Ontario Attorney General, Chris Bentley contributed as did many other local legal beagles, including Brian Foster, David Broad, James Zegers, our band The Wlyd Stallions, and Justice Grace Kerr to name just a few. A song by Barbara Axford of Siskinds, received accolades and airplay on CBC radio. Lawyers from other cities were reaching out to explore how they could do the same type of thing in their own hometowns.

At the same time, Claude Pensa who was very involved with his compassionate work with London Lawyers feeding the hungry, sent his emissary, David Kirwin to meet with me for lunch, to explore the possibility of the performers on the CD, performing a live event to raise money for charity. Voila! Just like that, Courthouse Rocks was born.

Courthouse Rocks because a very successful fundraiser and the local bar was extremely supportive. The shows were all entertaining, even memorable and over the years have raised a total of over \$500,000. These funds have gone a long way to help many local and important charities.

This year, Courthouse Rocks was held on Friday, October 3rd at the London Music Hall. Your support of that event and others like it in the future, is much appreciated. The tradition of lawyers providing fine entertainment for a good cause will hopefully continue for many years to come and we thank you all for your continued support.



Member Milestones

Contributed by:
Middlesex Law Association

MLA Rising Star

Lerners announced **Debbie Boswell** as the MLA's **2025 Rising Star Award** recipient. Congratulations to Debbie on this well-deserved recognition.
[Lerners](#)

New Partners at Siskinds

Ten lawyers were admitted to partnership at Siskinds in London. It includes: Anna Stoll, Bridget Moran, Christina Martin, Cole Vegso, John Morrissey, Katherine Serniwka, Kimberly Knight, Matthew Wilson, Tyler Planeta, and Vivian Iron. [Newswire+1](#)

McKenzie Lake Partner Promotions

McKenzie Lake welcomed three new partners earlier this year. A special shout

out to Erin Fisher in the London office.
[McKenzie Lake Lawyers LLP+1](#)

Firm and Individual Recognitions

Lerners highlighted 85 lawyers recognized in the 2026 editions of *Best Lawyers and Ones to Watch*, plus 25 named leaders in personal injury. Among them are several MLA-engaged members:

Greg Willson (MLA Vice-President) – *Ones to Watch*

Dara Lambe – *Lawyer of the Year*, Committee Member of our *Straight from the Bench Conference*

Shauna K. Powell – *Lawyer of the Year*, Panelist at our *Health Law Conference*

Danielle Douek – Co-Chair of our *Health Law Conference*

Jake Aitcheson – Chair of our *Mentorship Program*

Congratulations to these colleagues for their well-deserved recognition. For the full announcement, visit [Lerners' website](#).

Class Actions Kudos

Siskinds' **Linda Visser** received the **CBA Bill Miller Award** and was named to **Lawdragon 500 Global Plaintiff Lawyers** for 2025. Strong local plaintiff-side recognition. [Siskinds Law Firm](#)

Community & Impact

Harrison Pensa continues visible engagement, including support for youth housing at **Joan's Place**. Not a promotion, but notable community leadership from a London firm.
[Harrison Pensa LLP](#)



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Parental Leave and Lawyers: Challenges and Considerations

Contributed by:

Middlesex Law Association

Taking parental leave as a lawyer remains a complex and often difficult decision. Unlike larger corporate environments, many law firms—particularly small or mid-sized practices—struggle to absorb the workload when an associate or partner takes leave. This creates real challenges for both the lawyer and their colleagues.

Financial Impact

- For associates, reduced billings during leave can affect salary, bonuses, and future advancement.
- For partners, stepping back from clients may mean lost files or weakened relationships. Unlike salaried employees in other sectors, lawyers in private practice often bear a direct financial hit.

Practice Management

- Coverage during leave is uneven. In larger firms, files may be reassigned or temporarily covered by colleagues, but in smaller firms lawyers often have to manage their caseload up to the date of leave and then return to a backlog.
- Client relationships are at risk if transitions aren't managed carefully. Many clients prefer continuity and may resist reassignment.

Cultural Barriers

- There remains a stigma in some firms that taking leave signals a lack of commitment. Women are disproportionately affected, but

male lawyers who seek leave also encounter raised eyebrows.

- Returning lawyers often face pressure to “make up” for lost time, which can contribute to burnout and attrition.

Policy Gaps

- Employment standards legislation provides minimum parental leave protections, but many lawyers are classified as independent contractors or partners and fall outside those frameworks.
- Law societies do not have standardized policies for supporting lawyers on leave, though some have practice management resources or financial assistance programs for sole practitioners.

What Can Help

- Firms can normalize parental leave by adopting written policies, planning coverage well in advance, and recognizing the long-term value of retaining talent.
- Professional associations can advocate for better structures and highlight model policies.
- Individual lawyers benefit from early planning: discussing coverage with clients, budgeting for reduced income, and setting boundaries for re-entry.

The Bottom Line

Parental leave is not just a personal issue—it is a systemic one. Without adequate supports, lawyers may leave practice altogether, which undermines retention, diversity, and continuity in the profession. Addressing this requires both cultural change and practical solutions at the firm and association level.



Bench & Bar News: New Judicial Appointments in London

Contributed by:

Middlesex Law Association

We are pleased to spotlight several important judicial appointments affecting our region:

- The Honourable Jennifer M. Moser — Formerly an Assistant Crown Attorney in London, now appointed to the Superior Court of Justice in London. She replaces Justice K.A. Gorman, who elected supernumerary status.
- The Honourable Alexandra J. Bignucolo — A sole practitioner in

Stratford, appointed to the Superior Court, Family Branch, in London. She fills the vacancy created when Justice D.M. Korpan became supernumerary.

- The Honourable Lisa M. Walters — Formerly a partner at Wharton Woods Family Law in London, appointed to the Superior Court, Family Branch, in London. She replaces Justice E.M. Morgan, who became supernumerary.

Read more about them [here](#).

Swearing-In Ceremony

A special ceremony will be held on Thursday, October 16, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in Courtroom 20 (14th floor, London Courthouse, 80 Dundas Street). A reception will follow on the ground floor, generously hosted by the Middlesex Law Association. Please make sure your RSVP to attend.

This is a significant moment for our community, welcoming three new justices to the bench — including two appointments to the Family Court — and reflecting the depth of talent and leadership in our region. Members are encouraged to attend and show support for our newest judges as they begin their service.



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CPDonline.ca proudly welcomes Sam Puchala as a new Video Presenter and Contributor

Winner of the MLA's Rising Star Award and Regional Women's Director of the Criminal Lawyers' Association, Sam Puchala has been quoted by CBC and featured across national coverage of the Hockey Canada sexual assault trial. She was the go-to legal voice inside the courtroom and now brings first-hand analysis through CPDonline.ca.

Her videos on CPDonline.ca will deliver topical, timely commentaries on closely watched criminal cases drawing on her expertise in defending high-stakes offences against the person, including assaults, homicides, sexual offences, and domestic violence. She will provide practical insights into trial strategy and courtroom advocacy.



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2025 MLA Membership Survey Results

Contributed by:
Middlesex Law Association

Thank you to everyone who participated in our **2025 Membership Survey**. We had **95 responses** (about 10% of our active membership) — nearly three times the engagement we saw in the Civil Rules consultation earlier this year. Your input is helping shape MLA's programming, priorities, and advocacy.

Who Responded

- **77%** of respondents have been members for seven years or more, reflecting the stability of our membership.
- **Practice areas** were led by Civil Litigation (45%), Family (18%), Corporate/Business (15%), and Real Estate (14%).
- Nearly half of respondents are **solo or small-firm practitioners**, while 25% come from large firms.

What You Value

- **CLE/CPD programs** remain the top benefit (57%), followed by networking (47%) and social events (41%).
- **79%** rated their membership as or excellent.
- **94%** said they would recommend MLA to a colleague — a strong signal of loyalty.

What You Want Next

- **Mentorship:** Strong demand to relaunch a formal program, particularly for criminal law certification requirements.
- **Solo practitioner supports:** Interest in resources for practice setup, marketing, and technology.
- **Broader CPD balance:** Calls for more criminal law and less emphasis on insurance/civil litigation alone.

- **Advocacy:** Desire for MLA to play a more visible role in supporting local court processes.

Communications & Reach

- **99%** of respondents prefer email
- At the same time, our **LinkedIn presence has surged** (13,000 impressions in 30 days). This platform is proving invaluable for sponsor visibility and expanding MLA's profile.

Takeaways

Your feedback is clear:

- Keep CPD at the core of our offerings.
- Continue to grow networking and social opportunities.
- Plan for a **mentorship relaunch in 2026**.
- Invest in tools and programming for solos and small firms.

Thank you again for sharing your perspectives. These results will guide MLA's 2026 programming priorities and our continued commitment to providing value to every member.

Membership Dues for 2026

Contributed by:
Middlesex Law Association

At its September meeting, the Board of Trustees approved a modest increase to membership dues, effective with the 2026 renewal cycle. Regular membership will be set at \$225.75. This adjustment reflects the rising costs of operations while ensuring the

Middlesex Law Association remains well positioned to deliver the services our members rely on most. Your annual dues support:

- Access to a fully resourced courthouse library

- Accredited CPD programming
- Advocacy on issues impacting the profession
- Networking and community-building opportunities

Even with this increase, MLA membership continues to offer exceptional value.

A Morning at the MLA Library

Contributed by:
Samuel Kirwin

Another workday has just begun. It's going to be another busy one that involves a medley of court appearances, client meetings, drafting, and calls with opposing counsel. There is never a dull moment in the life of this young lawyer. Once at the courthouse, my first stop, as usual, is the Middlesex Law Association library. It's early and nobody else has arrived yet. Thankfully, I remember the door code.

There is a coffee machine here which dispenses free coffee. I take full advantage. The sound of the coffee brewing is the only thing that pierces the early morning library silence. I look around. There are so many books on the walls. My thoughts wander. If those books could only speak, they would surely tell so many stories about the lawyers of the Middlesex Law Association from years past.

The coffee pours. It is still too hot to sip, so I take the cup and make my way to the desk I sometimes like working at towards the rear of the library. The library is quite large so there is a considerable distance to travel. In fact, the MLA library might be one of the larger law association libraries in Ontario. I'm grateful to have access to such a resource. Since I work in a profession where knowledge of the law is a currency, I remind myself what a privilege it is to have access to a library with so many texts and access to online legal databases.

On my way to the workstation, I pass both privacy pods. The pods are a great place to enter when I have to partake in a phone or video call. The pods are sound proof, so they allow

lawyers to engage in noisy tasks without disturbing others in the library.

As I walk past the shelves where all of the most valued texts are on display behind glass doors, I am surprised to find that one of the doors is partially open. That door was always locked when I passed it previously. {Ed: This "open" cabinet was pre-arranged} The old Middlesex Law Association minute books are on those shelves. As someone who has a passion for history, the opportunity to peek at these books is too great to resist. I take a few of the minute books and other ancient texts to my work station and begin reading.

I find myself reading what appears to be the original first MLA minute book. The pages bearing ink calligraphy are old and delicate so I take care when turning them. As I read, the history of the MLA begins to engulf me.

The MLA was incorporated 146 years ago, on October 27, 1879. The association had just 50 members then. The first President of the MLA was a man named William Ralph Meredith. He held that role for 14 years. He later was appointed Chief Justice of Ontario and was knighted by Queen Victoria. He also helped to form the London Law School.

I learn that there have been many other noteworthy members of the MLA. Perhaps the most unconventional career of an MLA lawyer was that of George Moorehead. He was called to the bar in 1885, then left London to act on stage in New York and elsewhere in the USA. After

25 years of acting, he returned to London to practice as a lawyer.

Another noteworthy former member of the MLA is Mayer Lerner, who began practicing here in London in 1929. He was the second Jewish lawyer to regularly practice in London, after Harold S. Chaplin. The fact that he was one of the only Jewish lawyers in the city did not hold Mayer back, as he went on to become a President of the MLA and a founding member of the Lerner and Lerner firm. The MLA lounge is named after him.

Another notable member of the MLA was Edward H. Braund, whose legal career from about the 1920's, onwards was conducted from a wheelchair. There would have been many navigation challenges for Mr. Braund in this early era as there were few accessibility accommodations in those days.

In 1940, MLA member John Campbell Elliot was raised to the Senate. When he passed away, Prime Minister King described him as "one of the most loyal and capable of men."

The MLA has a long history with the military. Many members of the MLA went to the front during both World Wars. Many joined the Royal Canadian Airforce and the Royal Canadian Navy during the Second World War. Notably, in 1946, Oliver W. (Pat) Durdin became the acting chief prosecutor in the Canadian Warcrime Trials in Germany. Both John D. Harrison and his partner E.C. (Ned) Elwood joined the fray as gunners in 1939. H.W. (Bill) Hockin was captain of the Essex Scottish Regiment when he was captured and made a prisoner of war.

In this way, the lawyers of London have guarded the civil liberty not just in the Ontario courts, but also

► overseas facing actual bullets on various battle fields. Many made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve that civil liberty when fighting overseas.

In 1945, Evelyn Harrison, Vivian Weekes, and Beth Underhill were the only female lawyers practicing in London. At that time there were seventy MLA members. My, how times have changed. It would not come as a surprise if someone told me that there are now more female members than male members in the MLA.

In 1951, MLA member J. Gordon Gillanders became the youngest person to be appointed as a judge for the Court of Appeal for Ontario. Arthur M. Lebel was another MLA member from that era who became a judge at the Court of Appeal for Ontario. Judge

Lebel was apparently a very practical man.

This was demonstrated when he refused to enter, as a trial exhibit, a cantaloupe which had been used to demonstrate how a face-stabbing could have occurred accidentally.

Over the years, there has been extensive representation of MLA members on the municipal, provincial and federal political stages. In 1961, MLA member John Robarts became the Premier of Ontario.

By 1969, the number of lawyers practicing in London and Middlesex County had grown to 198. At that time the main courthouse was still the old Middlesex County Court building that is located on Ridout Street, in London.

The current, much larger, courthouse was not constructed until 1974. Perhaps it gave the MLA room to grow as the number of MLA members has more than quadrupled since 1969.

Oh no, I must have been carried away and lost track of the time! That peek at the minute books turned into a full history lesson. I'll have to drink my cold coffee quickly and hurry up to courtroom number one so that I'm not late to Justice Sigurdson's youth criminal court.

I guess I'll have to wait to learn more about the Middlesex Law Association for now. What a privilege it is to be a member of a law association with such a proud history.



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Women's Networking Event — MLA | July 24, 2025 | Elmwood Lawn Bowling Club

On a warm summer evening, the MLA welcomed over 50 legal professionals to its Women's Networking Event (attendance was sold out). The venue—Elmwood Lawn Bowling Club—provided an ideal outdoor setting, complete with picnic-style decor, light refreshments, and lively conversation under the evening sky.

Highlights & Flow of the Event

- **5:00 PM – Welcome / Opening Remarks**

The evening got off to a friendly start with brief remarks from Nicola (MLA organizing committee).

- **5:10 PM – Keynote Address by Associate Chief Justice LeRoy**

Justice LeRoy delivered an engaging keynote, drawing on her career journey—from criminal defence in London to senior roles in Ontario's court system. She touched on challenges and opportunities women face in law, and offered insight on leadership, resilience, and mentorship.



- **5:40 PM – Intro to Lawn Bowling & Networking**

After the keynote, attendees gathered for informal mingling. Nicola gave a short introduction to lawn bowling—enough to get people comfortable with the game.

- **6:20 PM – Lawn Bowling**

The lawn bowling portion allowed attendees to mingle in small groups while engaging in a relaxed, friendly competition. This activity removed the pressure of formal networking and encouraged natural conversation.

- **7:50 PM – Closing Remarks and Prize Draws**

Carolynn (on behalf of the committee) offered closing remarks. Several door prizes were awarded, and one attendee won the "Best Dressed" award.

Atmosphere & Takeaways

The event struck a balance between structure and spontaneity. The keynote set a thoughtful tone, and the lawn bowling gave people a low-stakes way to connect. Several women commented that the format helped them meet peers they might not otherwise have approached. The relaxed environment also prompted more authentic conversations about work-life integration, mentorship, leadership challenges, and overcoming imposter syndrome.

Many attendees expressed appreciation for MLA's effort to create a space specifically for women in law. Some suggested repeating the format (outdoors + light activity) in future years.

Thank you to our sponsors!

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Thank you to our committee members: Tahwila Husaini, Niola Circelli, Carolynn Conron, and Jesica Cacciavillani.

MLA Golf Tournament | August 13, 2025 | FireRock Golf Course

On August 13, 2025, more than 100 MLA members, colleagues, and friends came together at FireRock Golf Course for our annual MLA Golf Tournament. The day combined sunshine, friendly competition, and plenty of laughter, reminding us why this tradition remains a highlight of the MLA calendar.

A Full Day of Play and Connection

The tournament began with breakfast and a shotgun start that had every foursome teeing off at the same time. Whether you were chasing birdies or just hoping to stay out of the sand, the course provided opportunities for everyone to enjoy the game. Boxed lunches kept golfers energized, and dinner afterward gave members a chance to relax and share stories from the day.

Awards and Recognition

Prizes were handed out for top scores and on-course contests, with special recognition for longest drive and closest-to-the-pin. The room erupted in cheers as winners collected their prizes, and a few friendly rivalries were cemented for next year's rematch.

Building Community

More than just a tournament, the day served as a space for members across practice areas and career stages to connect. Many commented on how refreshing it was to spend time with colleagues outside of courtrooms and offices.

► Thank You to Our Sponsors

A heartfelt thank-you to our sponsors, whose support made the tournament possible:

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Thank you to our Committee

Thank you to Mark Simpson, James Zegers, Nicole Rogers, Shane Roberts, Theodore Madison, John Brennan, and Anita Osmani for organizing a seamless and memorable event.

We look forward to seeing you back on the greens next year. Until then, keep your swings smooth and your putts straight!

MLA September Networking Social | August 19, 2025 | Bear & Frankie's

On a warm evening in mid-August, MLA members gathered downtown at Bear & Frankie's (130 King St, London) for our Summer Networking Social. The event ran from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM.

The relaxed venue, ambient lighting, and casual food and drink set the tone for an evening where conversations flowed as freely as the beverages. Members and guests from across practice areas mingled—some catching up with old acquaintances, others meeting new faces from the local legal community.

What Happened

- Arrivals and greetings stretched across the first half-hour, giving attendees space to settle in.
- Conversations ranged from recent case law and regulatory changes to

lighter topics—summer vacations, practice challenges, and community updates.

- The event had no formal agenda or speakers, which many attendees appreciated: there was no pressure, only opportunity.
- As the evening progressed, groups shifted, laughs were shared, and connections deepened.

Why It Mattered

One of the recurring observations I heard: in a profession where we often interact through motions and formal settings, events like this remind us that there's an essential human side to our work. Breaking bread (or nibbling appetizers) together in a neutral space let people lower their guard, talk shop, and share stories.

For newer members, it was a chance to meet more established practitioners outside courtrooms. For longer-serving members, it was a chance to reconnect.



- Thank you to everyone who attended. As always, MLA's strength lies in its members—and evenings like this show it.

Special thank you to our sponsor:



MLA Annual Mentoring Dinner: Working Through Adversity | August 28, 2025 | Abruzzi

On August 28, MLA members gathered at Abruzzi for the Annual Mentoring Dinner under the theme "Working Through Adversity." The evening brought together newer lawyers (those in practice 10 years or less, as well as articling and summer students) alongside seasoned mentors for an evening of shared conversation and insight.

Highlights & Flow

- The evening opened with a warm welcome and orientation.
- Honourable Justice Duncan A. Grace delivered the keynote, drawing on his years on the bench and legal practice to reflect on resilience, ethical integrity, and navigating conflict.
- Attendees then rotated through small-group mentorship sessions. Each mentor led discussions around challenges in legal practice, stress management, decision-making under pressure, and maintaining professional values under adversity.

Atmosphere & Impact

The dinner offered more than a meal and conversation. It created a space where vulnerability could be expressed, questions could be asked, and experience could be passed on. Newer lawyers had a chance to hear stories of struggle and

recovery; mentors listened and offered perspective without pretense. Several attendees commented that the format—guided small groups, rotating mentors—made it easier to engage meaningfully. The evening also reinforced a core value of MLA: that professional growth isn't linear or solo, and that connections across experience levels matter.

Gratitude

Thank you to all mentors who volunteered their time, and to the sponsors whose support made this event possible. Mentors include: Jacqueline Fortner, Jacob Damstra, Maura Thompson, Rasha El-Tawil, James Zegers, Jake Aitcheson, The Honourable B.T. Granger, and Carolynn Conron.

Thank you also to the Mentoring Dinner Committee—Jake Aitcheson, Vanetia R, Tahwila Husani, and Jim Zegers—for organizing an event that offered both substance and community.

We look forward to carrying forward the conversations and insights from the dinner, and continuing to build a mentoring culture across the MLA membership.

Thank you to the following sponsors for their generous support of this event!

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Swearing-In of Justice Kettle | September 4, 2025 | The Library

On September 4, more than 130 people gathered at The Library to witness and celebrate the swearing-in of Associate Judge Sherry A. Kettle. The reception was hosted by the Middlesex Law Association.

The evening combined ceremonial dignity with warm collegiality. Members of the bar, judiciary, friends, and family came together to honour Justice Kettle's formal assumption of the bench.

Highlights & Tone

- The venue was full—attendance exceeded 130 guests, underlining the strong support from the legal community.
- The program included formal remarks, likely from senior judges, bar leaders, and MLA representatives, followed by conversations and networking during the reception.
- The tone was celebratory yet respectful, reflecting the weight of the occasion.
- Attendees ranged across generations and sectors of the profession, reinforcing that this was both a personal milestone and a communal event.

Significance & Reflection

Justice Kettle's appointment carries symbolic and real meaning for our community. Her background, professionalism, and service (including volunteer work with Children's Health Foundation and the Middlesex Law Association) have already made her a well-known figure in local circles.

[Ontario Newsroom](#)

► This swearing-in was more than a formal ritual: it was a reaffirmation that our profession values integrity, public service, and continuity. For many in attendance, the evening underscored how connected our legal community is, and how transitions like this ripple across courts, firms, and younger lawyers watching the bench evolve.

Thank you to everyone who came, and to MLA for organizing a reception that balanced solemnity and warmth. Feel free to review our LinkedIn for pictures of the event.

MLA September Networking Social | September 17, 2025 | Toboggan

On September 17, MLA members gathered at Toboggan Brewing Co. for our September Networking Social. The evening brought together lawyers from across practice areas in a casual, downtown setting that encouraged easy conversation over food and drinks.

The turnout was strong, with members appreciating the chance to reconnect after a busy start to the fall season. Some came directly from court, others from the office, and many stayed late into the evening as the conversations continued to flow.

The relaxed, come-as-you-are format allowed members to catch up with familiar faces and meet new colleagues in a way that felt both social and professional. Feedback during and after the event underscored that these informal gatherings help strengthen the MLA community just as much as our formal CPD programming.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and made the evening a success. We look forward to hosting more opportunities for members to connect throughout the fall.

Special thank you to our sponsor:



Health Law & Litigation Conference | September 18, 2025

On September 18, the MLA hosted the Health Law & Litigation Conference at The London Club, bringing together practitioners, academics, and in-house counsel to examine pressing issues in health law. (Co-chairs: Kimberly Knight and Danielle Douek.)

Program Highlights

- Practical Tips re: OHIP/Subrogated Claims and Costs — *Joni Dobson*
- Case Comment — *15-minute focused review of a recent decision*
- Causation: When Inferences Can Be Used if There Are Gaps in the Evidence — *Barb Legate*
- Trial Panel: Lessons Learned & War Stories — *Jill McCartney and Shauna Powell*
- Expert Evidence Reform — *Doug Wallace*

Key Themes

- Practical strategies for handling OHIP and subrogated claims, with attention to cost recovery issues.
- Emerging litigation challenges in medical malpractice, including when causation may be inferred despite evidentiary gaps.
- First-hand trial lessons from experienced counsel, with an emphasis on advocacy, risk management, and “what not to do.”
- Expert evidence reform and how evolving standards may reshape health law litigation.

Atmosphere & Engagement

The tone throughout was collegial yet probing. Attendees exchanged perspectives on strategy, regulatory challenges, and litigation tactics. Feedback highlighted the practical takeaways — from checklists on subrogated claims to insight on managing expert witnesses — alongside the chance to hear candid trial reflections from the panel.

Why It Matters

Health law sits at the intersection of legal, clinical, and regulatory practice. This conference reinforced that staying current is essential: liability risks shift quickly in medicine and institutional care.

For MLA members, the event strengthened competence in a niche area, expanded networks, and offered confidence-building strategies for health-related matters.

A sincere thank-you to all speakers, sponsors, and attendees for making this event a success.

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► 197th Fall Opening of the Courts & Bench and Bar Dinner | September 23, 2025 | Museum London

The 197th Fall Opening of the Courts & Bench and Bar Dinner was a remarkable start to the legal year. The evening began with a full procession from the courthouse to Museum London, with streets closed to traffic as robed justices and lawyers walked in unison. Even passersby stopped to ask what was happening, and the Attorney General later remarked how striking it was to look back and see the long line of robes filling the street.

In his keynote, Hon. Doug Downey covered a wide spectrum of developments: civil rules reform, a record number of judicial appointments during his tenure, and his commitment to expanding judicial capacity in London – where only two FTE justices had previously served. He also outlined his vision for “social hubs” housed in courthouses, bringing together justice and social services to address the root causes of crime. Many in attendance called it a genius model for improving access to justice.

Awards were presented to distinguished members of the bar:

- Access to Justice Award – *Cassandra DeMelo*
- Distinguished Service Award – *Joe Hoffer*
- Philanthropy Award – *Carolynn Conron*
- Rising Star Award – *Debbie Boswell*

These awards celebrate not only individual achievement, but the values that sustain our profession: accessibility, service, generosity, and renewal. Throughout the evening, the presence of the justices was a highlight – formal in the procession yet approachable and engaged during the dinner. Their participation underscored the strength of the bench–bar relationship in Middlesex.

The Opening of the Courts blended tradition with innovation: a ceremonial reaffirmation of our profession’s values and a forward-looking discussion about the future of justice in Ontario.

A special thank you to our sponsors:

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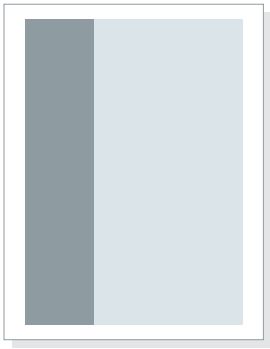
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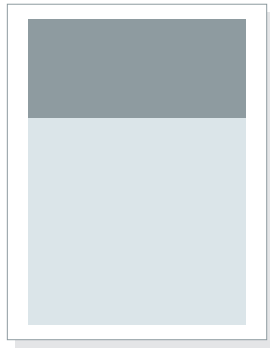
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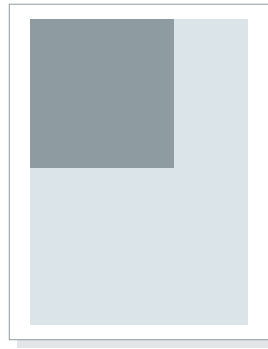
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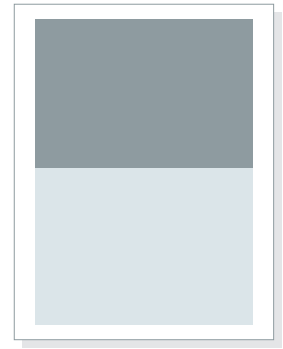
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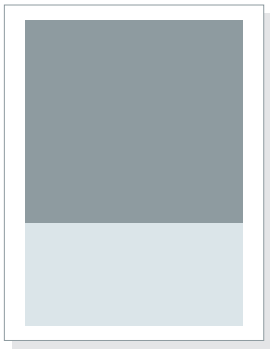
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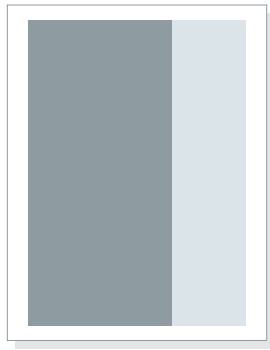
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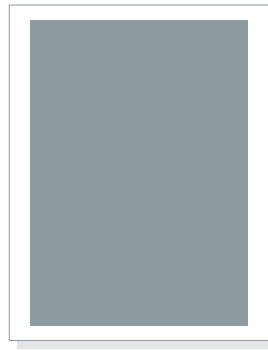
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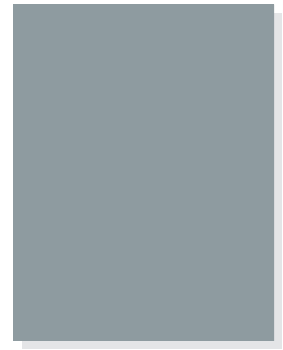
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