

The Essex Law Association (“ELA”) was founded over 125 years ago in 1884 and has represented the interest of its members since that time. It is one of the oldest professional associations in Canada and serves a current membership of over 600 lawyers in Windsor and Essex County. The Association is administered by an 18 member board of directors and it is my pleasure, privilege and honour to be the president of this excellent and dedicated group of individuals for this year.

The ELA operates one of the oldest county law libraries in Ontario for the benefit of its members, their staff, articling students, the judiciary, and court house staff. This is only one of the many roles and functions of the Association which include representing the interests of its members as part of various groups such as the County and District Law Presidents Association (“CDLPA”) and the Law Society of Upper Canada (“LSUC”). The association also works in conjunction with the local judiciary and the Province of Ontario to improve the functioning of the court system within Ontario and in the County of Essex for the benefit of all individuals in our community.

One of the most recent initiatives of the ELA was the launch of our new website with several features that were not included in the previous website. This improved website will provide both the members of the Association and the general public with the ability to use the website to a greater extent. This updated site will even allow any member of the Association or of the general public the ability to search for a lawyer using several selection criteria, including the area of practice of the lawyer. We welcome the public to this new tool and welcome their support of our members through the use of the website.

Although several members have been involved in the creation and maintenance of this new website, I wish to particularly thank Past President Janice Busch for all of her hard work in this respect. Without her assistance, persistence and work with the website designer this new tool would not have been possible. The ELA now enters the 21st century and becomes more relevant than ever to its members and the general public. We are positive that all members will see the value of the website and will make full use of it including accessing upcoming information about Continuing Legal Education programs that are available through the Association.

As all lawyers in Ontario are now aware, this is also the first year with a mandatory Continuing Professional Development (“CPD”) requirement implemented by the LSUC. All lawyers must now complete the required hours of substantive and ethical based programs during the year and we will strive to insure all of our members can meet their requirements through the programs offered by the ELA.

The ELA was honoured this year with the first ever attendance of the Justices of the Court of Appeal in Essex County. We were pleased to host 15 of the Justices for a very informative afternoon of roundtable discussions and an enjoyable dinner. I wish to express my gratitude to Past President Colleen Caza for organizing this excellent event that was attended by many of our members. The Association received many positive comments from both the Justices and our own members for the event.

One of the biggest issues currently confronting the profession is the lack of articling positions for new graduating students. Both the LSUC and CDLPA have indicated that this issue will be one of the most important for these organizations and they will be having consultation meetings throughout the Province to receive comments and suggestions from the profession. The current situation unfortunately leaves numerous law school graduates without the ability to meet their articling requirement for their call to the bar. The Association will continue to work with CDLPA and the LSUC with respect to this and many other issues throughout the year and will keep its members informed should there be any further developments.

I also wish to thank the staff at the law library for all of their work over the years and their continuing support and assistance to all of the members of the Association. Without their dedication and service none of the services provided by the Association would be possible. On behalf of all of the members of the Association I wish to express my gratitude to each of Doug, Kemala and Cathleen for their continuing work with our members.

In conclusion I would like to remind all lawyers in Windsor and Essex County that the Association can only survive and thrive through the involvement of individuals like each of you. Please consider getting involved in your Association to make a difference. Elections for board members are held every spring and I would encourage you to put your name forward for the Board of Directors. It is a great way for members of the local bar to meet other members and to contribute to your local Association and make a difference. I thank you for your support and look forward to meeting as many of the members as possible throughout the year at events sponsored by the Essex Law Association.

- Ilias Kiritsis, President of the Essex Law Association