

Doctor of Laws, honoris causa

February 23, 2001

Paul Binnie

Treasurer,

It is my pleasant duty to present to you and to this Convocation, the Honourable Mr. Justice William Ian Corneil Binnie, and request that you confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.

Called to the Bar in Ontario in 1967, he quickly displayed those talents which were to make him a leader of the litigation bar: the ability to isolate the key elements of a case, to bring the law to bear on those elements, and the skill to develop his argument in a clear, cogent and persuasive manner. During his years at the bar, he practised before all levels of court and administrative tribunals, arguing leading civil and constitutional cases before the Supreme Court of Canada and the International Court of Justice.

His judgment and legal analysis were in demand not only by private clients but by governments as well. He was Special Parliamentary Counsel to the Joint Senate and House of Commons Committee examining the Meech Lake Accord, and he advised the Government of Newfoundland respecting constitutional amendments to the Terms of Union.

From 1982 to 1986, as Associate Deputy Minister of Justice for Canada, he was responsible for all litigation involving the Crown in right of Canada, and advised the government on Charter and Aboriginal issues.

Throughout his career, his wit and his obvious enjoyment of the collegiality of the bar, combined with his abilities both as a litigator and legal scholar, firmly established him in the first rank of the legal profession in Canada. Mr. Justice Binnie,

Treasurer, has throughout his career, both as a practising lawyer, and since 1998 as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, demonstrated those traits of service and professionalism that we hold in high esteem, and I ask therefore that you bestow upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.