

## MINUTES OF SPECIAL CONVOCATION

Toronto – Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2009  
2:00 p.m.

Prior to Convocation, the Treasurer (W. A. Derry Millar) and benchers held a reception and luncheon for their guests at Osgoode Hall.

Following the luncheon, the Treasurer, benchers and their guests proceeded to Roy Thomson Hall for the Call to the Bar ceremonies of 307 candidates listed in the Report of the Director of Professional Development and Competence.

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## CONVOCATION WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 2:00 P.M.

A quorum of Convocation was present.

The body of the auditorium was occupied by the candidates and their guests.

The Treasurer asked all present to stand for the National Anthem sung by Keith Klassen.

The Treasurer welcomed the candidates and their guests.

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CONFERRING OF AN HONORARY DEGREE

Mr. Julian Porter, a representative of the Professional Development and Competence Committee introduced the Doctoral candidate Major General Richard Rohmer and read the following citation:

“Treasurer, may I present to you and this Convocation Major-General Richard Rohmer and request that you confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

Richard Rohmer – fighter pilot, lawyer, government advisor, arbitrator, mediator, and prolific author – is Canada’s most decorated citizen. He has dedicated his life to assisting his country and its people.

After serving in the RCAF during World War II, he turned his attention to law. Called to the Bar of Ontario in 1951, his legal career has been a distinguished one. In 1960, he was appointed Queen’s Counsel and in 1970, he was Called to the Bar of the Northwest Territories. He was Chair of the Ontario Royal Commission on Book Publishing and Counsel to the Robarts Royal Commission on Metro Toronto. In 1992, he formed the firm of Rohmer & Fenn specializing in aviation insurance law and land use.

Major General Richard Rohmer is most deserving of this honour and I request you, Sir, to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.”

The Treasurer admitted Major General Rohmer to the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

Major General Rohmer addressed the candidates and their guests.

“Justice Rosenberg; other distinguished members of the Ontario courts; Mr. Treasurer, Benchers; and all those new lawyers about to be called to the Bar.

My thanks to Julian Porter, Q.C., one of Canada’s leading and most distinguished counsel and litigators.

My short words and thoughts this afternoon are for the candidates for the Call to the Bar.

First, a few words about women lawyers and my envy about this grand group about to be called to the bar.

I was called to the bar at Osgoode Hall in June of 1951. A quick calculation will tell you that’s 58 years ago. In my class of that day – some one hundred and fifty souls – only 7 were women.

Today, one point of my envy is this. Of the approximately three hundred and six candidates I see before me, one hundred and thirty-seven are men and the happy majority – one hundred and sixty-nine – are women. What a wonderful, amazing, positive change in the gender complexion of the profession.

Furthermore, women in our judicial system are playing leading roles. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada is a woman who has with her on that bench three women, including that star jurist and my friend, the learned Justice Rosalie Abella.

The Ontario Court of Appeal has several women judges. The Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Justice is a woman. The Chief Justice of the provincial courts, the Ontario Court of Justice, is a woman.

Let me tell you why I envy you, each and every one of you. It’s envy in the first degree.

First of all, you are like birds leaving the nest fully fed with new knowledge, new legal principles – everything a fledgling lawyer should have – including that special barrister’s gown and the tabs you’re wearing.

I envy you because while you will be taking your law flight for the first time today, full of energy and “let’s get on with it,” I am in the process of finishing my very long flight in the superb profession of the law. I am heading for a soft landing because Father Time is causing me to run out of fuel, out of energy.

I just called the law a “superb profession.” That’s an understatement.

The legal profession knows no bounds as to where it can take you. Virtually every other profession puts its members in its own straightjacket. If you’re a medical doctor, a dentist, an engineer, a chartered accountant (to mention a few), your working life is usually confined to that profession.

But as a lawyer, you have an intellectual background that can take you anywhere. You can flourish in a big law firm or in your own little one. You can move into the corporate world or the academic scene. You can go to the bench – yes, I see several potential judges out there. I can see politicians, a prime minister, many cabinet ministers. I can even see a general or admiral or two in the military, and several authors of fiction and non-fiction works, even a few university chancellors or the chair of a Royal or not so Royal Commission. I can even see some of you as airline pilots – captains.

I tell you each and every one of you that you are about to be certified, you are about to enter the most challenging, the most universal, the best-by-far profession of all – the legal profession.

And, I repeat, I envy each and every one of you, because you are making your entrance at a time when technology is at an all-time high of achievement with all manner of new-fangled tools to assist you. The computer, the cell phone, the huge passenger jets that now link the world’s societies and the world of television is all encompassing with its flow of information, fact, opinion and, yes, entertainment. You can rack up a book of cases simply by massaging your search computer correctly.

In a few moments, you will be officially officers of the court. You will be responsible individuals in a nation that is growing rapidly, bringing with that growth huge social challenges that you will have to confront in the decades ahead of you. Huge challenges? Absolutely. Canada lets in over three hundred thousand new immigrants each year. Most of them flock to the big cities – about 100,000 to the Toronto area, as an example. What will you be doing to provide them with hospital and medical care and all the social safety nets that are part of our society? What about housing and education?

Those are but a few of the challenges that you as lawyers and national and community leaders will have to face as you spend your first decades as lawyers or as lawyers in whatever calling that turns you on.

Yes, I envy you deeply, because you will have enormous opportunities, countless opportunities, to influence the course of events, the course of significant events that will occur in this wonderful Canada of ours and in the international relationships our country enjoys throughout the world.

Always, always try to influence the course of events. As lawyers, each of you is now, as of this moment forward, in a superior position to do just that – influence the course of events.

I challenge you to do so for yourself, for your family, for your profession of law and for your magnificent and free homeland, Canada.

CALL TO THE BAR

Ms. Pawlitzka and Messrs. Gold, Schabas and Silverstein presented to the Treasurer the 307 candidates for the Call to the Bar as follows:

307 CANDIDATES FOR CALL TO THE BAR

(list of candidates in Convocation file)

The Treasurer conferred upon the candidates the degree of Barrister-at-law and called them to the Bar of Ontario.

The Treasurer addressed the new barristers.

CONVOCATION ADJOURNED

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Following Convocation a Special Sitting of the Court of Appeal for Ontario and the Superior Court of Justice convened, with the Honourable Justice Marc Rosenberg presiding.

The candidates were presented to Justice Rosenberg before whom they took the Oaths and acknowledged their signatures on the Rolls in the presence of the Court.

Justice Rosenberg then addressed the new barristers and solicitors.

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At the conclusion of the formal proceedings the Treasurer, benchers and guests returned to Osgoode Hall.

Confirmed in Convocation this 24<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2009

Treasurer