



News Release

Law Society meets with Grand Council Chief Madahbee to discuss Anishinabek perspectives on access to justice

Nipissing First Nation: For the first time in its 218-year history, Law Society representatives, led by Treasurer Janet E. Minor and Bencher Susan Hare, today met with Grand Council Chief Patrick *Wedaseh* Madahbee and other First Nation leaders on Anishinabek Nation territory to discuss First Nation perspectives on access to justice.

The meetings continue the important engagement that the Law Society began last November with an [historic meeting](#) with Ontario's First Nation leadership.

“We are here today to better understand justice issues from the perspective of Anishinabek communities and to see what additional supports they may require,” says Treasurer Minor.

“We recognize that First Nation, Métis and Inuit people may face unique access to justice challenges. The Law Society is reaching out to First Nation, Métis and Inuit leaders and citizens as a first step in renewing our Aboriginal Initiatives Strategy. We are working to build bridges and common understanding in the spirit of reconciliation,” she says.

Treasurer Minor and Bencher Hare met with Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee, Union of Ontario Indians (UOI) Social Services director Adrienne Pelletier, UOI political advisor Gary Dokis and UOI legal counsel Fred Bellefeuille and Jenny Restoule.

They also met with Nipissing First Nation Chief Marianna Couchie, counsellor Arnold May and senior staff members.

The meetings were followed by a meet and greet with Anishinabek lawyers and paralegals who practise in the North Bay area.

Future outreach meetings with other First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities are also planned to provide information about the role of the Law Society and to gain further understanding and input from those communities. For example, information will be available about how members of their communities may bring concerns about lawyers or paralegals to the Law Society's attention and how the Law Society may respond to concerns it receives.

The Law Society has largely completed the work set out in the [Final Report of the Aboriginal Bar Consultation](#) released in 2009. The report was the culmination of a four-year project to create a demographic profile of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Bar in Ontario, as well as canvass support for Law Society initiatives to enhance access to the profession and provide support for First Nation, Métis and Inuit members of the profession.

For more coverage see the [Gazette](#).

The Law Society regulates lawyers and paralegals in Ontario in the public interest. The Law Society has a mandate to protect the public interest, to maintain and advance the cause of justice and the rule of law, to facilitate access to justice for the people of Ontario and act in a timely, open and efficient manner.

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Media contact

Susan Tonkin, 416-947-7605, stonkin@lsuc.on.ca

Communications Advisor, The Law Society of Upper Canada

www.lsuc.on.ca

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