



## President's Report

Robert Hooper

The Hamilton Law Association since its inception in 1879 has been a strong and important part of the legal fabric of the Province of Ontario. I am humbled and honoured to serve as the 75<sup>th</sup> President of The Hamilton Law Association. As a transplanted east coast boy, I am delighted to now call Hamilton, “home” and have my career squarely planted within Hamilton.

Hamilton has a beautiful downtown core, fantastic surroundings including the rail trail and many waterfalls, and most importantly, on a day-to-day basis for me, one of the most collegial and helpful bars anywhere on the planet.

I have had the privilege of being involved with FOLA directly or indirectly over the years and continue to hear songs of praise for the practicing lawyers of Hamilton.

In order to prepare for the task of the President of The Hamilton Law Association, I was given the opportunity to attend the Bar Leadership Institute, a division of the American Bar Association, which trains local state and national bar presidents. I spent four days in Chicago learning about the duties of a bar president. It would be an understatement to say it was an incredible experience. I gained helpful insight into running board meetings, the various governance structures of a law association, the interplay between being a volunteer and the paid members of the staff, to name a few. There was an incredible sharing of information. I learned a

lot about taking positions on issues dealing with the media, and other stakeholders on a day-to-day basis.

The take-home resource was a 20-page booklet which takes a President through the issues that they should consider in the months leading up to their presidency and starting their presidency. I am happy to share the resources with any member of the Hamilton Bar who is moving into a presidency of a volunteer organization.

There are several hot topics at the Law Society presently. They have recently weighed in and made changes to the *Rules of Professional Conduct* as it relates to advertising and referral fees. This will have a significant impact on numerous lawyers in this jurisdiction. They have also recently passed hefty motion as it relates to racialization.

Although I was not able to attend the FOLA Plenary in Ottawa in May, it had a fulsome agenda. The issue of real estate standardization was a key issue. The future of county libraries and LibraryCo is a live issue at this time.

I am the youngest of a family of six to a single mother from Blacks Harbour, New Brunswick, a small fishing village. After an undergrad where I majored in basketball and soccer, I went off to law school at the University of Ottawa. Realizing that

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# HLA Journal

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**CONTRIBUTION DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE**

July 1, 2017

my French skills were not sufficient to maintain a practice in Ottawa, I found my way to Toronto to spend some time at Blake Cassels Graydon. My law firm had more employees than my home town's population.

I decided to draw a circle from the middle of Toronto with a 100 kilometre radius. As a result, I interviewed for jobs in Barrie, Oshawa, and Hamilton.

I was very fortunate when Dan Rosenkrantz took pity on me and gave me a job as an associate at Sullivan Festeryga. I then moved to the other side of the equation, doing plaintiffs work with Morris Law Group. On March 1, 2001, some 16 years ago, I hung up a shingle at the then Go Train Station on Hunter Street.

I have continued a practice on Hughson Street North, across from the Spice Factory, for the last 13-plus years.

In my year as President, I would like to ensure that I maintain the stability that those before me have set as a standard. Also, I would like to bridge some of the generational gap between the new lawyers and more seasoned lawyers. One of the ways I am hopeful to do so is to have an after party at the conclusion of The Hamilton Law Association's annual dinner. I would also like to embark on a conversation with members of The Hamilton Law Association about their fondest memories of The Hamilton Law Association and what they see on the horizon in the next five years. Vice President Pat Mackesy and I will lead a strategic planning session next spring where we will, with the staff and trustees, chart the next 5-year course.

The Hamilton Law Association exists to enable its members to become successful, respected and fulfilled in their profession. The leadership and management of our excellent

Executive Director, Rebecca Bentham, the work of our dedicated staff and the guidance of our trustees is instrumental in the fulfillment of The Hamilton Law Association's mission and its success.

I would love it if any member of the Association has any suggestions, ideas, criticisms, or thoughts about how the Association can fulfill their mission and vision, that you contact me for a coffee and I would be happy to meet.

Please don't forget that throughout this coming year there will be many fantastic CPD events and social events, including dinners and seminars, that should not be missed. Of course, this is an opportunity to see old friends and make new ones amongst our Bar that will nourish your spirit and enhance your practice in Hamilton.

I look forward to meeting and getting to know many of you over the next 12 months. Please come and introduce yourself at any of The Hamilton Law Association's great functions. ■

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