



**The Law Society
of Manitoba**

INCORPORATED 1877 | INCORPORÉ EN 1877

MINUTES

Benchers

Date:	Thursday, May 14, 2026	
Time:	12:30 pm	
Location:	Law Society Offices and via Videoconference	
Present:	Kyle Dear, President Ken Mandzuik, KC, Vice-President Gerri Wiebe, KC, Past President Carmen Nedohin, Officer-at-Large Kassy Baker Kathrine Basarab Gordon Daman Serena Ehrmantraut Patrick Fortier Jason Gisser Sharyne Hamm Simon Jack	Teresa Jaenen Dr. Richard Jochelson Timothy Kurbis Mathieu Lafrenière Rhea Majewski Maria Mitousis Kirsten Nynych Ian Scarth Trent Sholdice Leah Unruh Joshua Weinstein Deanna Wilson
Regrets:	Tehani Jainarine	Penny Piper
Guests:	Erin Wilcott	
Staff:	Leah Kosokowsky Alissa Schacter Sandra Alleyne Noelia Bernardo Pat Bourbonnais Tana Christianson Eileen Derksen	Joan Holmstrom Jamie Jurczak Kelly Kintop Sharon Kravetsky Sean Rivera Leah Shore Amy Tung

Chris Donaldson
Linda Fontaine

Betta Wishart
Simon Young

1.0 PRESIDENT'S WELCOME AND TREATY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ms Dear, President, called the meeting to order at 12:35 pm. Benchers, guests and staff were welcomed to the meeting, including newly elected benchers Ms Mitousis and Mr. Scarth. Treaty 1, 3 and 5 lands were acknowledged with gratitude.

2.0 IN MEMORIAM

Benchers observed a moment of silence for Leon Nicholas Mercury, KC, Garfield Vernon Brickman, KC, and Melvin Myers, KC.

3.0 CONSENT AGENDA

3.1 Minutes of March 19, 2026 Meeting

Benchers considered the minutes of the March 19, 2026 bencher meeting. It was requested that the minutes be amended at agenda item 10.2 Appointment of Election Scrutineers to record the abstention of Ms Hamm and Mr. Lafrenière from the vote taken on this matter.

3.2 Minutes of April 10, 2026 Special Meeting

Benchers considered the minutes of the April 10, 2026 special bencher meeting.

3.3 Report of the Complaints Investigation Committee

Benchers received for information the report of the Complaints Investigation Committee.

Motion: That the consent agenda items be approved as presented, subject to the requested amendment to the minutes of March 19, 2026.

MOVED: Mr. Lafrenière
Seconded: Ms Hamm
Abstention: Ms Mitousis, Mr. Scarth
Carried.

4.0 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

4.1 President's Report

Bencher received for information Ms Dear's report dated May 6, 2026.

4.2 Chief Executive Officer's Report

Bencher received for information Ms Kosokowsky's report dated May 5, 2026. Bencher were advised that on April 2, 2026 the Supreme Court of Canada denied three applications for leave to appeal filed by a suspended member. On April 8, 2026 the Manitoba Court of Appeal denied the request of this member for leave to appeal an order for costs. The member, who has not been declared a vexatious litigant by the Court of King's Bench, has now commenced a new proceeding in which current and former Law Society staff have been named defendants. The Law Society has retained counsel to act on this matter.

4.3 2025-2028 Strategic Plan Activities Update – May 2026

Bencher received for information the Strategic Plan Activities Update dated May 4, 2026. Ms Schacter provided an update on the Access to Justice Initiative, advising that completion of Phase I (engagement/consultation) will be announced at the Access to Justice Forum being held at the University of Manitoba on May 21 and 22, 2026. The *What We Heard* report, which is being translated into French, will be shared with the organizations who participated in the consultations and will also be posted on the Society's website.

5.0 NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms Wiebe referred benchers to the report of the Nominating Committee dated April 30, 2026. Congratulations were extended to Mr. Daman, Mr. Fortier, Ms Jaenen, Ms Jainarine, Ms Nedohin and Ms Wilson on their reappointments as lay benchers for the 2026 – 2028 term. The committee will provide its recommendations regarding the filling of the four appointed practising lawyer bencher positions at the special meeting of the benchers scheduled for May 28, 2026.

5.1 Officer-at-Large Appointment

Benchers were asked to endorse the recommendation of the Nominating Committee to appoint Mr. Fortier to fill the Officer-at-Large position.

Motion: That Mr. Fortier be appointed to serve in the role of Officer-at-Large for a term of two years, effective May 14, 2026.

MOVED: Ms Wiebe
Seconded: Ms Basarab
Abstention: Mr. Fortier
Carried.

5.2 Awarding of Life Bencher Status to Kyle Dear

Mr. Mandzuik thanked Ms Dear for the contributions she had made to the Law Society during her tenure as President.

Motion: That, having concluded her term as President of the Law Society of Manitoba, Ms Dear be appointed a Life Bencher.

MOVED: Ms Basarab
Seconded: Ms Hamm
Abstention: Ms Dear
Carried.

Mr. Mandzuik assumed the role of President and chaired the balance of the meeting. Ms Hamm assumed the role of Vice-President.

5.3 Thank You to Past President Gerri Wiebe, KC

Although Ms Wiebe had not yet concluded her work as chairperson of the Nominating Committee, she was recognized for the many contributions she had made to the Society during her tenure as a bencher and executive member of the Law Society.

5.4 Thank You to Outgoing Officer-at-Large, Carmen Nedohin

Ms Nedohin was thanked for the contributions she had made to the Law Society and to the Executive Committee during her tenure as Officer-at-Large.

6.0 DISCUSSION/DECISION

6.1 Oaths - Translation

Benchers were invited to approve in final form the English and French versions of the new Barrister and Solicitor Oath and the Bencher Oath of Office.

Motion: That the Barrister and Solicitor Oath and the Bencher Oath of Office be approved in both English and French as presented.

MOVED: Mr. Gisser
Seconded: Ms Unruh
Carried unanimously.

6.2 Complaints Review Commissioner

Benchers considered a memorandum prepared by Ms Kosokowsky, dated April 30, 2026, which recommended the reappointment of Mr. Vowell as Complaints Review Commissioner for a third term of two years.

Motion: That Mr. Vowell's appointment as Complaints Review Commissioner be renewed for a term of two years.

MOVED: Mr. Kurbis
Seconded: Ms Ehrmantraut
Carried unanimously.

7.0 MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

7.1 National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

Benchers considered a memorandum prepared by Ms Kosokowsky, dated May 2, 2026, which provided information regarding a capital campaign launched by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation for the construction of a permanent location to house the Centre on the campus of the University of Manitoba. Benchers were invited to consider whether as part of its commitment to truth and reconciliation, the Law Society might use a portion of the surplus held in the Education and Competence Fund to make a financial contribution to the NCTR.

Benchers expressed interest in providing a donation earmarked for educational endeavours as it would align with TRC Call to Action #27, the Society's Strategic Plan and Governance Policies, and also with the award which the Law Society would like to establish in recognition of the late Hon. Murray Sinclair. Benchers recommended that staff discuss with the NCTR whether they would be agreeable to receiving a contribution from the Law Society which would be allocated for educational purposes, whether paid as a lump sum or by instalments.

It was recommended that the Manitoba Law Foundation be informed of the Society's intention to use a portion of its statutory grant for this purpose and that in communications to the profession it be made clear that this funding would not be taken from practising fees paid by members. It was also suggested that other law societies be encouraged to make a donation to the Centre.

Motion: That benchers agree in principal with the Law Society approaching the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to discuss making a financial contribution to the organization which supports its educational endeavours.

MOVED: Ms Unruh
Seconded: Ms Mitousis
Carried unanimously.

Benchers were advised that the Executive will report back on the discussions with the NCTR and at that time benchers can confirm the amount and purpose of the donation to be made.

7.2 2026 Awards

Benchers considered a memorandum from the Richard J. Scott Award Selection Committee, dated April 30, 2026, which: (i) reported on the selection of Professor John Irvine as recipient of the 2026 Richard J. Scott Award; and (ii) recommended that the Executive Committee recommend to benchers that Bjorn Christianson, KC, be the inaugural recipient of the Law Society Medal. Benchers were advised that the Executive Committee has endorsed this recommendation.

Motion: That benchers endorse the recommendation of the Executive Committee to award Bjorn Christianson, KC, the Law Society Medal.

MOVED: Mr. Kurbis
Seconded: Ms Unruh
Abstention: Ms Hamm
Carried.

7.3 Rule of Law Campaign Update

Benchers received for information Ms Kosokowsky's memorandum, dated May 1, 2026, which reported on the results of Phase II of the Rule of Law Campaign and outlined the activities planned for Phase III which include a survey of Canadian youth, focus groups and a virtual summit scheduled for June 23, 2026. Information collected from these activities will inform the development and delivery of an education curriculum for Canada's youth on civics and the rule of law. Benchers were advised that this initiative has proven to be very successful, garnering national and international interest.

8.0 COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1 Equity Committee

Ms Unruh provided an oral report on the meeting of the Equity Committee held on April 30, 2026. At this meeting the committee (i) discussed extending eligibility to run for and vote in benchers elections to members who have maintained non-practising status for three years or less; and (ii) received information on the part-time practising fees pilot project and the mandatory minimum compensation initiative for articling students. Benchers were advised that the committee is awaiting receipt of additional information to finalize its recommendations regarding election eligibility.

9.0 MONITORING REPORTS

9.1 Investment Policy Changes and Compliance – March 31, 2026

Benchers considered a monitoring report, dated May 1, 2026, which (i) reported on structural adjustments to the Society's investment portfolio; (ii) reported on amendments to the Society's Investment Policies; and (iii) confirmed that investments in both the Reserve Fund and the Office Staff Pension Plan Fund remain in compliance with investment guidelines as of March 31, 2026.

9.2 Complaints Resolution Department

Benchers considered a monitoring report, dated May 7, 2026, which reported on operations within the Complaints Resolution Department and outlined strategies which are being adopted to address the substantial increase in complaints which are meritless or outside of its jurisdiction, or involve unreasonable complainant conduct. These strategies include: modifications to the website and FAQs to better inform the public; implementation of a 50-page limit on attachments and supporting materials; a respectful conduct acknowledgement; modifications to the Complaint Help Form; improved public accessibility to file and pursue complaints; and, development of an internal policy and staff training on how to deal with unreasonable complainant conduct. Benchers were advised that other law societies are experiencing these same problems and that the use of artificial intelligence by complainants is making it increasingly difficult to close complaints in a timely manner. It was suggested that staff explore other forums, such as Access to Justice Week, to educate the public about the Law Society's complaint process and the scope of its jurisdiction.

10.0 OTHER BUSINESS

With regard to the May 2026 CPLED report included as agenda item 12.3, benchers wondered whether additional information could be provided concerning the 20 candidates from Manitoba who had failed the February 2026 Capstone Evaluations, and specifically with regard to the students who had been completing their articles at firms within the criminal defence bar. Benchers were advised that while this failure rate appeared to be high, on average it is consistent with other years. Information received from the Director of CPLED indicated that the failures were the result of a variety of factors, including insufficient

preparation time, cheating, previous examination failures in other jurisdictions, and extenuating circumstances. Additionally, research and writing skills were identified as a predominant weakness among this cohort.

Benchers were advised that staff will be meeting with members of the Canadian Defence Lawyers Association of Manitoba to ascertain whether firms had assigned work to their students during the Capstone period which interfered with their studies for the evaluations.

11.0 IN CAMERA

With the exception of Ms Kosokowsky, Ms Schacter, Ms Bourbonnais and Mr. Rivera, all guests and staff were excused from the balance of the meeting at 1:55 pm.

Motion: That the meeting proceed *in camera*.

MOVED: Ms Nedohin
Seconded: Mr. Gisser
Carried unanimously.

11.1 Fair Registration in Regulated Professions Office – NCA Language Assessment

Benchers discussed the Law Society's compliance with certain registration practices under the *Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act* arising from recent amendments to the NCA language assessment policy.

Motion: That the meeting proceed out of camera.

MOVED: Mr. Lafrenière
Seconded: Mr. Scarth
Carried unanimously.

12.0 FOR INFORMATION

Benchers considered the materials provided for information.

There being no further business, Mr Mandzuik called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 pm.

MOVED: Ms Basarab