

A message from Ken Warren, KC

2022–2023 President of the Law Society of Alberta

Last year was another year of growth for the Law Society of Alberta as the legal profession and society continued to evolve after the pandemic. It was a privilege to serve as President given the accelerated change that the legal profession has undergone over these last few years. I am proud to say that despite the rapid transformation of the profession and the challenges that it has brought, our strategic work has always remained a key priority and we have meaningfully progressed our strategic goals in a variety of areas, while also creating efficiencies in our regulatory processes.

One of our strategic goals, Competence & Wellness, has always held a special interest for me, and we made significant strides in this area over the course of 2022. There were several large projects that came to fruition, three of which particularly stand out in my mind:

- publishing the Professional Development Profile, which was the first step in the redevelopment of our improved continuing professional development program;
- reaching the deadline for completion of the Indigenous cultural competency education, The Path (Law Society of Alberta) – Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada, with almost 100 per cent engagement; and
- hosting our first-ever Well-Being in Practice Summit.

Reaching the deadline for The Path (Law Society of Alberta) was a particularly significant milestone. This was the first time a specific course was mandated for all active Alberta lawyers, and I want to commend the profession for their participation in this shared professional development requirement. The decision to mandate this foundational competence training for all active lawyers in Alberta was integral to the Law Society's commitment to responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #27, which calls upon Canadian law societies to ensure all lawyers receive Indigenous Cultural Competency Training.

Our first-ever Well-Being in Practice Summit was also a particular highlight. In collaboration with the Alberta Lawyers' Assistance Society, the Alberta Lawyers Indemnity Association and the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) – Alberta Branch, the event was a two-day virtual conference on taking care of yourself, your workplace, and your profession. The featured seminars highlighted important conversations, valuable learnings and helpful resources in support of personal and professional wellness.

This Summit was timely as we came out of the pandemic. Now more than ever, I hear consistently from Alberta lawyers about the realities of burn out and chronic stress. As we continue to live through the lasting impacts of COVID-19, focusing on lawyer well-being, sharing the struggles that many lawyers experience and working together towards a solution are crucial to the sustainability of our profession.

To that end, the research report from the [National Study on the Wellness of Legal Professionals in Canada](#) was also released in late 2022. Undertaken by a research team at the Université de Sherbrooke led by Dr. Nathalie Cadieux, with funding from the Federation of Law Societies of Canada (FLSC) and the CBA, the study filled a critical gap in knowledge about the mental health of Canadian legal professionals. The Law Society of Alberta worked alongside the FLSC

and Dr. Cadieux to communicate the results of the study which highlighted the importance of national initiatives to increase our understanding. We will review the recommendations made in the report and determine the appropriate next steps.

As we look forward to our next strategic plan commencing in 2024, I am excited to see the continuation of our established direction and the new projects to come. I want to express my sincere gratitude to my fellow Benchers and the Law Society teams I had the pleasure of working alongside. Their intelligence, insight and integrity led the way for thoughtful and impactful decision-making. I really enjoyed our time together – my only regret is that I cannot serve longer.

I look forward to supporting my successors for years to come as they continue to serve the public interest in our role as regulator.

Sincerely,

Ken Warren, KC

President, Law Society of Alberta