

**IN THE MATTER OF PART 3 OF THE
LEGAL PROFESSION ACT, RSA 2000, c. L-8**

AND

**IN THE MATTER OF A HEARING REGARDING
THE CONDUCT OF CORI MERCIER
A MEMBER OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF ALBERTA**

Single Bench Hearing Committee

Sandra Petersson, KC – Chair

Appearances

Henrietta Falasinnu – Counsel for the Law Society of Alberta

Mona Duckett, KC – Counsel for Cori Mercier

Hearing Date

October 3, 2025

Hearing Location

Virtual Hearing

HEARING COMMITTEE REPORT - SANCTION

Overview

1. Cori Mercier was admitted as a member of the Law Society of Alberta (LSA) in July 2013 and her primary area of practice is family law.
2. On March 29, 2022 a complaint was made to the LSA regarding Ms. Mercier's conduct on a family matter, specifically about language Ms. Mercier had used towards the other parties' counsel.
3. The LSA conducted an investigation of the complaint which resulted in a referral to the Conduct Committee. On June 18, 2024, the Conduct Committee directed two citations to be dealt with at a hearing.
4. Eventually, on June 20, 2025, Ms. Mercier executed a Statement of Admitted Facts, Exhibits and Admission of Guilt (Agreed Statement).
5. On July 9, 2025 LSA counsel and Ms. Mercier's counsel made a joint application to the Pre-Hearing Conference (PHC) Chair to withdraw one citation and amend the other

citation. The PHC Chair granted the application. The one citation that is the subject of this hearing is:

- 1) It is alleged that Ms. Mercier used language and made comments about other parties' counsel that were inflammatory, offensive and unprofessional, and that such conduct is deserving of sanction.
6. On July 15, 2025, the Conduct Committee found the Agreed Statement to be acceptable. Accordingly, pursuant to section 60(4) of the *Legal Profession Act (Act)*, it is deemed to be a finding of this Hearing Committee (Committee) that Ms. Mercier's conduct is deserving of sanction in relation to the amended citation (set out above).
7. On October 3, 2025, the Committee convened a hearing into the appropriate sanction for Ms. Mercier's conduct.
8. After reviewing all of the evidence and exhibits, and hearing the submissions of the LSA and Ms. Mercier, for the reasons set out below, the Committee has determined that a reprimand and a fine of \$5,000.00 is an appropriate sanction. In addition, costs of \$4,975.16 were ordered to be paid by Ms. Mercier. The costs and fine are to be paid by November 15, 2026.

Preliminary Matters

9. There were no objections to the constitution of the Committee or its jurisdiction and a private hearing was not requested, so a public hearing into the appropriate sanction proceeded.

Agreed Statement of Facts/Background

10. After the commencement of proceedings in relation to Ms. Mercier's conduct, Ms. Mercier submitted the Agreed Statement. The Conduct Committee found the Agreed Statement acceptable on July 15, 2025 with relation to the one citation which was amended. Pursuant to section 60(4) of the *Act*, the admission of guilt in the Agreed Statement is deemed to be a finding by this Committee that Ms. Mercier's conduct is deserving of sanction under section 49 of the *Act*.
11. As provided by section 60(3) of the *Act*, once the Agreed Statement has been accepted by the Conduct Committee, the hearing into the appropriate sanction is to be conducted by a single Benchler. As a result, I was appointed to conduct the sanction hearing.
12. The facts are as follows. Ms. Mercier was appointed as counsel for the child (K) in an ongoing family matter. The family matter involved dispute between K's grandparents and K's mother over guardianship and parenting time and access. AA represented grandparents in the matter. The matter was contentious. Eventually, both Ms. Mercier and AA filed applications to have the other removed as counsel in the matter.

13. In a letter dated July 15, 2022 to the Justice in the matter, Ms. Mercier made the following statements about AA:
- a. "...Removing counsel for the child will only serve to benefit the grandparents and [AA] for their bad deeds, misrepresentations, bath faith conduct and abuse of the legal system."
 - b. "... [AA] is a self-interested party that is entrenched in her own beliefs and opinions and is adamant that she is right... [AA] is too involved with the matter, and it has clouded her judgment."
 - c. "... [AA] is blinded by her obsession and agenda to have this child removed from the care of his mother and to prevent and or harm the bond. [AA]'s actions are personal, and she is not able to be objective in her representations to the court."
 - d. "We respectfully, submit that [AA] is driven by the conflict, and she had made public remarks that are extremely concerning... [AA] has made comments and videos that are posted online that have caused complaints to be made about her conduct."
 - e. "[AA] is unable to separate her emotions from her professional obligations. [AA] has cried in court alleging her dog pushed her down the stairs and had an alleged anxiety attack on another occasion..."
 - f. "... [AA]'s emotional outrage at the hearing in February before the Honourable Justice [S] was of extreme concern. As her conduct cannot be reflected in writing via the transcripts the court had to restraint [sic] on multiple occasions [AA]'s outrage."
14. When a complaint was made about Ms. Mercier's conduct to the LSA, Ms. Mercier provided the following comments about AA in her response to the LSA:

a. MENTAL HEALTH OF [AA]

It is known amongst family lawyers that [AA] has a mental illness and she has confirmed this Herself in court on the record. Respectfully, in this instance the mental illness of [AA] impairs her ability to practice law in an ethical manner. [AA] tries to use her personal issues to her advantage in court in order to leverage misinformation and gain litigation advantages.

...

- b. [AA] since 2018 has made substantial efforts to make my personal and professional life difficult as [AA] has a personal hatred for single biological mothers due to her own personal circumstances. [AA] is a step-mother herself and thinks that she is superior and caters her practice to harassing biological mothers. [AA] is jaded in the way she practices law as she alleges that her husband suffered through his own personal issues with the mother of his children and [AA] proclaims to have 'saved him'. This is not the reality of the situation [AA] singles out biological mothers and seeks to have their children taken because she mistakenly thinks she is making matters fair.

Submissions on Sanction and Costs

15. A joint submission on sanction was provided to the Committee consisting of a reprimand and a fine of \$5,000.00. Counsel also agreed to Ms. Mercier paying costs of \$4,975.16.
16. Counsel for the LSA and for Ms. Mercier provided careful submissions about the facts, summarized applicable case law and submitted that the proposed sanction was reasonable.

Decision on Sanction and Costs

17. Counsel for the LSA and Ms. Mercier confirmed their understanding that the Committee is not bound by a joint submission on sanction. That said, a Committee is required to give significant deference to a joint submission and should not depart from a joint submission on sanction unless it would bring the administration of justice into disrepute or is otherwise contrary to the public interest.
18. Further, the fundamental purpose of sanction is to ensure the public is protected from acts of professional misconduct and to maintain public confidence and the integrity of the profession. These fundamental purposes are critical to the independence of the profession and the proper functioning of the administration of justice.
19. Ms. Mercier's conduct was serious. The communication to the Justice about AA was particularly troubling. Respect and courtesy to all persons with whom the lawyer has dealings with is expected of all lawyers. When certain matters become contentious, it is the lawyers involved that are counted upon to keep things civil.
20. The Committee notes that Ms. Mercier, with the assistance of her counsel, was cooperative and took accountability for her conduct. The approach taken by both Ms. Mercier and the LSA in dealing with this matter through the Agreed Statement and admission of guilt also avoided an unnecessary contested hearing, witness inconvenience, and process costs.

21. LSA counsel presented several cases in support of the joint submission on sanction. The three LSA cases¹ include conduct where there are inappropriate or offensive words directed at another lawyer were most helpful. In those three cases the lawyers were reprimanded and fined which is in line with what was asked of the Committee.
22. Taking all of the above into account, the Committee accepts the joint submission on sanction of a reprimand and a fine of \$5,000.00. The Committee also orders the costs, as agreed to by the parties, in the amount of \$4,975.16. Both the fine and the costs will be to be paid in full by November 15, 2026.
23. Ms. Mercier was issued an oral reprimand by the Committee at the hearing as follows:

With respect to the reprimand, the hearing guide of the Law Society requires that a hearing committee take a purposeful approach to sanctioning a member who has been found, or admitted guilt, to conduct deserving of sanction. The fundamental purpose of sanctioning is the protection of the reputation and standing of the legal profession generally.

Ms. Mercier, I acknowledge and appreciate your cooperation with the Law Society leading up to today, and resolving this complaint by admitting guilt and by proceeding with a single-Bencher hearing. Your admission has permitted this citation to be resolved on a more efficient basis, which is not just a benefit to you, but is also a benefit to the public and the Law Society.

Ms. Mercier, you are an experienced lawyer and have practiced for over ten years. It is clear to me that you have a long and principled career, and have made significant contributions to the administration of justice in Alberta.

Your career has been exemplary until this incident. I expect that facing this citation now at this stage of your career is a disappointment. You had admitted guilt on one citation. That citation is serious. And while there were no serious consequences to the public and there was no loss, there was a complaint and a significant investigation.

In this matter, you put your professional reputation and integrity at risk, and in making these comments today, and in expressing this reprimand, I urge you to constantly have in your mind that your

¹ *Law Society of Alberta v. Smith*, 2024 ABLS 12 (aff'd by Appeal Committee at 2025 ABLS 13), *Law Society of Alberta v. Nguyen* (2016 ABLS 24), *Law Society of Alberta v. Lee*, 2009 ABLS 32.

practice and the integrity required of all of us, as members of the profession, and the diligence that we must all demonstrate to protect our client's interests, and to maintain our reputation, and the reputation of this profession.

Concluding Matters

24. There shall be no Notice to the Profession or referral to the Attorney General.
25. Tabs A and B of Exhibit 5 will remain private and Exhibit 6 will require additional redactions for protection of privacy before it is made public. The remaining exhibits, other hearing materials, and this report will be available for public inspection, including the provision of copies of exhibits for a reasonable copy fee, except that identifying information in relation to persons other than Ms. Mercier will be redacted and further redactions will be made to preserve client confidentiality and solicitor-client privilege (Rule 98(3)).

Dated December 2, 2025.

Sandra Petersson, KC