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Year in Review 2022-2023

In 2022-2023, the Supreme Court Advocacy Institute completed its sixteenth year of activities, during which it provided counsel appearing before the Supreme Court of Canada with rigorous practice sessions. The Institute's advocacy program increases the effectiveness and quality of advocacy by simulating for counsel the experience of oral argument before the highest court. A panel of seasoned Supreme Court advocates hears counsel's argument and offers candid and constructive feedback to assist counsel in making their oral submissions effective and helpful to the Court.

Demand for the Institute's advocacy program remains high. Over the past year, the Institute provided free, non-partisan advocacy sessions in 74% of cases before the Court. Participation rates were especially high in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, where nearly every appeal benefitted from the Institute's advocacy program. The Institute's advocacy program was used for a wide range of appeals in civil and criminal matters, by counsel working in private practice and in government, and by seasoned advocates as well as by those appearing before the Court for the first time.

Sixty-four (64) lawyers donated their time as advocacy advisors for the Institute, offering advice to counsel based on their own experience before the Court. Many participated in more than one session, illustrating once again the dedication of our advocacy advisors to the bar, to the public, and to access to justice. The Institute continues to receive extremely appreciative feedback from counsel who have used the advocacy program. Counsel are grateful for the time and effort the advisors devote to the sessions and report that the mock hearings are a highly valuable aspect of their preparation.

The Institute's advocacy sessions are organized by session coordinators in each province. For their invaluable assistance in delivering the Institute's services, we thank Aubin Calvert (British Columbia), Loni da Costa (Alberta), Shoshanna Paul (Saskatchewan), Sacha Paul (Manitoba), Erin Dann (Ontario: Toronto), Colleen Bauman (Ontario: Ottawa), Fran ois Goyer (Quebec), and Michael Marin (Atlantic provinces).

A number of Institute members were appointed to the bench in the course of the 2022-2023 year. We congratulate the Institute's co-founder and former advocacy advisor Justice Owen M. Rees (Ontario Superior Court of Justice), as well as former advocacy advisors Justice Joan M. Barrett (Ontario Superior Court of Justice), Justice Patrick Ouellet (Quebec Superior Court), Justice Anne Turley (Federal Court of Canada), Justice Faisal Mirza (Ontario Superior Court of Justice), and former Manitoba Regional Committee member and advocacy

advisor Justice Sarah Inness (Manitoba Court of King's Bench). We extend our congratulations to former session coordinator for Alberta, Justice April D. Grosse, on her elevation to the Alberta Court of Appeal.

For their appointments to the Order of Canada, we congratulate honorary chairperson the Honourable Clément Gascon, C.C., and advocacy advisor Robert J. Sharpe, O.C.

After years of service as a member of the roster of advocacy advisors for British Columbia, Robin Elliott has retired with our gratitude.

We express our thanks to Julie G. Hopkins for her years of service as session coordinator for Alberta and welcome Loni da Costa as her successor.

As part of its continuing legal education mandate, the Institute's co-executive director Grégoire Webber spoke at the Canadian Bar Association's Constitutional and Human Rights Law Symposium in April 2023 and at the Cambridge Lectures organized by the Canadian Institute for Advanced Legal Studies in July 2023. Co-executive director Shantona Chaudhury chaired The Advocates' Society's 2022 Spring Symposium, including moderating a panel on the relationship between written and oral advocacy in the argument of an appeal.

We are proud to report that Shantona received the Douglas K. Laidlaw Medal for Excellence in Advocacy from The Advocates' Society in June 2023.

We estimate that in 2022-2023 the Institute's advocacy advisors, committee members, and executive directors contributed approximately \$560,000 in *pro bono* services to the benefit of parties and their counsel before the Supreme Court of Canada, bringing the Institute's total *pro bono* contribution since 2006 to approximately \$8.22 million.

The Institute's ability to provide its advocacy program to all counsel without charge is made possible by the generous funding provided by the Advocates' Society, the American College of Trial Lawyers (Canadian Foundation), the Barreau du Québec, the Canadian Bar Association, the Law Foundation of Ontario, and the Ontario Bar Association Foundation. The willingness of all participants to donate their time on a *pro bono* basis allows the Institute to maintain low-cost operations. We thank Torys LLP for continuing to provide the Institute with *pro bono* services in support of our charitable status.

Finally, our joy in recounting another successful year is tempered by sadness as we mourn the passing of the Honourable Louis Lebel, C.C., former Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and former honorary chairperson with the Institute.