

The pro bono movement in Alberta and beyond

PBLA visits Fort McMurray

In March 2011, Canadian Bar Association – Alberta Branch, Alberta Lawyers' Assistance Society, and PBLA co-hosted a reception in Fort McMurray to provide an opportunity for local lawyers to learn about these organizations, and to network with colleagues in the legal profession. The reception was held in conjunction with the CBA's Albertans and the Justice System Townhall Meeting and was attended by several lawyers as well as The Honourable Judge Stephanie A. Cleary, Provincial Court of Alberta (Fort McMurray).

PBLA also met with key stakeholders to gain an understanding of the legal landscape of the community. PBLA is looking into the possibility of offering some type of pro bono legal service to citizens in the Fort McMurray area.

PBLA invited to Chile for international conference

In April, Gillian Marriott, QC, travelled to Santiago, Chile, at the invitation of the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice Initiatives (New York City Bar Association) to participate in the Conference which was focused on the development and enhancement of the pro bono movement and its role in furthering access to justice in the "Americas." The Pro Bono & The Legal Profession: Strengthening Access to Justice Conference engaged leaders of Bar Associations, individuals from governments, lawyers, judges, and members of non-governmental organizations in lively discussions of these issues over a two day period. Another day was devoted to exploring the role of women in the legal profession.

The Conference was very well attended and we learned that we in Canada are not alone in facing the access to justice issue. It is reassuring to know that there are like organizations who are working on programs and initiatives to address the issue and who are willing to not only share their knowledge and best practices but are so enthusiastic, engaged, and passionate about what they do that you cannot help but feel and believe that the links of the "pro bono chain" will strengthen access to justice in all our countries.

Notice of PBLA Annual Meeting

Monday, June 20, 2011

4:30 to 6 pm (Program start 4:45)

The Fairmont Palliser Hotel

Turner Valley Room, 133 - 9 Ave SW Calgary, Alberta

Join us for refreshments, a brief meeting and a celebration of 2010 milestones. Everyone is welcome.

Please RSVP by June 15 to Myra Skerrett:
myra.skerrett@pbla.ca 403-541-4840

In preparation for the conference, a Canada Report was prepared by Dr. Lesley Jacobs (Director, York Centre for Public Policy and Law, York University & the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice) which highlights topics such as structure and composition of the legal profession, legal needs of Canadians, and public attitudes towards government and law. For this report and full conference details visit www.probono2011.com/en ■



Pablo Gerrerro, President, Fundación Pro Bono (Chile); Nikki Gershbain, PBSC National Director; Gillian D. Marriott, QC, Executive Director PBLA; Antonia E. Stolper, Chair, Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice (NYC).

~ Congratulations ~

The Honourable Rodney A. Jerke, associate and partner with Davidson & Williams LLP, was appointed Judge of the Court of Queen's Bench in Lethbridge, in April 2011. Mr Justice Jerke was admitted to the Alberta Bar in 1980 and appointed Queen's Counsel in 1998. He was the first President of Pro Bono Law Alberta from 2007-2009 and President of the Law Society of Alberta from 2010-2011. Mr Justice Jerke has served as Chair of the PBLA Advisory Board since 2007 and has been a tireless supporter of PBLA's work for many years.

Suzanne Alexander-Smith of Chapman Riebeck of Red Deer was recognized with the Distinguished Service Award for Pro Bono Legal Service in January 2011. Suzanne was a member of the original working group that established PBLA and has continually served on the Board since 2007. Her support over the years to both PBLA and the Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic is invaluable.

Mary Lynn Dorsey was recently awarded the McKillop Award for Community Service for her leadership in providing access to justice for low income Calgarians in her role as Executive Director for more than ten years. Mary Lynn created the Homeless Outreach Project to help over 3000 Calgarians replace lost or stolen identity cards each year. Visit www.clg.ab.ca for more information about Calgary Legal Guidance programs and services.