



News Release



New Board of Directors named to Canadian online legal research service

October 19, 2010

The Federation of Law Societies of Canada is pleased to announce the appointment of a new board of directors to the Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII), the Federation's free online search engine for Canadian legislation and case law.

The Council of the Federation has also approved the nomination of Sonia Poulin of Alberta as Chair of the new CanLII Board. The appointment of the new Board was done in conjunction with a review and update of CanLII's governance structure, a project initiated in 2008.

CANLII is a non-profit organization created and funded by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada, on behalf of its 14 member law societies. It was launched in 2000 on a test basis to provide efficient and free access to the growing number of judicial decisions and legislative documents available on the internet. In 2001, the Council of the Federation approved a proposal to make CANLII a permanent, not-for-profit service to support the legal profession in the performance of its duties while providing the public with permanent open and free access to the legal heritage of all Canadian jurisdictions.

CanLII is also a member of the Free Access to Law Movement, which includes the primary stakeholders involved in free, open publication of law throughout the world.

In April 2010, the Federation of Law Societies of Canada also signed a new five year agreement with with CanLII's principal technology service provider, Lexum Inc., the successor corporation of the LexUM laboratory of the Université de Montréal.

The CanLII web site currently features 14 legislative databases and 166 court and tribunal databases, representing almost a million cases. The web site registers nearly 23,000 visits per day, and 2,500 new cases are added every week.

"Over the last 10 years, CanLII has been an outstanding achievement of Canada's law societies" says John Campion, President of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada.

"CanLII has benefited from crucial contributions from federal, provincial and territorial governments and their official publishers who have all made their legislative texts available."

"With a new Board of Directors and a renewed relationship with Lexum, we have taken important steps to ensure the long-term viability of the CanLII internet service and the free access to Canadian primary legal information not only for the legal profession, but for the public at large" adds CanLII President Darrel Pink.

Access to the CanLII service is available at www.canlii.org, or through the web site of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada www.flsc.ca.

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The Federation of Law Societies of Canada is the national coordinating body of the 14 law societies mandated by provincial and territorial law to regulate Canada's 95,000 lawyers, Quebec's 3,500 notaries and 2,500 Ontario paralegals in the public interest. It is a leading voice on issues of national and international importance relating to the administration of justice and the rule of the law.

For more information on the Federation, please visit our web site at www.flsc.ca

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The following individuals are members of the new Board of Directors of the Canadian Legal Information Institute:

Johanne Blenkin, LL.B., MLS, of Vancouver, B.C. is the Executive Director of the B.C. Courthouse Library Society, which has a library system of 30 branches. Prior to joining the society, she was a practicing lawyer in civil litigation and family law. She is a member of the Lawyer Education Advisory Committee of the Law Society of British Columbia, and was a member of the executive of the Canadian Association of Law Libraries from 2006-2008.

Martin Felsky, PhD, JD, of Oakville, Ontario has worked with more than 100 law firms, corporate and government law departments as legal technology advisor. He has also been an advisor to courts in Nova Scotia and Manitoba on the use of technology in civil litigation, and on rules relating to electronic discovery and production. He has been a member of the Judges Technology Advisory Committee of the Canadian Judicial Council since it was created in 1987.

Dr. Michael Geist, LL.B., LL.M., of Ottawa, Ontario is the Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce Law at the University of Ottawa. He has also been an Associate Professor at the U of O for more than 12 years. He is the author of "Internet Law in Canada", and is a syndicated columnist in more than a half dozen online and print publications. He is also the Editor-in-Chief of two Butterworths publications, "The Canadian Privacy Law Review" and "Internet and E-commerce Law in Canada".

Charmian Harvey, B.A., of Westmount, Quebec has worked in the publishing field for almost 20 years. Since 2005 she has served as Executive Director of Totalmedia, a subsidiary of the Chagnon Foundation. The mission of the Foundation is to contribute to the improvement of health through poverty and disease prevention. Prior to joining Totalmedia, she worked in legal publishing, leading the migration from print to electronic publishing for a major legal publisher.

Diana Miles, LL.B., of Oakville, Ontario is a senior executive and lawyer with extensive management experience in the not-for-profit and professional services sectors. She is presently the Director of Professional Development and Competence for the Law Society of Upper Canada, and a member of the Chief Justice of Ontario's Advisory Committee on Professionalism. Prior to joining the law society, she was the Chief Operating Officer of a major Canadian law firm.

Darrel Pink, LL.B., of Halifax, Nova Scotia is the Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society. He is also the current President of CanLII, and has served on the executive since 2002. He is a regular lecturer on professional responsibility at Dalhousie Law School (now Schulich School of Law). This past year, he spent six months on a consultancy with the Tanganyika Law Society in Tanzania, assisting in efforts to strengthen their capacity in governance and regulation. He is also a member of the Board for the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice.

Sonia Poulin, MLIS, of Edmonton, Alberta is Director of Alberta Law Libraries, a network of 51 law libraries of Alberta Justice and the Law Society of Alberta. She also collaboratively oversees Law Information Centres, a new initiative of Alberta Justice to provide information, practical assistance and referrals to self-represented litigants. She has worked in the private, academic and government sectors in five provinces in both official languages and in both common and civil law.