

# *The Advocates' Society*

## **For Immediate Release**

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Toronto

### **THE ADVOCATES' SOCIETY ANNOUNCES INSTITUTE FOR CIVILITY & PROFESSIONALISM**

The Honourable Dennis O'Connor, Associate Chief Justice of Ontario, will serve as honorary chair of The Advocates' Society Institute for Civility & Professionalism, which will provide opportunities for training and mentorship to the legal profession in Ontario. This initiative follows a call for a renewed emphasis on civility by the Honourable Coulter A. Osborne, Q.C., in his *Civil Justice Reform Project: Summary of Findings & Recommendations*.

Michael Eizenga, president of The Advocates' Society, will unveil plans for the Institute to more than 1,000 members at the Society's annual End of Term Dinner on June 11, 2008 at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel. The Society's 3,800 members include many of the province's top trial lawyers and judges.

"Civility amongst those entrusted with the administration of justice is central to its effectiveness and to the public's confidence in that system," said Associate Chief Justice O'Connor. "I am honoured to chair this important undertaking launched by The Advocates' Society." Joining him on the advisory council are Mr. Eizenga of Siskinds LLP, John Callaghan of Gowling, Lafleur Henderson LLP, Kimberly Morris of Woolgar VanWiechen Ketcheson Ducoffe LLP, and Bonnie Tough of Tough & Podrebarac LLP.

"The promotion of civility and professionalism has been a mission of The Advocates' Society since it was established more than 40 years ago," said Michael Eizenga. "In 2000, a symposium to discuss ways of promoting civility was convened by then-president Ronald Slaght, Q.C., and culminated in the publication of the "Principles of Civility for Advocates," which are quoted regularly by the judiciary and have been distributed across Canada, in the U.S., and as far as Brazil."

The Institute will host annual workshops designed to foster civility, and The Advocates' Society will incorporate principles of civility and professionalism throughout its educational curricula. A video will be produced and made available to firms and associations to facilitate discussion, education and mentorship.

"Civility is not just about being polite. At its core, it is about respect -- for the system of justice, for the other players in the system, for the other voice in the conflict," said Michael Eizenga.

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*Encl: Terms of Reference*