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## Year in Review 2018-2019

In 2018-2019, the Supreme Court Advocacy Institute completed its twelfth year of activities, during which it continued to provide counsel appearing before the Supreme Court of Canada with rigorous practice sessions. The Institute's advocacy program aims to increase 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 continues to be high. Over the past year, the Institute provided free, non-partisan advocacy sessions in 67% of cases before the Court. Participation rates were particularly high in Ontario (where 90% of appeals benefitted from the Institute's services), Quebec (where 66% of appeals benefitted from the Institute's services), and British Columbia (where 71% of appeals benefitted from the Institute's services). The Institute's advocacy program was used for a wide range of appeals in civil and criminal matters, by counsel working in private practice as well as in government, and by seasoned advocates as well as first-time counsel before the Court.

Sixty-nine (69) 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 note 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 Mila Shah (British Columbia), Julie G. Hopkins (Alberta), Sacha Paul (Manitoba), Colleen Bauman (Ontario: Ottawa), Erin Dann (Ontario: Toronto), François Goyer and Pierre-Jérôme Bouchard (Quebec), and Jula Hughes (Atlantic provinces).

In pursuit of the Institute's mandate for continuing legal education, Executive Director Shantona Chaudhury discussed the evolution of the Supreme Court of Canada over the last half-century at a symposium entitled *Are Canadian Institutions Fit for Purpose? The Evolution of Canada's Federal Institutions over the Past 50 Years* hosted on May 10, 2019 by the Parliamentary Internship

Programme.

A number of Institute members were appointed to the bench in the course of the 2018-2019 year. At the risk of omission, we congratulate former advocacy advisors Justice Kevin Feth (Alberta Court of Queen's Bench), Justice Melanie Hayes-Richards (Provincial Court of Alberta), Justice Mahmud Jamal (Ontario Court of Appeal), Justice Charles LeBlond (New Brunswick Court of Appeal) and Justice Benjamin Zarnett (Ontario Court of Appeal).

We congratulate outgoing session coordinator Jula Hughes on her appointment as Dean of Law at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, Lakehead University, and thank her for her work in promoting the work of the Institute in Atlantic Canada.

The Institute mourns the passing of David Scott, Q.C., a long-time advocacy advisor in Ottawa.

We welcome Shoshanna Paul as the new session coordinator for Saskatchewan and Michael Marin as the incoming session coordinator for Atlantic Canada.

We estimate that in the 2018-2019 year, the Institute's advocacy advisors, committee members, and executive directors contributed approximately \$561,000 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 \$5.63 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 Canadian Bar Association, the Law Foundation of Ontario, and the Ontario Bar Association Foundation. Thanks to the willingness of all participants to donate their time on a *pro bono* basis, the Institute maintains low-cost operations. We thank Torys LLP for continuing to provide the Institute with *pro bono* services in support of our charitable status.