

2012-2013 ANNUAL REPORT

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In 2012-2013, the Supreme Court Advocacy Institute completed its sixth Supreme Court of Canada term, during which it continued to provide counsel appearing for argument before the Court with rigorous practice sessions. The Institute's advocacy program aims to increase the effectiveness and quality of advocacy before the Court by simulating for counsel the experience of oral argument before the highest court. A panel of seasoned Supreme Court advocates listens to counsel's argument and offers candid and constructive feedback to help maximize counsel's opportunity to present informative and effective oral submissions.

During the 2012-2013 year, the Institute provided free, non-partisan advocacy sessions in approximately 55% of cases before the Supreme Court of Canada, an important increase over 47% of cases the previous year. Counsel from both government and private practice used the Institute's advocacy program in a wide range of civil and criminal appeals. Counsel making use of the Institute over the past year included seasoned advocates as well as first time counsel before the Court. Over the course of the year, the Institute provided advocacy sessions in 56% of appeals from British Columbia, 57% from Alberta, 67% from Saskatchewan, 85% from Ontario, 55% from Quebec, and 17% from the Atlantic provinces.

Fifty-nine (59) lawyers donated their time as advocacy advisors for their colleagues, offering advice based on their own experience before the Court. Many participated in more than one session, illustrating the commitment of our advocacy advisors to the bar and to the public. The Institute has expanded its rosters in select regions to accommodate the increasing demand for its advocacy program.

Important changes within the Institute took place during the past year. We were delighted to welcome the Honourable Marie Deschamps as an Honorary Chairperson following her retirement from the Court. In addition, the Institute expanded its services to include Manitoba and Saskatchewan, thus achieving a presence in every province. We welcome E. W. Olson, Q.C. and Robert Leurer, Q.C. as regional chairpersons for Manitoba and Saskatchewan, respectively, and thank them for their important leadership in developing the Institute's services in their provinces. Also, Mike Feder, advocacy advisor on the roster for British Columbia, assumed the important role of advocacy session coordinator for that province.

We estimate that since 2006, the Institute's advocacy advisors, committee members, and executive directors have collectively contributed over \$2,390,000 of *pro bono* services to the benefit of parties and their counsel before the Supreme Court of Canada. We continue to receive positive feedback from counsel who have used the Institute's advocacy program on the level of preparation of our advisors for practice sessions.

The Institute will be seeking additional funding from its generous partners in the course of the forthcoming year. Thanks to the willingness of all members to donate their time on a *pro bono* basis, the Institute maintains low-cost operations. We thank Torys LLP for providing the Institute with *pro bono* services in support of our charitable status.