

2007-2008 ANNUAL REPORT

The Supreme Court Advocacy Institute has completed its first full Supreme Court of Canada term. During the 2007-2008 term, the Institute provided advocacy sessions for approximately 20% of cases before the Court. Counsel making use of the Institute included seasoned and first time advocates before the Court, from government and private practice, in both civil and criminal appeals. Counsel in each of the four provinces where the Institute offers its program sought to use the service. During some Court sessions, the Institute organized practice panels for up to 75% of cases from a given province. As to the forthcoming Supreme Court of Canada year, requests for practice panels for the autumn Court session already exceed those of the past year.

In the course of the 2007-2008 year, the Institute's advocacy program expanded into Alberta and our CLE program was further developed by making available online key advocacy articles on oral and written advocacy. Most recently, two former justices of the Supreme Court of Canada have joined the Institute as Honorary Chairpersons: the Honourable Charles Gonthier and the Honourable John Major. We welcome them and look forward to working with them to expand the reach of the Institute's activities.

The Institute remains in a good financial position. Effective March 23, 2008, the Canada Revenue Agency granted the Institute charitable status. We are grateful to Suzanne Coté, Pierre Martel, and Pierre-Louis Le Saunier of Stikeman Elliott LLP, who made this possible.

Over 25 lawyers donated their time as advocacy advisors for their colleagues, offering them advice based on their own experience before the Court. Several participated in more than one session, illustrating once again the commitment of lawyers to the bar and to the public. The testimonials from counsel who have used the Institute's service confirm the seriousness with which our advisors devote themselves to assisting their colleagues. On behalf of the National and Regional committees we extend to them our warm thanks.