



MAX EISEN:

The LSO presented a degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa (LLD) to author, speaker, Holocaust survivor and passionate educator Tibor "Max" Eisen in recognition of his outstanding achievements toward the cause of justice. He was born into an Orthodox Jewish family with two brothers and a baby sister in Moldava, Czechoslovakia. When he was 10 years old, Hungary occupied Slovakia. In 1944, his family was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau where his two younger brothers, baby sister, parents and extended family were murdered in gas chambers. As a result of a brutal injury caused by an SS guard, Max was taken to a hospital where he had become too sick to work and was slated for extermination, but was befriended by a doctor. That friendship and demonstration of humanity allowed Max as a young boy to survive overwhelming odds, the concentration camps and the 13 day "death march" in January 1945 to Mauthausen and a further 3 day march to Ebensee. He was liberated on May 6, 1945 to begin a long painful journey of healing and finally immigration to Canada in 1949 to begin a business and have his own extended family. Max testified in Germany in 2015 and 2016, to bear witness to the horrors of Auschwitz at the trial of two former guards who were convicted at their trials. He has dedicated his life to Holocaust education around the world.

His memoirs *By Chance Alone*, recipient of the Canada Reads Award, is a must read detailing his courage, resilience and determination to become a concentration camp survivor and a remarkable Canadian. Max in his unique way, including expressing gratitude for those who helped him survive and flourish, has continued to shine a bright light on some of the darkest days of our generation.

Max

encouraged all of us in the following biblical words "Justice, Justice You Shall Pursue".

The spellbinding webcast presentation should be available at LSO.ca in about a week.

LSO BUDGET 2021:

As a result of prudent financial planning perhaps forced on us by our ravaged profession and economy, Convocation has passed a budget intended to maintain Law Society stability. Much more work needs to be done to focus on the core obligations to protect the public interest and ensure a continuation of vibrant legal services. Projected total expenses of approximately \$129 million exceeds total revenue of about \$119 million. Don't be alarmed by that shortfall because the LSO does not consider that \$10 million to be a deficit. The shortfall is said to be illusory as long as the Lawyer General Fund balance is used "to mitigate" any 2021 fee increases for Lawyers and the Paralegal General Fund balance is similarly used. The good news for lawyers is that our annual fee has been reduced to \$1873. (about 9% less than last year) and paralegal fees have been reduced to \$964. (about 4% less than last year). In this COVID world, not surprisingly, the LSO fee revenues are down by about 15% but overall expenses have only been reduced by 7.5%. For our fees we get self-governing regulatory oversight, the Practice Management Helpline, Member Assistance Program and library facilities.

LIBRARY BUDGET 2021:

LiRN the successor to LibraryCo receives grants made to the County Libraries. Its overall budget

continues to decline by about 10% with the big libraries facing larger cuts than the smaller ones. In this COVID world the value of electronic access to library material is self evident but requires a solid technology infrastructure to serve the profession. In 2021, lawyers will contribute \$159.00 each to LiRN. Paralegals, for historic reasons that may need reconsideration if their scope of practice changes, do not contribute to the operation of the libraries.

COVID RESPONSE RELIEF FOR 2021:

Recognizing the financial stress faced by lawyers and paralegals, Convocation has decided to help by a deferral program available hopefully through a simple application process. Those in practice since 2018 or earlier, in firms of 5 or less having gross income reductions of more than 50% will be eligible to defer 2021 annual fees to March 31, 2022. Those licensed from 2019 to 2021 must have gross income from all sources in 2020 of less than \$50,000. In other words the LSO is only helping with cash flow to assist us to continue in practice and avoid near-term suspension for non-payment of fees. You will be able to read the fine print when posted on the LSO website but the piper still expects to be paid - in time. If you are not working or are on parental leave, report that change of status to be eligible to pay in the 25% fee category.

CORRECTION -- WITH APOLOGIES TO CONVOCATION AS I REPORTED THIS INCORRECTLY IN OCTOBER:

LSO FEE EXEMPTIONS - CONSIDERED IN NOVEMBER

In October Convocation revisited its August approval in principle removing the previous Law Society fee exemption for those who still practice law in Ontario after more than 50 years. The Committee reconsidered the original botched debate and decision after reviewing the numerous letters delivered by lawyers.

In the result, existing Life Members have been grandparented so they retain the honorary fee exemption first granted in 1959. But those achieving the 50 year milestone as of January 1, 2021 are out of luck and will be required to pay fees if they choose to retain their membership.

But there are choices for those simply over 65.

If you have reached that age and remain in practice, you must pay to play. No fee exemption is available.

However, a new fee category has been coined for those over 65 who no longer practice law or provide legal services but want to preserve the honour of retaining their license. That will be possible by paying a reduced fee of 10 per cent of the annual fee for practitioners. Lawyers approved for this category will continue to receive all Law Society services and be permitted to provide pro bono services as set out in the by-laws. A motion brought by Benchers Desgranges and Fagan during the Budget debate, to reduce the fee to 5%, in line with most other Canadian jurisdictions, supported by the Retired Law Officers of the Crown and others, was defeated.

Benchers again resisted the encouragement "to do the right thing... ..please."

So if a licensee over 65 does not want to pay the 10 per cent fee they will now be able to surrender their license and be listed on the LSO site as "license surrendered-retired" which is intended to be an improvement over the current nomenclature "license surrendered". No further fee payment is required once a license is surrendered. Those who do so will not be entitled to the valuable resources provided through the Member Assistance Program.

I am obliged to those who pointed out my error. I trust this is now accurate and more understandable to readers. To review the full report see:

<https://lawsocietyontario.azureedge.net/media/lso/media/about/convocation/2020/convocation-october-2020-professional-regulation-committee-report.pdf>

STRATEGIC EFFICIENCY:

March 31 will become a harmonized deadline for Law Society filings and payments. However, December 31 will remain the reporting date for reporting and CPD credits.

DATES TO NOTE:

Check the Law Society website to find links to the following celebratory events:

Law Society Awards Ceremony:	December 8, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.
Welcome to the Professions: channel)	December 9 and 10 2020 at 5:30 p.m. (register in advance or view it on the LSO YouTube
Deadline for Human Rights Award nominations:	December 31, 2020
Deadline for 2021 Law Society Award nominations:	January 20, 2021 (See the LSO website for more information)
Law Society Licensee update:	January 28, 2021
Deadline for payment of Annual Fees and filings:	March 31, 2021

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