



The Advocates' Society
La Société des plaideurs

Brian J. Gover, President

bgover@stockwoods.ca

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VIA EMAIL

Kathleen Flynn Peterson
Robins Kaplan LLP
800 LaSalle Avenue, Suite 2800
Minneapolis, MN 55402

John Day
The Law Offices of John Day, PC
5141 Virginia Way, Suite 270
Brentwood, TN 37027

Dear Kathleen and John:

RE: Mentoring Task Force

I write in relation to the Special Edition of eBulletin received on February 6, 2019, in which your Task Force sought, among other things, materials relating to State, Province or local Bar Association programs that train trial lawyers. In addition to being a Fellow of the College, I am currently the President of The Advocates' Society. Established in 1963 as a not-for-profit association, The Advocates' Society has over 6,000 members throughout Canada. Its mandate includes offering training programs for lawyers (especially the learning-by-doing kind), promoting collegiality and mentoring and acting as the voice of Canada's litigation bar in interacting with governments and courts on matters that affect access to justice, the administration of justice and the practice of law by advocates.

We have noted that your Task Force is charged with preparing a White Paper on "best practices" in the training and mentoring of trial lawyers. To assist you in your work, enclosed please find our Society's Guide to Mentoring, last revised in 2017.

But I also write for another, broader purpose. At The Advocates' Society, we accept President Leon's message (delivered in his keynote address at our Fall Convention last November) "that it is an obligation of senior trial counsel to mentor, sponsor and train young lawyers and give them opportunities: (1) so that they can get meaningful trial experience; and (2) so that they can get the same or at least similar opportunities to those that many of us had as young lawyers who wanted to become trial lawyers."

While we share the College's concern about the vanishing trial phenomenon and the attendant loss of litigation skills, we also consider that mentoring is an important and challenging issue when viewed through a diversity lens. In our view, it is incumbent upon senior litigators to reach out to and mentor junior lawyers whose backgrounds may be very different from their own in order to improve the opportunities for lawyers from different communities. We are also concerned that in the #MeToo era, senior male litigators will be concerned about taking an active role in mentoring junior female lawyers.

We at The Advocates' Society are interested in collaborating with the College in connection with the College's important work on establishing "best practices" for mentoring. If your Task Force is interested in such a collaboration, I would be pleased to hear from you.

Yours very truly,

Brian Gover
BG/sjb

Enclosure

c. Jeffrey S. Leon
Vicki White