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2014

PARALEGAL BENCHER ELECTION

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Education

- * Laurentian University.
- Political Science/Law (Juri)
- * Brock University
- Public Administration
- * University of London, England
- Law (LL.B.)

Vocation

- * Started in private practice in 1992 with a range of legal services from bankruptcy to wills.
- * Began franchising paralegal offices in 1995 eventually operating in ten locations.
- * In my working life I have had a plethora of positions including factory labourer, retail sales, restaurant server, driving instructor, paralegal instructor, TV and voice-over actor.

Regulating non-lawyers to provide legal services is a bold initiative and unique in the world. Paralegals in Ontario are/will be setting the standard throughout the country and internationally. Other jurisdictions will look to us as a model. Our representatives will help shape how our profession is seen by lawyers and the public. Many eyes will be watching. We have to make this work!

So this election is a pivotal event for us particularly as a new profession and while I dislike talking about myself I have too much to offer as a candidate not to. I put myself forward as having the academic background and practical experience to be effective and articulate representing all licensed paralegals whether it be those employed or in private practice, newly licensed or 'grandfathered', or in the GTA or spread throughout the province.

Over many years I have developed an informed and considered vision of what we should try to do both in theory and in practice and why. I can articulate that vision in a clear and cogent way that speaks to both the 'heart' and the 'mind' of our profession and us as legal professionals. The public should see us as above reproach and think of us first for representation because of our expertise and professionalism. But with all the changes and new licensees public sees the market as 'volatile' and confidence is jeopardized.

So... increase educational standards. Law courses should be tough. Allow practice only in areas certified. In time, we will be seen as specialists by the public and eventually even by the Ontario BAR. Certification would mean more available 'jobs' because one 'generalist' wouldn't be allowed to do the job of a number of specialists.

Although counter-intuitive, longer mentoring periods with commensurate accreditation would make more placements available because mentors find it easier to 'work-in' a long placement than a short one. Longer is better for students anyway.

PSO ratification and minimum \$10.00/m dues is a priority. The PSO is our professional association and it is in the public interest to have a well-funded association.