



**Law Society
of Saskatchewan**

2020 Annual Report – President’s Message

2020 certainly wasn’t the year we expected. The pandemic caused upheaval in our personal and work lives and in our families and communities. We spent a good part of the year finding ways to cope with the changes COVID-19 required us to make and, of course, we’re still coping. We persevered, nonetheless, and I think most of us found some lasting good came out of this unwelcome experience.

Along the way, we discovered a level of resilience, creativity and capacity to adapt that surprised many of us. The Benchers and other volunteers, and particularly the Law Society staff, made early adjustments in March and April to ensure the work of the Law Society proceeded without interruption.

From the Benchers’ perspective, the most significant change was our inability to gather in-person for Convocations and committee meetings. However, with the tremendous support we count on from the staff, we were able to quickly develop the skills and marshal the technology required to conduct our business virtually. While this presented challenges at times, we learned we could not just survive, but could create efficiencies and improve board governance. We got better at this as we did it more, and it seems unlikely we’ll ever return entirely to our old way of doing board business.

A quick mention of a couple of the Law Society’s initiatives that we advanced in 2020. We continue to work towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Legal Services Task Team that would see persons other than lawyers provide limited legal services to a greater extent than currently allowed. This initiative is largely in the hands of the Law Society staff at this stage, but with the participation and oversight of the Future of Legal Services Committee and the additional periodic oversight of the Benchers as a whole.

Equity and diversity continue to be values of importance to the Law Society. One example of this is the ongoing work of the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Group, which was formed in 2019 as a means to gain advice from Indigenous members of the legal community on the Law Society’s response to Call to Action 27 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which indirectly calls on law societies to ensure lawyers receive appropriate cultural competency training. The advisory group also provides advice generally on issues within the mandate of the Law Society affecting Indigenous people in Saskatchewan.



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Benchers devote a great deal of volunteer time to the work of the Law Society, but one meaningful compensation for this is the opportunity to work with a lot of wonderful people. I am grateful to all of these people for their commitment and their many contributions.

I'm grateful to Tim Brown and the staff at the Law Society for all of the support they gave me in my role as president. The past year demonstrated in a new way that we have an exceptionally dedicated and talented administration.

I also want to thank the many members of the legal community who support the work of the Law Society as volunteers.

Finally, I am grateful to my fellow Benchers, past and present. The work of the Benchers is often complex and challenging. Like all good boards, we bring a diversity of perspectives to the board table along with a commitment to work together to carry out the Law Society's mandate, always in the public interest. It's been a privilege to work with such fine individuals and I'm proud to have served as the Law Society president.

Gerald Tegart, Q.C.