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February 28, 2025

The Honourable Doug Downey
Attorney General of Ontario
McMurtry-Scott Building
720 Bay Street, 11th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2S9

Dear Minister Downey:

Re: Annual Report to the Attorney General

Pursuant to section 51.10.1(4) of the *Courts of Justice Act*, I am pleased to provide my annual report respecting the educational programs at the Ontario Court of Justice for the 2024 calendar year.

The Ontario Court of Justice strives to develop and maintain professional competence and social awareness, and encourage personal growth, through its Education Plan for all judges. Our Continuing Education Plan can be viewed at [Continuing Education Plan for Judges](#).

Judges attend annual programs created by the Ontario Court of Justice, as well as other education programs presented by organizations and associations such as the National Judicial Institute and the Canadian Association of Provincial Court Judges. In addition to providing this annual continuing education for all judges, in 2024 I designated four (4) programs for newly appointed judges, pursuant to section 51.10.1(3) of the *Courts of Justice Act*. These programs, together with other educational programs delivered in 2024, are detailed in the attached appendix.

Social context education is integrated into our judicial education. Our programs continue to include sessions that educate judges on cultural competence, awareness of unconscious bias, intimate partner violence, coercive control, sexual assault law, anti-Black and Indigenous discrimination and racism and the experience of vulnerable populations that are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

To complement this judicial education, together with our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, we produced a videotaped, candid conversation between our Associate Chief Justice and a prominent professor of sociology about the origins of Black History Month,

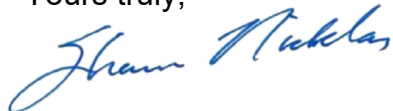
its enduring importance, Black achievement and the path forward. We also created a video of two of our judges using a real case scenario to apply the principles articulated by the Ontario Court of Appeal in *R. v. Morris*.

For National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, together with our Indigenous Initiatives Advisory Committee, we gathered numerous resources to permit a wide variety of self-directed learning opportunities on a diverse number of topics. We also created experiential learning opportunities by curating a list of regional community events honouring September 30, 2024, to deepen our understanding of the residential school legacy and the ways in which it continues to affect Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Additionally, in December 2024, we invited over 40 provincial agencies to attend a Community and Social Services Agency Forum, to solicit and receive their input on our judicial education and our court practices. Through this forum we gathered thoughtful and valuable insight from those who work closely with the vulnerable populations in Ontario.

I am very proud of our efforts to provide our judges with access to robust initial and continuing education this past year, and I look forward to another successful year in 2025.

Yours truly,



SHARON NICKLAS
Chief Justice / Juge en chef
Ontario Court of Justice / Cour de justice de l'Ontario

APPENDIX

2024 CALENDAR OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

DATE	PROGRAM NAME	APPROXIMATE NO. OF ATTENDEES
January 23 – 26, 2024	<p>Internal: Sophomore Program</p> <p>This unique program was designed for judges who have been on the bench for four to six years.</p> <p>Session included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Resilience Skills for Judicial Practice</i>• <i>The Active Judge</i>• <i>Quality Decision-Making</i>• <i>Overview of Judgment and Decision-Making, including delivering oral and written judgments</i>	55
February 7-9, 2024	<p>Internal: Judicial Development Institute – Family Law</p> <p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Short Snappers: Security for Costs, No motions without Leave; Stay Orders and Lifting Stays; Disclosure of Child Protection Records</i>• <i>Mediation Theory & Skills for Judges</i>• <i>Parenting Arrangements for Complex Family Dynamics. This session, which included presenters who had lived experience and a family therapist, focused on bringing a clinical perspective to the determination of parenting arrangements, including the presence of intimate partner violence</i>• <i>Office of the Children’s Lawyer Update</i>• <i>International Abductions and Wrongful Removals. This session included the issue of intimate partner violence within the context of child abductions.</i>• <i>Updates on the Law on Relocation. Part of the issues explored in this session is when intimate partner violence impacts relocation</i>• <i>DivorceMate: Unique Issues for Child and Spousal Support</i>• <i>Hot Topics</i>	62
March 19 – 22, 2024	<p>Internal: Local Administrative Judge Conference</p> <p>This unique program was designed for Local Administrative Judges, providing the opportunity to discuss judicial leadership and administrative skills relevant to their role. A portion of the conference included collaborating with Trial Coordinators to discuss court initiatives and best practices.</p>	45

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DATE	PROGRAM NAME	APPROXIMATE NO. OF ATTENDEES
	<p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fireside Chat: Leadership in a Time of Change</i> • <i>Judicial Values and OCJ Vision</i> • <i>Criminal Mode of Proceedings</i> • <i>A Key Relationship - The Trial Coordinator (TC) and the Local Administrative Judge (LAJ)</i> • <i>TCs and the LAJs – Underpinnings of the Relationship</i> • <i>The TCs and the LAJs – Working Together on Scheduling and Best Practices – Exploring Different Approaches; Turning Principles into Practices</i> • <i>The TCs and the LAJs – Working Together on Best Practices – Looking to the Future</i> • <i>The New LAJ Manual</i> • <i>Working with your Colleagues and Justice Partners as LAJ</i> • <i>Well-Being and Leadership on the Bench: Resilience, Mental Health and Wellness for OCJ Judges</i> 	
<p>April 8 - 12, 2024</p>	<p>External: French Legal Terminology Session for French-speaking Judges</p> <p>This program is offered to bilingual judges.</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>April 14 – 19, 2024</p>	<p>External: CAPCJ New Judges Education Program **</p> <p>Sessions Included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My Life as an Indigenous Person</i> • <i>Procedure and Evidence on Voir-Dire – Summary of Dismissal of Frivolous Motions</i> • <i>Hearsay – Principled Approach</i> • <i>Confessions: Common Law Rule and Right to Counsel</i> • <i>Child Testimony</i> • <i>Section 9 – Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> • <i>Section 24(2) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> • <i>Judicial Pre-Authorization: Issues for Provincial Court Judges</i> • <i>Assessment of Facts and Credibility and Reasonable Doubt</i> • <i>Sexual Assaults – Essential Elements – Consent</i> • <i>Prior Statements – Consistent and Inconsistent</i> • <i>Evolution of Digital Evidence</i> • <i>Sentencing</i> • <i>The Offences of Operating a Motor Vehicle While Impaired</i> 	<p>17</p>

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DATE	PROGRAM NAME	APPROXIMATE NO. OF ATTENDEES
May 22 – 24, 2024	<p>Internal: Joint Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Court of Justice and the Association of Ontario Judges</p> <p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trial Management in an Age of Distractions</i> • <i>New Civil Applications Coming to your Courtroom</i> • <i>Facing a Challenge. This interactive session dealt addressed issues of subconscious bias and racial discrimination, as well as recent caselaw developments</i> • <i>The Verdict on Chat GPT – Generative AI for Judges</i> • <i>Power Imbalances: Avoiding Resolving Against One's Interest</i> • <i>Criminal Law: Hot Topics on 11(b) – You Be the Judge</i> • <i>“Let’s Get Frank”: The New Family Court Record</i> • <i>Overcoming Obstacles – My Life in the Law. Keynote speaker – The Honourable Justice Hugh Fraser</i> 	249
June 3 – 7, 2024	<p>Internal: New Judges Orientation Program **</p> <p>This program is an introduction to becoming a judge and recognizing the transition from counsel to judge.</p> <p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What it Means to be a Judge: Justice System Values and Vision, Judicial Independence and Discretion</i> • <i>Transitioning from Bar to Bench and Judicial Ethics</i> • <i>Judicial Well-Being: Resilience Skills on the Bench</i> • <i>Becoming a Culturally Competent Judge: Minimizing Cultural Bias and Achieving Fairness. This interactive session, presented by a prominent sociology professor, explores how unconscious bias manifests in every day life and trickles into the courtroom.</i> • <i>Becoming a Culturally Competent Judge: Minimizing Cultural Bias and Advancing Fairness</i> • <i>Managing Your Courtroom as an Active Judge</i> • <i>Developing Your Decision-Making Systems</i> • <i>Introduction on Managing Your Workflow</i> • <i>Vulnerable Parties in your Courtroom: A Clinical Psychologist’s Perspective to Key Issues and Communication Strategies</i> • <i>Fireside Chat: Delivering Justice to Indigenous Peoples</i> 	17

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2024 CALENDAR OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

DATE	PROGRAM NAME	APPROXIMATE NO. OF ATTENDEES
September 9 – 13, 2024	<p>Internal: Judges and Jails: The Realities of Incarceration</p> <p>This program offered judges the opportunity to visit federal and provincial institutions, where they met with incarcerated persons and correctional staff.</p> <p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introduction to the Parole Board</i> • <i>Reflections from the Inside: A Human Face to the Bricks and Bars</i> • <i>Prisoner Documentation: Do's and Don'ts for Judges</i> • <i>Parole Board Hearings</i> • <i>Tour - Collins Bay Institution</i> • <i>Tour – Quinte Regional Detention Centre</i> • <i>Myths and Assumptions About Sentencing and Corrections in Canada</i> • <i>Proportionality and the Rise of Individualization: Recent Developments and Possibilities for the Future</i> • <i>Tour of St. Lawrence Valley Correctional and Treatment Centre</i> • <i>Practicalities of Crafting a Fit Sentence: Mock Sentencing Hearing and the Case of R. v. JW</i> • <i>Mental Health: What Can I do in Sentencing?</i> • <i>Making Better Use of Sentencing Reports</i> • <i>Reflections on Incarceration and Rehabilitation</i> 	38
September 25 – 27, 2024	<p>Internal: Annual Family Law Seminar</p> <p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rules Update and Senior Advisory Family Justice Report</i> • <i>Top Nine Best Practices for the New Justice</i> • <i>Impact of Trauma on Children. This session, presented by a Clinical Professor at McMaster University, examines the impacts on children who witness domestic violence, either directly or indirectly</i> • <i>Enforcing Compassionate Judgment Writing</i> • <i>Adding Kin as Parties: Follow-Up and the Fallout</i> • <i>Duty to Report</i> • <i>Short Snappers: Summons to Witness in the context of Secure Treatment Applications; Who is a “parent” under the CYFSA; Amicus appointed in child protection matters; The new ARCH form for Adoptions</i> • <i>An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families</i> • <i>Case Management in Child Protection Cases</i> 	63

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DATE	PROGRAM NAME	APPROXIMATE NO. OF ATTENDEES
October 16 – 18, 2024	<p>Internal: East Regional Seminar</p> <p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Sexual Assault Trial: Start to Finish</i> • <i>Pre-Trial Stage: Part I – Judicial Pre-Trial</i> • <i>Pre-Trial Stage II – Managing section 276 & 278 Applications</i> • <i>The Trial Stage: Capacity to Consent, “Blackouts” and Common Credibility and Reliability Issues</i> • <i>Sentencing in Sexual Assault Cases</i> • <i>Self-Defence Seminar</i> • <i>Overview and Tour of St. Lawrence Valley Correctional and Treatment Centre</i> • <i>Sentencing in the Context of Addiction and Mental Illness</i> • <i>Sentencing – Morris Updates</i> • <i>GPS Monitoring Program</i> • <i>The Top Ten Cases OCJ Judges Need to Know</i> 	41
October 20 – 25, 2024	<p>External: Français Juridique</p> <p>This program is offered to bilingual judges.</p> <p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vocabulaire des infractions contre les droits de propriété</i> • <i>Enquêtes sur la mise en liberté</i> • <i>Droits de propriété</i> • <i>R. c. Therrien – Imposition de peine et Rédaction de décision avec ordonnances associées</i> • <i>Décision orale avec ordonnances associées</i> • <i>Simulation : Comparutions</i> 	1
October 23-25, 2024	<p>Internal: Toronto Regional Seminar</p> <p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sexual Assault Law Updates</i> • <i>Avoiding the Pitfalls that Lead to Miscarriages of Justice</i> • <i>Intimate Partner Violence and Coercive Control</i> • <i>Self-Defence</i> • <i>Cases You Need to Know</i> • <i>Trial Management: Under-Represented and Self-Represented Litigants</i> • <i>Bite-Size Topics: Digital Evidence, SOIRA Orders, Ancillary Orders, Section 24(1) Stays, Primer on Crypto Currency, Amicus Orders</i> • <i>Protection of Privacy in the Digital Age</i> 	86

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DATE	PROGRAM NAME	APPROXIMATE NO. OF ATTENDEES
November 6 – 8, 2024	<p>Internal: North Regional Seminar</p> <p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Elements of Sexual Offences</i> • <i>Best Practices When Interviewing Children</i> • <i>Trauma Exposure and the Impact on Judges</i> • <i>The Top Ten Cases</i> • <i>7 Minute Judge – French Language Rights, Sentencing of the Barely Fit and Criminally Responsible Accused, Bench Warrants and Search Warrants Best Practices, Case Management of Section 276/278 Applications, Testimonial Accommodation, Amicus</i> • <i>Oral Judgments: A Tool to Manage the Judicial Workload</i> • <i>To Intervene, or Not to Intervene, That is the Question</i> • <i>Gladue Writers and Gladue Reports</i> 	32
November 13 – 15, 2024	<p>Internal: West Regional Seminar</p> <p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Section 276 Primer: Evidence of Other Sexual Activity</i> • <i>Provincial Offences Act Appeals</i> • <i>Not Criminally Responsible Updates</i> • <i>Morris Updates and Obtaining Enhanced Pre-Sentence Reports</i> • <i>Youth Criminal Justice Act: Tips and Traps</i> • <i>Garofoli Applications</i> • <i>Sexual Assault Update</i> • <i>Self-Represented Litigants: Freeman on the Land and Sovereign Canadian Citizen Issues</i> • <i>Impaired Driving Updates</i> • <i>Top Ten Cases</i> 	72
November 18-22, 2024	<p>External: Newly Appointed Provincial and Territorial Judges Skills Seminar – National Judicial Institute **</p> <p>Sessions Included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dealing with Credibility</i> • <i>Cognitive Bias and How to Best Address It</i> • <i>Crafting a Judgment: Blending Communication and Content</i> • <i>Nuts & Bolts of Being a New Judge</i> • <i>The Challenge of Communicating with the Self-Represented and the Under-Represented Litigant</i> 	23

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2024 CALENDAR OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

DATE	PROGRAM NAME	APPROXIMATE NO. OF ATTENDEES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Getting it Done: Some Tips on Efficient and Timely Delivery of Judgments</i> • <i>Introducing the Judgment Exercise</i> • <i>Judgment Exercise and Feedback</i> • <i>Trauma Exposure and the Impact on Judges</i> • <i>To Intervene or Not Intervene: The Role of the Trial Judge</i> • <i>Guilty Pleas and Sentencing</i> • <i>Dealing with Lawyers and Lawyer Conflict</i> 	
November 28, 2024	<p>Internal: New Judges Technology Program **</p> <p>This program introduced newly appointed judges to technology inside and outside the courtroom, to assist them in effectively managing their workflow and decision-writing.</p>	17
December 9 – 13, 2024	<p>Internal: New Judges Orientation Program **</p> <p>This program is an introduction to becoming a judge, recognizing the transition from counsel to judge.</p> <p>Sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What it Means to be a Judge: Justice System Values and Vision, Judicial Independence and Discretion</i> • <i>Transitioning from Bar to Bench and Judicial Ethics</i> • <i>Judicial Well-Being: Resilience Skills on the Bench</i> • <i>Becoming a Culturally Competent Judge: Minimizing Cultural Bias and Achieving Fairness. This interactive session, presented by a prominent sociology professor, explores how unconscious bias manifests in every day life and trickles into the courtroom.</i> • <i>Becoming a Culturally Competent Judge: Minimizing Cultural Bias and Advancing Fairness</i> • <i>Managing Your Courtroom as an Active Judge</i> • <i>Judicial Obligations in Sentencing: Lessons from Zara, Morris and Gladue and Other Tools for Crafting Fair and Meaningful Sentences</i> • <i>Developing and Delivering Effective Reasons for Decision</i> • <i>How to Apply the Principles: Key Tools, Parts I and II, Issue Identification and Outline</i> • <i>Fireside Chat: How to Organize and Develop Reasons Efficiently</i> • <i>Developing & Delivering Effective Reasons for Decision</i> • <i>Clarity at the Paragraph, Sentence and Work Level</i> • <i>Oral Judgment Delivery</i> 	19 (with an additional 7 judges attending the workshops and an additional 4 judges for the Friday afternoon session)

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DATE	PROGRAM NAME	APPROXIMATE NO. OF ATTENDEES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Practical Insights from an Appellate Judge</i>• <i>Vulnerable Parties in your Courtroom: A Clinical Psychologist's Perspective to Key Issues and Communication Strategies</i>• <i>Reimagining Justice for Indigenous Peoples: History, Bias and Transformation</i>	

****** Courses for newly appointed judges as designated pursuant to the *Courts of Justice Act*