

## INTRODUCTION

This special issue of the *Alberta Law Review* arises out of a three-day Conference held in June, 1994 at the Faculty of Law, The University of Calgary. The title of the Conference was "A New Look: A National Conference on the Legal Profession and Ethics." The idea for the Conference arose initially from the report prepared in 1991 by Professor (as he then was) Brent Cotter, *Professional Responsibility Instruction in Canada: A Coordinated Curriculum for Legal Education*. A Planning Committee and a National Advisory Committee were struck to develop the Conference program, and a decision to hold the Conference as part of the annual Learned Societies Meetings in Calgary brought in the Canadian Association of Law Teachers as an active associate. While the impetus for the Conference came from the Cotter Report, the Planning Committee decided to broaden the Conference theme beyond matters relating to professional responsibility instruction. It believed that, before addressing issues of professional responsibility instruction, there was a need to address some fundamental questions about the nature of the legal profession itself, together with issues of legal ethics. This view guided the Planning Committee in the formation of the program, and in choosing the title for the Conference. The goal was to hold a Conference that would reflect upon the legal profession, its roots, its present role and what might need to be changed in order to achieve views of the legal profession and legal ethics that best suit the present and foreseeable future.

The Conference brought together law teachers, continuing legal education representatives, law society representatives, lawyers and members of the public. It is very rare that all of these constituencies meet together at one time, so it was a unique opportunity for discussion amongst these various groups. By publishing this permanent record of the Conference, we can share some of the issues and ideas discussed there with an even wider audience.

The Conference commenced with a keynote address by the Honourable Mr. Justice J.C. Major of the Supreme Court of Canada on "Lawyers' Obligation to Provide Legal Services." From there we moved to an historical discussion of the legal profession and ethics. With the historical discussion in mind, alternative visions of legal professionals in society were presented. Building on these foundations, the discussions turned to important issues currently facing the legal profession, including regulation of the profession, access into the profession, structure of the workplace, codes of conduct and the changing nature of legal solutions. Also discussed were issues relating to the profession and ethics in substantive law areas, including criminal law, family law, comparative law and legal history. All of this led back to the initial catalyst for the Conference: a discussion of professional responsibility instruction. Richard Devlin of Dalhousie Law School acted as the Conference rapporteur, and provided participants with his thoughts on the discussions to close the Conference.

The papers published here follow the same order as the Conference program just outlined. They do not include all of the papers presented at the Conference; there were over forty speakers. However, there is at least one paper from each part of the program.

Many acknowledgements must be made. The Conference was sponsored by the Faculty of Law, The University of Calgary; the Faculty of Law, University of Alberta; the Law Society of Alberta; the Legal Education Society of Alberta; the Federation of Law Societies; and the Canadian Association of Law Teachers. Funding for the Conference was provided by the Alberta Law Foundation; The Law Foundation of British Columbia; The Law Foundation of Saskatchewan; the Yukon Law Foundation; The University of Calgary; the University of Alberta; and the Department of Canadian Heritage. Without the support of these organizations, "A National Conference on the Legal Profession and Ethics" would not have been held. The Conference was held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association of Law Teachers, and benefitted in many ways from this arrangement.

The active participation of individuals too numerous to mention made the Conference happen. Those individuals include members of the Planning Committee and National Advisory Committee; Conference speakers, panel chairs, and workshop facilitators; and support staff and student volunteers from the Faculty of Law, The University of Calgary. A special thank you is due to the speakers who have allowed their papers to be published in this special issue, to editorial board of the *Alberta Law Review* in Calgary who edited the papers and to the editors of the *Alberta Law Review* in Edmonton and Calgary, past and present, who supported the publication of the papers.

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