



Michelle L. Haigh

I was first appointed to the Paralegal Standing Committee by the Attorney General of Ontario in 2006. Since then I have worked with the committee to establish the by-laws governing the paralegal profession and the licensing process. It was an honour to be involved in this groundbreaking process. I continue to sit on the Paralegal Standing Committee and have been appointed to the Compensation Fund Committee. I also participate in the good character hearings as one of a three member hearing panel. This experience has been enlightening and challenging. The paralegal profession gained respect and integrity when it became regulated.

I have learned about the issues that affect our paralegal members in different areas of practice. This is why I believe that it is essential to elect paralegals that will effectively reflect the different scopes of practice.

Education:

Sheridan College -
Honours Graduate, 1996
Paralegal Studies

University of Windsor –
Faculty of Law Certificate(s)
ADR/Advanced ADR

Professional:

- Sole practitioner since 1996, civil litigation – Small Claims Court
- Appointed by the AGO to the Paralegal Standing Committee at the LSUC. As a member of the PSC, I also sit as an adjudicator at good character hearings for paralegal candidates.
- Toronto Small Claims Court “Frequent User Committee” member
- Member of the Sheridan College Advisory Board – Paralegal Studies Program
- Member of Licensed Paralegals Association (Ontario)

Community:

- Parent volunteer for City Rep Hockey Minor Atom AA, organizing teambuilding sessions and social gatherings.
- Parent volunteer for Burlington Rep Lacrosse Novice, travel coordinator and team social events

Mission Statement

If elected, I will commit myself to the position and to all of the requirements that it brings. I will make the time to further educate myself on the many different concerns brought to me by the paralegal profession and I look forward to advocating on their behalf. I will also ensure that the public interest is maintained at all times. I have been involved in this process since the task was placed in the hands of the Law Society and I look forward to continuing our efforts to enhance the paralegal profession.

I’ve compiled a list of some of the issues that I believe are important to the paralegal profession, as well as to the public, and which I look forward to tackling if elected for this position:

Scope of Practice

Now that the ground work for the licensing of paralegals is completed, I believe that we should explore the possibility of expanding the scope of practice to ensure that the public not only receives competent access to justice, but also affordable access to justice. Some areas might include, for example, family law and appeals of Small Claims Court orders.

Exemptions

I believe that as our profession matures, reviewing the exemptions is in the public interest. Reducing the number of exemptions over time will enhance the integrity of our profession.

Continuing Legal Education (CLE)

In order for paralegals to continue to earn the respect of their peers and the public, it is important to maintain and enhance our knowledge of the profession, as well as ethics and competency. I fully support the initiatives of the Law Society in implementing a monitored requirement for CLE. However, because it is not convenient for all paralegals to engage in CLE through a classroom or meeting place, I think it is imperative for new programs to be developed through the Law Society and community colleges. This will allow licensees to engage in these programs through different ways, such as teleconferences, webcasts, or online courses.

Fees

I think it is important to monitor fee increases in order to ensure that our members can continue to afford their membership. We must keep in mind the younger and lower income licensees who may have challenges in maintaining their practice. If fee increases are necessary, it is important to understand why and be sure to communicate these issues to our membership.

I’ve had the opportunity to dedicate the last four years getting up to speed on the regulatory system and I’m ready to put that experience to work for you.

Please support me for election to the Paralegal Standing Committee.
