

New paralegals welcomed at Osgoode Hall in April

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The Law Society welcomed more than 150 newly licensed paralegals at a reception on April 27 at Osgoode Hall.

Ontario's newest paralegals hail from all over the province and some travelled long distances to attend the reception, including from Waterloo, Pontypool, Simcoe and Keswick.

The event was also attended by members of the judiciary, government, representatives from lawyer and paralegal organizations, and Law Society benchers.

Treasurer Janet E. Minor welcomed the new paralegals and explained their importance to the justice system.

"Let me say in welcoming you, we are truly glad you are here, we need you. Access to justice has become a significant concern in the courts of Ontario, among the public, and among the members of the legal profession throughout the province. ... You have now joined the ranks of legal service providers charged with meeting the access to justice challenge," said Treasurer Minor.

A total of 219 paralegals were licensed by the Law Society in April.

Advice from Ontario's Chief Justice

The Hon. George R. Strathy, Chief Justice of Ontario, also brought greetings and he passed on advice given to him when he became a new lawyer. "No one expects you to have all the answers," he began. "You're going to get asked questions that you don't know the answer to.

"Don't be afraid to tell your client that you don't know the answer...that you'll have to research it. They'll respect you for that and regard you as a serious person who takes their problem seriously," he said.

Second career for new paralegal

Among the new licensees in attendance was Jeanine Appleton-Bott.

Appleton-Bott had been an editor for the News and Sports departments with Toronto's Citytv for 23 years until 2010 when she and many other employees at the station were let go during major restructuring.

When it was time for next steps, Appleton-Bott enrolled in an Accredited Paralegal Program in Mississauga. It was a decision that made sense to her.

"I always had an interest in law because of my involvement in the news department, telling the two sides of every story that had to be told was an exciting and rewarding part of working at Citytv. Gaining knowledge of the law through the late, great, "Voice" of Citytv, Mark Dailey, was truly a highlight of my career," she said.

"I was also involved in the union for 22 years on various levels, always looking out for our members, to the best of my ability."

Toward the end of the paralegal program, her field placement was with the Toronto law firm Symes Street & Millard LLP. The experience affirmed her interest in the law and commitment to helping others.

She is now looking forward to embarking on her second career — that of a licensed paralegal.

Paralegal Standing Committee and special guests

Also at the April reception was the Paralegal Standing Committee led by chair Michelle Haigh, along with vice-chair Susan McGrath and committee members Robert Burd, Cathy Corsetti, and Marian Lippa. Haigh addressed the new paralegals and provided perspectives on their new career and new colleagues.

Special guests included MPP Jagmeet Singh, Bramalea-Gore-Malton; Stephen Parker, president of the Ontario Paralegal Association; and longtime paralegal [John Tzanis](#), who will receive the Law Society's William J. Simpson Distinguished Paralegal Award at the [Law Society Awards ceremony](#) on May 25.