

48th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

FAMILIES AND THE LAW

For all members of the legal community

Program

OCTOBER 9 TO 11, 2024 | IN PERSON & ONLINE | WINNIPEG

Delta Hotels Winnipeg, 350 St Mary Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3C 3J2

“Families and the law”

CIAJ’s 48th annual conference will discuss the justice system as it affects families in Canada. The conference will consider the wide ambit of concerns regarding the system’s ability to aid families in resolving their disputes. Are there enough resources available? Are the courts and tribunals the best forum for families and children? Are we ready for a culture shift or paradigm shift? There is no doubt that improving the situation for families in difficult and sometimes heartbreaking situations is paramount. All members of the legal community are invited to join forces to explore these issues and offer some solutions.



- *Bilingual program with simultaneous interpretation.*
- *Participation in this program is accredited in provinces where CLE requirements for lawyers are mandatory.*
- *Participation in this program is approved under Section 41 (1) of the Judges Act.*



HONORARY CHAIR

**The Honourable Justice Michelle O'Bonsawin,
Supreme Court of Canada**

An Abenaki member of the Odanak First Nation in Quebec and the first Indigenous judge appointed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in Ottawa. Before becoming a judge, she was General Counsel for the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group and worked at Canada Post. She practiced mental health law, labor law, human rights, and privacy law, and taught at the University of Ottawa. Holder of an LL.B. and an LL.M., she will complete her doctorate in 2021. Active in the legal community, she is also a speaker and author of several legal publications.

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CHAIR

**The Honourable Chief Justice Marianne Rivoalen,
Court of Appeal for Manitoba**

Born and raised in St. Labre, Manitoba, she has extensive experience in litigation and aboriginal law, having served as Senior Counsel with the Department of Justice Canada. Appointed to the Court of Queen's Bench in 2005, she became Associate Chief Justice (Family Division) in 2015 and Chief Justice of the Manitoba Court of Appeal in 2023.

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CO-CHAIRS

- **The Honourable Justice Julie Dutil**, Court of Appeal of Quebec, CIAJ's President
- **The Honourable P. Colleen Suche**, Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba, CIAJ's past president

MEMBERS

- **The Honourable Justice Julie Audet**, Superior Court of Justice (Ontario)
- **Jennifer Cox**, KC, Staff Lawyer, Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, Dalhousie University
- **Patricia M. Hebert**, KC, Barrister & Solicitor / Registered Mediator, Bruyer & Mackay LLP; Sessional Instructor, Faculty of Law, University of Alberta
- **The Honourable Justice Lana Krogan**, Court of King's Bench for Saskatchewan
- **Dean Robert Leckey**, Full Professor & Samuel Gale Chair, Faculty of Law, McGill University
- **The Honourable P. Colleen Suche**, Court of King's Bench of Manitoba, CIAJ's past president
- **The Honourable Justice Connie Petersen**, Family Division, Court of King's Bench of Manitoba
- **The Honourable Judge Robert Proulx**, Youth Division, Court of Québec
- **Rollie Thompson**, KC, Professor Emeritus of Law, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University
- **Maggie Wente**, Partner, Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP
- **The Honourable Justice James R. Williams**, Family Division, Supreme Court of Nova Scotia
- **Christine O'Doherty**, Lawyer, CIAJ's Executive Director
- **Mary Plagakis**, CIAJ's Project Manager of Multidisciplinary Programs
- **Lise Bujold**, CIAJ's Assistant Director
- **David Lazzam**, Articling student CIAJ

Family law is uniquely shaped by the interplay between legal, social, and economic factors, and in the absence of robust and equitable family law systems, individuals and families are vulnerable to a range of negative outcomes including poverty,

housing insecurity, and unequal access to justice. The panel will discuss the socio-economic issues which underpin family law in Canada, exploring both legal and extra-legal reforms which might alleviate the burdens that participants in the family law system bear. The discussion will pay particular attention to interdisciplinary approaches including examples of immigration law intersection with family-related rights, social support programs and community resources, Canada child benefit coverage, and the need for increased provincial programming.

- Moderator:**
- *The Honourable Justice Julie Dutil, Court of Appeal of Quebec, CIAJ's President*
- Speakers:**
- *Eugenie Depatie-Pelletier, Adjunct Professor, Department of Geography, Université Laval; Research associates, Canada Chair in Global Migration Processes*
 - *Rollie Thompson, KC, Professor Emeritus of Law, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University*
 - *Susan Young, Lawyer, Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University*

2:45–3:00 PM **Health break**

3:00–4:30 PM **Panel 3 – Protecting Our Future: Exploring Challenges and Solutions in Child Protection**

“Child Protection” is a concept that includes not just the immediate health and safety of the child, but a broader approach to the social, legal, and educational environments that shape a child’s upbringing. This panel considers what meaningful outcomes for children interacting with the justice system entail, from ensuring positive resolutions for ongoing cases, to early intervention and prevention strategies to limit the number of children in need of protection. Discussion will include perspectives on current shortcomings of Canadian child protection systems.

- Moderator:**
- *The Honourable Associate Chief Justice Gwen B. Hatch, Family Division, Court of King’s Bench, Manitoba*
- Speakers:**
- *The Honourable Judge Robert Proulx, Youth Division, Court of Québec*
 - *Tammy Law, Lawyer, Tammy Law Professional Corporation*

5:00–7:00 PM **Reception**

8:00– 9:30 AM	Registration and breakfast Login for online participants
9:00–9:30 AM	Interview with CIAJ prizes & awards recipients • 2024 Christine Huglo Robertson Essay Recipient • 2024 Charles D. Gonthier Research Fellowship Recipient
9:30–11:00 AM	Panel 4 – Indigenous Family Law Governance and Child Protection This panel discusses the possibilities and challenges within the area of Indigenous family law governance following the enactment of the Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families. The discussion will touch on issues of legislative drafting, policy implementation, and capacity building amongst Indigenous governing bodies, while also exploring what truly Indigenous-led approaches to family law and child protection might look like, as well as what is still required of Canadian legal systems and governments in meeting the goals of reconciliation. <i>Speakers:</i> • <i>Maggie Wente, Partner, Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP</i> • <i>Earl Stevenson, In-House Legal Counsel, Peguis Child & Family Services</i>
11:00–11:15 AM	Break
11:15–12:30 AM	Small group discussion on Reforming the Family Justice System <i>Speakers:</i> • <i>Nicole Sherren, Principal Consultant & Owner, R2P Solutions</i> • <i>Diana Lowe, KC, Justice System Consulting at Re-imagining Justice and Co-Lead of the RFJS</i>
12:30–1:30 PM	Lunch
1:30–3:00 PM	Panel 5 – Unveiling the Layers: Understanding and Addressing Intimate Partner Violence To properly address intimate partner violence (IPV), courts and legal practitioners must gain a far more fulsome understanding of the psychological, social, and legal characteristics of IPV than is currently evidenced within our family law systems. This panel will take an interdisciplinary

approach towards the dynamics of IPV, from the coercive power imbalances between victims and perpetrators, to the underreporting of IPV, particularly within marginalized communities, to the barriers victims face when accessing the justice system.

- Speakers:*
- *Jennifer Koshan, Professor & Research Excellence Chair, Faculty of Law, University of Calgary*
 - *Dr. Ilana Dodi Luther, Executive Director, Access to Justice & Law Reform Institute, Schulich School of Law*

3:00–3:15 PM **Health Break**

3:15–4:30 PM **Panel 6 – Understanding High-Conflict Families and Paths to Resolution**

As the number of high-conflict family court disputes increases, this panel explores the dynamics of high-conflict families, the challenges they present to family courts, and how we might resolve those problems through reform. What makes a family “high-conflict”? How do current administrative practices exacerbate existing problems? Do adversarial legal systems enable high-conflict family disputes, and how might we move towards more constructive dispute resolution models?

- Moderator:*
- *The Honourable Justice Julie Audet, Superior Court of Justice (Ontario)*

- Speakers:*
- *Dr. Rachel Birnbaum, Co-Director, Research Institute with Children, King's University College*
 - *Vincent Ramsay, Lawyer*
 - *Suzanne Williams, Lawyer & Mediator, Strathdee Williams Family Law*

4:30–5:00 PM **CIAJ AGM**

6:00–8:00 PM **Reception**

8:00–9:00 AM	Registration and breakfast Login for online participants
9:00–10:30 AM	Panel 7 – Generational Approaches to Reforming Legal Ethics and Responsibilities This panel will examine the professional and ethical responsibilities of lawyers working around family law and how these duties may be reformed through a child-focused approach. <i>Moderator:</i> - Alper Yilmaz, Co-chair, CIAJ's Student Committee; Law Student, Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa <i>Speakers:</i> - Kala Bryson, Articling Student, Rise Women's Legal Centre - Caroline Bourbonnais, Lawyer, Le Cabinet Bourbonnais - The Honourable Justice Robynne B. Kazina, Court of King's Bench, Manitoba
10:30–10:45 AM	Health Break
10:45–12:00 AM	Panel 8 – Consent and Decision-making Challenges for Gender-Diverse Children and Families Considering recent provincial policies concerning gender-diverse students, this panel will discuss the legal, ethical, and personal implications of parental consent requirements for gender-diverse children and families. The panel will touch on the rights of children and parents, the socio-medical context of gender diversity, and the roles and responsibilities of school boards and various levels of government in decision-making concerning gender-diverse children. <i>Moderator:</i> - Dean Robert Leckey, Full Professor & Samuel Gale Chair, Faculty of Law, McGill University <i>Speakers:</i> - Dr. Shuvo Ghosh, MD, FAAP, Developmental-Behavioural Pediatrician, Montréal Children's Hospital, McGill University Health Centre - Annie Pullen Sansfaçon, Associate Vice-Rector for Indigenous Relations, Professor, Canada Research Chair
12:00–1:00 AM	Lunch



1:00–2:15 PM

Think Tank: Innovations in Family Law – New ways of Supporting Families

As we look to the future of family law in Canada, recent scholarship and advocacy are paving the way for innovative solutions to the challenges Canadian family law currently faces. In this interactive workshop, you will be invited to actively engage in discussions with our panelists, who will explore various strategies for resolving family law disputes while minimizing the impact on children. Topics will include collaborative lawyering, the concept of one lawyer representing both parties in a divorce, neutral advice provided to both parties, as well as gender equity in compensatory support and the role of punishment in family law.

Together, we will also consider digital tools and broader structural changes designed to alleviate case backlogs and improve access to justice. This workshop will be a unique opportunity to exchange ideas and co-create innovative solutions for the future of family law in Canada.

Moderator:

- *Patricia M. Hebert, KC, Barrister & Solicitor / Registered Mediator, Bruyer & Mackay LLP; Sessional Instructor, Faculty of Law, University of Alberta*

Speaker:

- *Jacintha Gallant, Founder and President, Our Family in Two Homes; Lawyer and Mediator, Waterstone Law Group PEI*

2:15–3:15 PM

Fireside chat:

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Chief Justice Marianne Rivoalen, Court of Appeal for Manitoba*

Speaker:

- *Susan E. Guthrie, JD, Family Law and Mediation Attorney, AI & LegalTech Integration Specialist for Legal Professionals, Practice Building Consultant*

3:15–3:30 PM

Closing remarks

- *The Honourable Justice Julie Dutil, Court of Appeal of Quebec, CIAJ's President*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2024

DECADES OF EXCELLENCE

CIAJ IN 2024

CIAJ marks **50 years** of leadership in the advancement of the administration of justice in Canada. Since 1974, the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice has brought together legal professionals through its annual events, webinars, and publications, reaching a diverse and influential audience.

OUR MISSION

Promote excellence through knowledge, learning and the exchange of ideas.

CIAJ offers Canada's legal community up-to-date education and research programs in both official languages.

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IN ALL FAIRNESS

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50 years: Planting the Seeds of Justice

CIAJ is a non-profit, independent organization that links individuals and institutions involved in the administration of justice across Canada. Its work is multidisciplinary and wide-ranging. Collaborating with governments, courts, tribunals, professional associations, law schools and law firms, CIAJ sponsors and conducts conferences and specialized seminars and prepares comprehensive papers and reports. Its services are offered in both official languages.

Join CIAJ: develop yourself, shape a better world, and make a difference.

Become a member of CIAJ and benefit from cutting-edge training and research programs, connect with key players in the system, and contribute to improving the Canadian justice system. As a member, you'll also enjoy exclusive benefits such as discount on every in-person program, free webinars and the accumulation of CPD hours.

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Contact us

Please contact us for more information about our organization, the benefits of membership and how you can assist us with our mission.

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50 YEARS OF CIAJ





NEXT EVENT

Indigenous Justice System: A Knowledge Sharing Symposium

CIAJ's 2nd edition of the Indigenous Justice System – a Knowledge Sharing Symposium will bring together members of Indigenous communities, judges, legal professionals, and law students across Canada to discuss and reflect on the evolution of the Indigenous Justice System in relation to colonial laws and courts.

This conference will take place on Tsuut'ina Nation land adjacent to Calgary from November 4 to 6, 2024.

Indigenous Peoples at the forefront

Indigenous Peoples are best served by the system when their laws, morals, values, customs and needs are prioritized.

This conference is a space for dialogue and knowledge sharing among indigenous leaders and elders, and actors of the legal system on how Indigenous communities design their own legal institutions and how they interact with the existing legal system to better create a justice system reflective of Indigenous culture and values. For dialogue and exchange on the continuation of active education and exploration of ways to narrow the gaps and work closely with and under the Leadership of Indigenous Peoples, which is critical to all who are involved. Together, we aim to collectively identify solutions for improved collaboration and outcomes.

Focus on solutions

The various presentations, sessions and panels will consider the wide ambit of realities and challenges regarding the system's ability to serve Indigenous communities, families and individuals. Are there enough resources available? Are courts and tribunals the best forum for them? Which other resources may be optimal to reach resolutions and improve outcomes in cases? In person and online participants will discuss in depth, share experiences and practices, challenging the current state of affairs as we work closely towards continuous improvement.

[Register now to reserve your seat](#)

