



Federation of Ontario
Law Associations
Fédération des associations
de barreau de l'Ontario

Spring Plenary 2025

May 14 to 16
Toronto, Ontario

Welcome to Toronto!

On behalf of the board and executive of the Federation of Ontario Law Associations, welcome to our Spring Plenary. Twice each year, we come together to meet with friends new and old, exchange ideas, and advocate for meaningful improvements to our justice system.

This plenary takes place at a pivotal moment for our profession. Recent issues, including the controversy surrounding the LSO CEO, the proposed LSO governance reforms, and the proposed complete upheaval of the civil rules, have sparked critical conversations about the future of legal regulation, access to justice, and the profession's ability to serve the public effectively. FOLA is proud to play an important role influencing the development of these issues.

FOLA remains committed to long-standing challenges which we will address this plenary: attracting and retaining lawyers in rural and underserved areas, reducing court and tribunal delays, diving deeper into the use of AI in legal practice, and of course ensuring our associations and libraries are as relevant as ever. We encourage you to participate actively in discussions, share your insights, and help shape the direction of our advocacy. As always, we welcome updates from our regulator, our malpractice insurer, LiRN, and key stakeholders who play a role in keeping our justice system functioning.

We thank all the hard-working presidents, boards, and staff of our member associations for all you do. Your leadership, your input, and your continued day-in, day-out dedication make FOLA's advocacy powerful and meaningful. Together, our unity makes us a respected voice in the profession. We look forward to connecting with you throughout this plenary and to continuing our shared mission of strengthening Ontario's legal profession.

Sincerely,

Allen Wynperle

Allen Wynperle
Chair

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This FOLA Spring Plenary program has been accredited by the LSO for the following Professionalism hours:

Total Professionalism Hours	5 hours 25 minutes
Total EDI Professionalism Hours	0
Total Professionalism plus EDI Professionalism Hours	5 hours 25 minutes

	<p>This program qualifies for the LAWPRO Risk Management Credit. To encourage participation in CPD programs that include risk management content, LAWPRO offers a \$50 premium credit (to a maximum of \$100) for each qualifying program completed by mid-September. The maximum \$100 credit will be applied to next year's insurance premium. The Risk Management Credit is applicable to standard coverage, and cannot be applied to Run-off or Excess policy premiums. It can only be claimed by lawyer insureds.</p>
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WIFI NETWORK: Hilton Honors Meeting
WIFI code: diamond

Wednesday, May 14

6:30 PM - 9:00 PM	<p>Welcome Dinner University Club, 380 University Avenue</p> <p>Kick off the plenary with a welcome dinner at the University Club. Enjoy a keynote address by The Honourable Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario, and network with fellow attendees.</p>	<p>Keynote Address:</p> <p>The Honourable Doug Downey Attorney General of Ontario</p>
9:00 PM - 12:00 AM	<p>Hospitality Suite San Francisco/Los Angeles – Floor 26</p> <p>Unwind and socialize in the hospitality suite, generously provided by our platinum sponsor, LAWPRO.</p>	

Thursday, May 15 – Mandarin Ballroom, Lower Level II, Doubletree

7:30 AM - 3:30 PM	<p>Registration Open – Mandarin Ballroom, Lower Level II</p> <p>Collect your nametag at our registration table.</p>
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7:45 AM - 8:45 AM	Breakfast and Networking Buffet breakfast is included with your registration.	
9:00 AM - 9:15 AM	Call to Order, Welcoming Remarks from the Chair, and Roll Call of the Presidents Opening remarks from Allen Wynperle, Chair of FOLA, and, in a time-honoured tradition, presidents are invited to introduce the members of their delegation.	Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allen Wynperle, Chair, FOLA• You!
9:15 AM - 9:20 AM	Welcoming Remarks TLA President Anna Wong welcomes us to Toronto!	Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anna Wong, President, Toronto Lawyers Association
9:20 AM - 10:10 AM	Committee Chairs' Reports Reports will be presented from FOLA's Real Estate, Family Law, and Legal Aid committees. For follow-up purposes or feedback, you will find their contact information printed on the last page of this document.	Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laura Oliver, Central West Rep. and Family Law Committee Co-Chair, FOLA• Logan Rathbone, Family Law Committee Co-Chair, FOLA• Mark Giavedoni, Real Estate Committee Chair, FOLA• Terry Brandon, Legal Aid Committee Chair, FOLA
10:10 AM - 10:15 AM	Treasurer's Report A brief update on the financial status of FOLA.	Speaker: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corey Wall, Treasurer, FOLA
10:15 AM - 10:35 AM	Break	
10:35 AM - 11:00 AM	LiRN Update	Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theresa Leitch, Managing Director, LiRN• Vicki Whitmell, Chair of the Board of Directors, LiRN• Jennifer S. Rooke, FOLA 1st Vice-Chair and PRCC Chair



11:00 AM - 11:50 AM	Special Topics: Tribunal Delays Delays in Tribunals have long been a pressing issue, impacting access to justice and procedural fairness. This panel will explore the root causes of delays in Ontario's tribunals, recent legal and policy developments aimed at improving efficiency, and practical strategies for managing cases effectively. Our expert panelists will discuss key challenges, including resource constraints, procedural complexities, and legislative reforms, while offering insights into best practices for legal professionals navigating these systems.	Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kathy Laird, Tribunal Watch Ontario• Mary-Anne Strong, President, OTLA• Samuel Mason, Tenant Lawyer
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Lunch	
1:00 PM - 1:20 PM	Law Society of Ontario Update	Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Priya Bhatia, Acting CEO, LSO
1:20 PM – 2:20 PM	Attracting Young Lawyers & Law Students to Rural Practice With an aging bar and growing legal needs in rural communities, attracting young lawyers and law students to rural practice is more important than ever. This panel will explore the benefits and challenges of rural practice, strategies for recruitment and retention, and the support systems needed to help new lawyers thrive outside urban centers. Panelists will discuss mentorship opportunities, incentives, work-life balance, and the unique professional experiences that rural practice offers. Join us for a conversation on how to strengthen the future of legal services in smaller communities.	Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ashley Gibson, Central South Rep., FOLA• Bill Woodward, former Chair, FOLA• Fariya Walji, Senior Program Director, TMU Law Practice Program• Anna Maria Decia-Gualtieri, Director of Career Services, Windsor Law• Jannatul Nizam, Ivey Field Project
2:20 PM - 2:50 PM	LDD Connect A word from Platinum sponsor LDD Connect	
2:50 PM – 3:15 PM	Break – Find Your Breakout Session Below!	



3:15 PM –
3:50 PM

Breakout Sessions

Room 1 – Mandarin Ballroom, Lower Level II

Kevin's Civil Rules Reform Roundtable

The Civil Rules Reform Committee has in Phase 2 of the consultation process. Changes include the elimination of discoveries among other things. Attend and help the FOLA committee craft our submissions!

Room 2 – Tokyo Room, 25th Floor

Curtis' Family Law Roundtable

Explore with fellow friendly family lawyers for an engaging and interactive discussion. Curtis will host a collaborative space to share insights, discuss emerging trends, and explore practical strategies for handling complex family law matters. Whether addressing legislative updates, procedural challenges, or best practices for client advocacy, this roundtable offers a valuable opportunity to connect with peers and gain fresh perspectives.

Room 3:- Shanghai Room, 25th Floor

Mark's Real Estate Roundtable

Join the rollicking ranks of resourceful real estate lawyers in an interactive discussion on the latest developments and challenges in real estate law. Exchange insights, discuss emerging trends, and explore best practices in real estate transactions, regulatory changes, and risk management.

Speakers:

- Kevin Cooke, East Rep., FOLA
- Curtis Pineiro, Central-East Rep., FOLA
- Mark Giavedoni, 2nd Vice-Chair, FOLA

3:50 PM –
4:10 PM

Get To The Next Breakout Session!



4:10 PM -
4:45 PM

Breakout Sessions

Room 1 – Mandarin Ballroom, Lower Level II **How to train and build up new lawyers in your Association**

Join fellow Association experts who will share strategies for helping new legal professionals better understand the procedures, services, and resources available at courthouses and libraries. Attendees will learn how these initiatives build strong relationships between legal professionals, courthouse staff, and library teams, while also providing valuable networking and learning opportunities. Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, and the event has become a highly anticipated resource for many new lawyers and law students.

Room 2 – Tokyo Room, 25th Floor **Work-life balance for the everyday lawyer**

Panelists will explore practical strategies and tips for maintaining balance as lawyers. From setting boundaries and managing time effectively to prioritizing mental health and well-being, this discussion will offer insights into how lawyers can navigate the pressures of their practice while ensuring personal and professional fulfillment.

Room 3 - Shanghai Room, 25th Floor **LiRN – Lexis+ Training**

Lexis+ is now available thanks to LiRN at all libraries! It delivers AI-driven tools for natural language search, document review, and comparing legal agreements. You will also learn about practice-specific content, legislation-tracking, automated templates, and more!

Speakers:

- Pia Williams, Executive Director, Waterloo Region Law Association
- Jennifer Bolduc, MGD Lawyers
- Ashley Gibson, Central-South Rep, FOLA
- Anne Marie Disanto, DiSanto & Gray LLP
- Curtis Pineiro, FOLA Central-East Rep.
- Gordon Brough, Product Adoption and Learning Consultant, LexisNexis
- Theresa Leitch, Managing Director, LiRN

4:45 PM -
6:30 PM

Free Time



6:30 PM - 9:00 PM	Law Society Treasurer's Reception and Dinner Arcadian Loft 401 Bay St. 8th Floor, Toronto	Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peter Wardle, Treasurer, Law Society of Ontario
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	A time-honoured tradition at FOLA plenaries is the dinner hosted by the Treasurer of the Law Society.	Sponsor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Law Society of Ontario
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9:00 PM - 12:00 AM	Hospitality Suite Open San Francisco/Los Angeles – Floor 26	Sponsor: LAWPRO
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	Our hospitality suite is generously provided by LAWPRO, our platinum sponsor.	
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Friday, May 16

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM	Regional Breakfast Meetings and Networking Start the day with breakfast with the delegates from your region of Ontario. Your breakfast is included with registration.
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9:30 AM – 10:00 AM	Annual General Meeting
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10:00 AM – 10:30 AM	LAWPRO: Generative AI 101 This session will provide a practical introduction to generative AI, explaining how it works, its potential applications in law, and the ethical and professional considerations at play. Dan will demystify the technology, explore real-world use cases, and discuss how lawyers can harness AI responsibly and effectively.	Speaker: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dan Pinnington, CEO, LAWPRO
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10:30 AM - 11:00 AM	LEAP A word from Platinum sponsor LEAP
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11:00 AM – 11:30 AM	LONG BREAK FOR CHECKOUT – 30 minutes
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11:30 AM -
12:00 PM

30 Tips in 30 Minutes

Fast, practical, and packed with value—this rapid-fire session delivers 30 essential tips in just 30 minutes to help you streamline your practice, enhance client service, and stay ahead in the ever-evolving legal landscape. From time-saving tech tools to risk management strategies and advocacy hacks, our panel of experts will share actionable insights you can implement immediately. Don't miss this power-packed session designed to boost your efficiency and effectiveness!

Speakers:

- Ian Hu, Director of Policy & Advocacy, FOLA
- Doug Judson, Past Chair, FOLA
- Kathleen Klein, Valin Partners
- Michellene Beauchamp
- Ramona Abraham

12:00 PM –
12:15 PM

Final Remarks, Lunch, and Departure

A final word to wrap-up before lunch and departure.

Speaker:

- Jennifer S. Rooke, 1st Vice-Chair, FOLA



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Thank you to our speakers!

Ramona Abraham is a defence counsel in Durham Region but she is originally from Hamilton where she articulated. She moved to Durham when she was called to the bar and started practicing with a firm in personal injury, Federal agency work and criminal defence. She started her own practice in 2012 and has been on her own ever since. She has been the President of the Durham Region Law Association for the past year and is moving into the position of Past President during this conference. She is an avid theatre geek and enjoys participating in theatre when she gets the chance. She is married with two lovely daughters and spends her spare time hanging out with her family.

Priya Bhatia is the Acting CEO and Executive Director, Professional Development and Competence at the Law Society of Ontario. She is a senior leader with demonstrated experience in complex operational environments. Her previous roles at the Law Society include Executive Director, Professional Development and Competence, and Director of Licensing and Accreditation. Skilled in policy development, strategic management, public speaking, relationship building and credentialing, Priya has been actively involved in the regulatory sector and has served on a number of committees at the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and the Council for Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation. Priya was recently appointed to the board of the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators Regulation and has served as Chair of the Ontario Regulators for Accessibility Consortium and the Association of Continuing Legal Education Directors. Priya is a frequent presenter on topics of competence, licensing, and credentialing at a national and international level. Priya has a JD from the University of Ottawa and certifications in adult training and development, strategic leadership, and inclusion best practices.



Anna Maria DeCia-Gualtieri is the Director of Career Services at the University of Windsor, Faculty of Law. She is a graduate of the University of Windsor (Honours B.A. 1998) and of Windsor Law, Class of 2001. After articling with McTague Law Firm LLP in Windsor, Anna was called to the Ontario Bar in 2002. She remained at the firm to join the Commercial Litigation Department, where she practiced commercial litigation and estate litigation until joining Windsor Law.

Anna has enjoyed a 17-year career working with students, faculty, employers and the Law Society of Ontario to provide law students with the support and guidance necessary for them to pursue distinguished and fulfilling careers. Anna also serves as the faculty supervisor of Pro Bono Students Canada – Windsor Law Chapter. She is a member of the Essex Law Association and is active in the Windsor community, including being a board member of Harmony in Action. As part of her professional development, Anna is an active member of both the Canadian Legal Career Development Network (CLCDN) and National Association of Law Placement (NALP), where she has served and led several working groups and committees within NALP.



Anne Marie DiSanto grew up in the Niagara Region and received her BA Honours in English Language and Literature from Brock University. After working for several years at the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, she returned to Niagara College and graduated at the top of her class from the Law Clerk Program. During her studies at Niagara, Anne Marie worked for a mid-size law firm in Niagara Falls as a co-op student, and then began working in the Estates department at that same Firm on a full-time basis following graduation.

Five years later, Anne Marie returned to university to pursue her LLB from City University in London, England. She took advantage of her newfound love of travelling and explored many countries in Europe. She returned to the same law firm following graduation to work first as a summer student and then to complete her articles.

Anne Marie became an associate in the firm after her call to the bar in January 2017. The following year, she opened DiSanto & Gray LLP. Three years later, the firm merged with another local lawyer to become Durdan DiSanto & Gray LLP.

Anne Marie's main areas of practice are Family Law, Estates and Estate Litigation. Her previous years of work as a clerk makes her



particularly well suited to assist clients dealing with these areas of law.

Anne Marie is active in the community and is proud to be a member on several boards including the Quest Community Health Centre (questchc.ca), Niagara Sexual Assault Centre (niagarasexualassaultcentre.com), and Chippawa Lioness. She is also a member of and past president of the Welland County Law Association and member of the Lincoln County Law Association.

Anne Marie recently became a mother and is relishing life in that role. In her spare time, Anne Marie loves reading, spending time with friends and family, and travelling as much as her time and busy schedule permits. She especially loves spending time with her niece.



Mark Giavedoni is a partner in Gowling WLG's Hamilton office where he is the firm's National Leader of the Real Estate Industry and Sector Group, and also a member of the Construction/Infrastructure Law Group, Expropriation Law Group and Municipal Law Group.

Mark prides himself on being a responsive and dedicated strategic adviser on all aspects of real property transactions: title repairs, financing, project structure and development, dispute prevention and resolution. As a Certified Specialist in Real Estate Law by the Law Society of Ontario, Mark has the expertise and personal touch to bring the right solution to task.

He is frequently consulted by municipalities, universities, school boards, utilities and other lawyers to advise on complex matters. His experience enables him to guide and represent clients on condominium structures and developments; commercial leases; financings and secured lending; purchase and sale transactions; land use planning and assembly; expropriations; construction contracts and facilities management.

Mark is a past president of the Hamilton Law Association. He is a member of the Real Estate, Municipal and Education Sections of the Ontario Bar Association and is the 2nd Vice-Chair and Chair of the Real Estate Committee for the Federation of Ontario Law Associations.



Kathleen Klein is a partner at Valin Partners LLP in North Bay, ON, where she maintains a diverse general practice that includes civil litigation, real estate, employment law, wills and estates, and family law. Her international education and work experience—spanning Switzerland, Australia, Vietnam, and Québec—have shaped a dynamic, adaptable approach to law and life. Kathleen has developed a deep appreciation for practical, efficient legal practice. Her commitment to mentorship, continuous learning, and real-world problem solving makes her passionate about sharing strategies that help fellow lawyers thrive—especially when time is tight.



Kathy Laird is a member of Tribunal Watch Ontario, a public interest organization that monitors accessibility and fairness at Ontario's adjudicative tribunals. She has served as counsel to the Chair of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario and an adjudicator at the Human Rights Board of Inquiry, the Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal and the Child and Family Services Review Board. She was executive director of the Ontario Human Rights Legal Support Centre and litigated as a legal clinic lawyer before numerous tribunals and courts at all levels



Samuel Mason is a staff lawyer and clinical instructor at Parkdale Community Legal Services in Toronto where he supervises Osgoode Hall law students through the Intensive Program In Poverty Law. He is the founder and director of Tenant Lawyer Professional Corporation, a tenant-side law firm that represents individual and organized tenants, including tenant associations. He is regularly litigating at the Landlord and Tenant Board and appellate courts. He sits on the Board of the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, a speciality legal clinic focused on law reform in the interests of tenants.



Curtis Pineiro is originally from Kingston. After he graduated from the Computer Science program at Trent University, Curtis worked as Trent's Adaptive Technologist in the Student Accessibility Centre for 5-years in which he completed a graduate certificate from Cambrian College in Applied Learning Disability Studies. In 2009, Curtis left Peterborough to study law at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, United Kingdom, where he graduated with merit. Curtis completed his National Committee on Accreditation and was called to the bar of Ontario in 2013.

Since then, he has provided high quality legal service to the Peterborough community in the areas of family law, wills and estate administration. Curtis has been active on the board of the Peterborough Law Association for over ten years, most recently having completed a two-year term as president. He also sits on the board of the Kawartha Family Court Assessment Service and is a faculty member at Trent University in the Law & Arts Trent/Swansea Dual Degree program, where he has taught Foundations of Canadian Law since 2020. In 2024, he was elected to the board of the Federation of Ontario Law Associations as the representative to the Central East region. Curtis tries his best to maintain a work-life balance to maximize time with his wife and two young children when he is not working or volunteering.

Daniel E. Pinnington was appointed President & Chief Executive Officer of LAWPRO in 2018. From 2012 to 2018, he served as Vice President, Claims Prevention & Stakeholder Relations, overseeing LAWPRO's claims prevention and outreach initiatives.

Dan joined LAWPRO in 2001 as Director, practicePRO – LAWPRO's innovative and internationally recognized claims prevention initiative. He used his unique combination of practice experience and technology expertise to provide lawyers with tools and resources to assist them to avoid malpractice claims and succeed in the practice of law.

Before joining LAWPRO, Dan practised for eight years in the litigation department of a Niagara-area law firm. Dan was called to the bar in 1993, having graduated with a combined LL.B./J.D. from the University of Windsor and Detroit Mercy College of Law.

Dan is a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management and is a prolific writer, speaker and blogger on risk management, legal



technology and law practice management issues. He has given hundreds of presentations throughout North America and has chaired more than a dozen major conferences.

Dan was the President of the National Association of Bar-Affiliated Insurance Companies (NABRICO) in 2019. He has been very active in the American Bar Association's Law Practice Division and was a long-time member of the ABA Legal Professional Liability Standing Committee. He was Chair of ABA TECHSHOW 2007 and Editor-In-Chief of Law Practice magazine from 2009-2012. He co-authored *The Busy Lawyer's Guide to Success: Essential Tips to Power Your Practice* and made several contributions to other books published by the ABA Law Practice Management section. Dan has also been active over the years in a variety of roles for the Canadian and Ontario Bar Associations.



Mary-Anne Strong has been passionately advocating for those injured in motor vehicle collisions and slip and fall accidents, since she was called to the Ontario Bar in 2002. She also represents individuals in disputes with their own insurance companies, particularly for long-term disability benefits and Statutory Accident Benefits, through the motor vehicle insurance system. Mary-Anne has handled many fatality cases representing parents and siblings who have lost loved ones in motor vehicle collisions. While fearlessly advocating for compensation for wrongful deaths, she seeks to provide her clients with compassionate guidance through the litigation process.

Mary-Anne's experience and training extends beyond her degree in law — she also completed two executive training programs on negotiations and a mediator's training program, through Harvard Law School. She has been a guest lecturer at the University of Windsor Law School on insurance topics. She has provided several presentations for the Law Society of Ontario, Ontario Trial Lawyers Association, and the Middlesex Law Association on various insurance and litigation topics. Her cases have been reported in the Ontario Reports, Lawyers Weekly, and the Law Times.

In 2023, Mary-Anne was appointed to the Ontario Civil Rules Committee by the Honourable Chief Justice Morawetz. She is also a member of the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association and has served on its Board of Directors since 2019. Most recently she serves on the Executive Committee of the Board and chairs the Practice Direction Committee which regularly drafts submissions to the government to



address concerns for victims of car collisions and civil litigants in Ontario. Mary-Anne is very honoured to serve as President of the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association beginning in May 2025.

Mary-Anne was born and raised in Windsor, Ontario and attended the University of Windsor for her undergraduate degree. She obtained her Bachelor of Laws at the University of Western Ontario in London. Mary-Anne practices exclusively in personal injury civil matters on behalf of injured people throughout Ontario, with her main practice in London, Ontario.

Outside of the practice of law, Mary-Anne has been a strong supporter and fundraiser for the Terry Fox Foundation, which is a charity of particular importance to her and her family.



Fariya Walji is Senior Program Director of the Law Practice Program (LPP). She leads the development and delivery of an intensive, practice-based training program that prepares law graduates to become client-focused, innovative, and well-rounded lawyers. Over the past decade, more than 2,500 lawyers have completed the program, with over 220 employers participating annually and consistently relying on the LPP as a trusted talent pipeline. A frequent speaker on professionalism, legal ethics, recruitment, and mentorship, Fariya also serves on the Boards of the Women's Law Association of Ontario (WLAO) and the National Self-Represented Litigants Project (NSRLP).



Vicki Whitmell has been the chair of LiRN since June of 2024. She is a librarian who has served the Ontario legal and legislative communities through her work in academic and law firm libraries and as the former Legislative Librarian for the Province of Ontario. She is passionate about building advocacy and leadership skills in libraries and is active on a number of community boards and organizations, including chairing the Sundridge Strong Union Public Library Board.

Pia Williams is the Executive Director and Library Manager of the Waterloo Region Law Association, where she has led since 2018. With over 20 years of experience in libraries—including more than a



decade in law associations—she brings expertise in legal information services, member engagement, and nonprofit governance. Pia holds an Honours BA from the University of Toronto and an MLIS from Western University.



Anna Wong is the President of the Toronto Lawyers' Association. She is also a civil litigator with Weintraub Huang LLP. Her practice focuses on commercial disputes, real estate litigation and administrative matters.

Anna is an educator and author, with a graduate degree from the University of Oxford. She teaches Canadian administrative law at the Master's level, and has presented at a number of educational programs. Anna's writings, which have appeared in peer-reviewed law journals, have been cited with approval by courts, including the Supreme Court of Canada. She is co-author of the book, *Canadian University Law*.

Anna speaks Mandarin and Cantonese.

Bill Woodward was called to the Bar in 1988. He has practised in London in the insurance defence field. He is the former President of the Middlesex Law Association and the former Chair of FOLA.
