

2026

Distinguished Service Awards



CANADIAN
BAR ASSOCIATION
Alberta



LAW SOCIETY
of ALBERTA

Celebrating Excellence

Program

Lunch

11:50 a.m.

Master of Ceremonies:

Sarah Vincella Coderre, Vice-President, Canadian Bar Association - Alberta Branch

Moment of Gratitude delivered by the Honourable John D. Rooke

Distinguished Service Awards Presentations

12:35 p.m.

Christopher N. Samuel, President, Canadian Bar Association - Alberta Branch

Stacy Petriuk, K.C., President, Law Society of Alberta

February 24, 2026

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Hudson

200 - 8 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta

Service in Promoting Equity, Diversity & Inclusion in the Legal Profession

Khatera Haidery



Khatera Haidery demonstrates equity, diversity and inclusion in the legal profession with courage, leadership and an unwavering commitment to opportunity for all. She uses her voice, experience and influence to open doors for those who have traditionally faced barriers to entering and thriving in the law.

Khatera's educational background reflects her dedication to growth and service. Khatera entered law school at the University of Calgary in 2006. She received the Mosaic Scholarship which is provided annually by the Famous Five Foundation to a young woman who has demonstrated outstanding community contribution and leadership. Khatera was called to the Bar in July 2010 and became a partner at Dunphy Best Blocksom in 2023. Her work history demonstrates her professional curiosity, adaptability and willingness to learn and support others.

Khatera champions inclusive practices across education, recruitment, mentorship and professional culture. She actively supports law students, articling students and early-career lawyers from equity-deserving communities by offering guidance, sponsorship and practical tools to help them succeed. She builds spaces where people feel seen, respected and empowered to contribute fully to the profession.

Khatera serves as a mentor and role model, particularly for newcomers and women in law. She shares her journey openly to inspire confidence and resilience in others. By investing time in one-on-one mentorship and community engagement, she helps emerging lawyers navigate systemic challenges and build sustainable, meaningful careers.

In every setting, Khatera leads with empathy and integrity. She challenges assumptions, amplifies underrepresented voices and models inclusive leadership. Her impact reaches beyond individual success stories and shapes the culture of the profession itself.

Through persistent advocacy, thoughtful mentorship and visionary leadership, Khatera Haidery strengthens equity, diversity and inclusion within the legal community. Her work creates pathways for future generations of lawyers and ensures the profession grows more just, representative and inclusive for all.



Service to Legal Scholarship

Professor Gideon Christian

Professor Gideon Christian is one of Canada's foremost scholars, working at the intersection of law, artificial intelligence (AI) and ethics. Through his work as the University Excellence Research Chair in AI and Law in the University of Calgary's Faculty of Law, his pioneering scholarship is shaping how Canada's legal profession and judiciary understand, regulate and adopt emerging technologies.

Professor Christian's academic journey began when he earned an LL.B. (Honours) from the University of Lagos in 2002, followed by his Barrister-at-Law qualification at the Nigerian Law School in Abuja

where he was called to the Bar in 2004. He later earned a Master of Laws in Law and Technology at the University of Ottawa in 2008 and completed his PhD in Law at the University of Ottawa in 2014. His graduate work focused on sustainable legal frameworks for emerging technologies. In 2019, he joined the University of Calgary as an Assistant Professor. He was granted tenure as Associate Professor and appointed the University Excellence Research Chair in AI and Law in 2024.

Professor Christian's groundbreaking research addresses some of the most pressing issues of our time: how to ensure fairness, accountability and transparency in the use of AI. His body of work includes widely cited publications in the McGill Law Journal, Canadian Bar Review, Alberta Law Review and Canadian Journal of Law and Technology, exploring the implications of AI adoption across civil litigation, criminal justice and immigration law. His scholarship on AI bias and ethical governance has influenced judicial reasoning and informed national policy dialogue.

At the University of Calgary, he coordinates the Trial Advocacy course, one of Canada's largest experiential learning programs, engaging over 120 volunteer lawyers and judges annually. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Professor Christian demonstrated exceptional innovation by launching Canada's first eLitigation course, training law students to advocate effectively in virtual and hybrid courtroom environments.

Through his teaching, research and leadership, Professor Gideon Christian exemplifies innovation, intellectual excellence and a deep commitment to advancing justice in the digital age. His work ensures that as technology evolves, the rule of law – and the human values at its core – remain strong, equitable and enduring.

Pro Bono Legal Service

K. Scott Hadford



Scott Hadford embodies the spirit of pro bono service through tireless advocacy, deep compassion and an unwavering commitment to access to justice. As the owner and managing partner of Hadford Defence Group in Lethbridge, Alberta, he leads a busy criminal defence practice while dedicating extraordinary time and energy to serving those who cannot afford legal representation.

Scott's legal foundation is built on academic excellence and decades of practical experience. In 1999, he completed his Juris Doctor at the J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University. Scott articulated and began practicing in the United States, gaining litigation experience from 1999 to 2007 in Arizona, Idaho, and Utah, where he handled insurance defence, personal injury, impaired driving defence, and complex civil litigation.

Scott returned to Canada and was called to the Alberta Bar in 2009. He then built a respected criminal defence practice in Lethbridge, first as a sole practitioner and then as an associate with Connolly and Associates. In 2019 he launched his own practice. Scott became the owner and managing partner of Hadford Defence Group in 2020.

Scott places pro bono work at the core of his professional life. Since 2019, he has provided ongoing volunteer services with Lethbridge Legal Guidance, where he hosts monthly criminal law clinics, participates in Ask-A-Lawyer events, and supports Law Day initiatives. He delivers clear, practical legal advice to individuals facing urgent and often overwhelming legal challenges. He ensures each client feels heard, respected, and he regularly accommodates family members, support workers and interpreters to remove barriers to understanding and participation. When issues extend beyond a single consultation, he commits to follow-up pro bono assistance to help clients navigate the next steps.

Scott leads by example. He mentors junior lawyers and articling students, actively involving them in pro bono work and instilling a lasting ethic of service. He reinforces the profession's responsibility to protect the vulnerable and uphold fairness at every stage of the justice process.

Through sustained, hands-on pro bono service, Scott Hadford delivers justice where it is most urgently needed. His dedication strengthens trust in the legal system, transforms lives, and sets a powerful standard of service, integrity, and humanity.



Service to the Community

Diana Lowe, K.C.

Diana Lowe, K.C. dedicates her career to strengthening communities by transforming how families experience justice. She serves as a national leader in improving justice outcomes and community-based systems transformation. Her work focuses on reducing harm, increasing support and improving outcomes for families navigating separation and divorce, intimate partner violence and child welfare challenges.

Diana's academic foundation reflects her interdisciplinary mindset. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Alberta, followed by a Master of Laws from the University of Edinburgh. Admitted to the Law Society of Alberta in 1985 and later to British Columbia, she built experience in private practice and as a staff lawyer in legal aid before becoming the inaugural Executive Director of the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice. From 2010 to 2020, she served as Executive Counsel to the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta. Appointed King's Counsel in 2008.

The Re-imagining the Family Justice System (RFJS) initiative is a significant contribution which Diana has co-led since 2013. She helped create a national movement grounded in brain science and resilience, shifting the focus from adversarial litigation to prevention, reducing stress and creating pathways to community supports. Her work has guided pilots such as Family Justice Navigation programs, strategy mapping for large-scale change and the current King's Bench Pilot running in Grande Prairie. Through multi-sector collaborations across Alberta and beyond, courts, governments, justice and social service organizations now align around a Theory of Change, prioritizing better outcomes for children and families alike.

Today, Diana serves as the Senior Director of the University of Calgary's Centre for Transformation. Her legacy is not just legal reform, but cultural change. With vision, persistence and heart, Diana Lowe continues to prove that justice works best when it puts people and outcomes first.

Diana shares this community-centred model nationally and internationally, helping other jurisdictions re-imagine family justice as a matter of public well-being rather than solely a legal process.

Through vision, persistence and selfless service, Diana Lowe strengthens communities by reshaping justice systems to serve families with dignity, compassion and hope.

Service to the Profession

The Honourable Peter Martin, K.C.

The Honourable Peter Martin, K.C. shapes the legal profession in Alberta through leadership, scholarship, mentorship and an unwavering commitment to the administration of justice. Across nearly five decades, he has advanced professional excellence at every level of practice, from courtroom advocacy to judicial leadership and legal education.



Peter graduated from the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Law in 1976 and was called to the bar in 1977. Peter launched his career with Alberta's Attorney General's office, where he quickly earned a reputation as a formidable Crown Prosecutor, trusted with the province's most complex and serious cases. He appeared regularly before every level of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada, and earned respect for combining fearless advocacy with fairness and integrity.

Peter served as President of the Law Society of Alberta, where he guided the profession with clarity and purpose. At the same time, he co-founded a criminal defence firm that became a training ground for exceptional advocates, many of whom later joined the judiciary. Through mentorship, example and high standards, Peter helped raise the bar for advocacy across the province.

In 1998, Peter brought that same leadership to the bench as a Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench and in 2005 he advanced to the Alberta Court of Appeal. For more than two decades, he strengthened the administration of justice with sharp intellect, practical wisdom and deep respect for the role of counsel.

Mentorship defines Peter's legacy. He invests personally in young lawyers, students, prosecutors and judges, offering wisdom, encouragement and opportunity. Many of Alberta's leading jurists and practitioners trace their development to his influence.

Peter Martin continues to serve as a mediator and arbitrator, bringing clarity, compassion and resolution to complex disputes. Through leadership, teaching and mentorship, Peter strengthens the legal profession and exemplifies service at its highest level.

Distinguished Service Awards

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The Distinguished Service Awards celebrate excellence in the legal profession. Jointly awarded by the Canadian Bar Association - Alberta Branch and the Law Society of Alberta, these prestigious awards recognize the many outstanding contributions Alberta lawyers make to pro bono legal service, to the promotion of equity, diversity and inclusion in the profession, to legal scholarship, to the community, and to the profession.