



The Canadian Bar Association

CBA's Pro Bono Program Helps Lawyers Provide Legal Services to the Public

**For Immediate release
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QUEBEC CITY – The Canadian Bar Association is launching a new initiative – the CBA Pro Bono Mentorship Program – to both encourage and assist Canadian lawyers in providing pro bono legal services to the public.

“Many lawyers consider pro bono to be a valuable way to give back to the community and to help further access to justice in Canada,” says Pamela Kovacs of Regina, chair of the CBA’s Pro Bono Committee. “The CBA encourages lawyers to contribute 50 hours of pro bono work per year. However, pro bono work is not a substitute for adequate government funding of legal aid.” The CBA has been outspoken for more than a decade about the need for increased funding for legal aid.

Pro bono publico is a Latin term meaning “for the public good.” For lawyers today, pro bono means to volunteer part of their time without charge or at substantially reduced rates, to establish or preserve the rights of disadvantaged individuals. They may also provide legal services to organizations that represent the interests of, or that work on behalf of, people of limited means or other public interest organizations, or for the improvement of laws or the legal system.

“Many of us have experience being a mentor or a mentee in an informal or casual way. We talk to a colleague to gain perspective on a file, or to ask for guidance. The CBA mentorship program is a more formal mentoring relationship designed to support pro bono legal work,” explains Pamela Kovacs.

As part of the program, the CBA has published a handbook for lawyers, *Doing Well by Doing Good: A Practical Guide to CBA Pro Bono Mentorship*. The booklet describes how mentorship takes the guesswork out of pro bono files. For example, the mentor may suggest how to set up files for a pro bono client, how to find sources to pay for disbursements (costs other than the legal fees), how to manage clients with multiple needs, or how to handle a particular legal situation.

Participating lawyers will have a one-year, one-on-one mentorship relationship matched according to the pro bono needs of the lawyer to be mentored.

The launch takes place on Sunday, Aug. 17, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 206AB at the Quebec City Convention Centre during the CBA’s Canadian Legal Conference. Pamela Kovacs will be available to

answer media questions. Sessions are open to accredited media. The Media Centre is located in Room 2102B of the Quebec Convention Centre, with the Communications Office in Room 2103.

Accreditation may be obtained by contacting the Communications Office in Quebec City which is open from Friday, Aug. 15 at noon until Tuesday, Aug. 19 at noon (tel: 418-649-5218).

The Canadian Bar Association is dedicated to improvement in the law and the administration of justice. Some 37,000 lawyers, law teachers, and law students from across Canada are members.

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