



Connection

Legislature appoints Clare Lewis as new Ontario Ombudsman

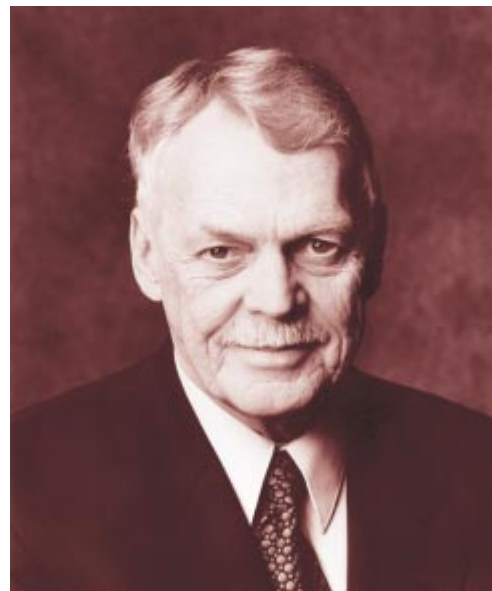
The Ontario Legislature has voted to appoint Clare Lewis, Q.C. as the province's new Ombudsman. The appointment took effect on January 30th.

Mr. Lewis was selected through a competition process overseen by an all party Standing Committee of the Legislature. His nomination was supported unanimously by all members of the committee and was subsequently confirmed by a unanimous vote of the Legislature.

Mr. Lewis has taken up this post following a distinguished career as a lawyer, judge and public servant. At the time of his appointment he was the Chair of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. Prior to this he served as the province's first Police Complaints Commissioner, after having been for five years the Public Complaints Commissioner responsible

for resolution of complaints regarding members of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force. His work in this role followed a period of six years when he served as a judge of the Provincial Court, Criminal Division. (See page 2 for a full biography.) Mr. Lewis will serve as Ombudsman for a term of five years.

The all-party appointment process established by the Legislature followed a recommendation made by Roberta Jamieson in her final annual report as Ombudsman in June last year. Ms. Jamieson had called on the Legislature to ensure the appointment of her successor was made "accessible to any who might seek it" as a means of protecting the independence and credibility of the Ombudsman office. The Legislative Assembly published newspaper advertisements seeking applicants for the position.



Clare Lewis, Q.C.

Ms. Jamieson ended a ten-year term in October. Fiona Crean, Ombudsman Ontario's Executive Director, was appointed Ombudsman on a three-month interim basis as the Standing Committee worked to complete its appointment process. The Legislature voted to amend the Ombudsman Act to reduce the term of office from ten years to five in late 1999.

OMBUDSMAN ONTARIO CELEBRATES 25th ANNIVERSARY

In October of this year, Ombudsman Ontario will celebrate its 25th anniversary as an office established by the Ontario Legislature. This occasion will be marked by events that will highlight the importance of this institution in ensuring accountability in public administration as a vital feature of our democracy. The following is a brief outline of the history of the Ombudsman's office.

As early as 1962, the Ontario Legislature discussed the possibility of establishing a place of last resort, independent of the provincial government, to which the public could bring complaints about the administration of government.

Mr. Vernon Singer, the Liberal Member from Downsview, introduced a private member's Bill in 1965, calling for the appointment of a "Parliamentary Commissioner" to investigate administrative decisions and acts of officials of the provincial government and its agencies. After debate of the Bill at Second Reading, it died on the Order Paper.

Mr. Singer did not give up and introduced his Bill in ten consecutive sessions of the Legislature. Each time the Government declined to take any action. By then, six provincial governments already had appointed Ombudsman: Alberta (1967); Saskatchewan (1972); Manitoba (1970); Quebec (1968);

New Brunswick (1967) and Nova Scotia (1970).

On March 11, 1975, the Lieutenant-Governor, Her Honour Pauline McGibbon, read Ontario's Speech from the Throne and in it promised the appointment of an Ombudsman. According to Hansard, Mr. Singer briefly interrupted the Speech with "solitary desk thumping." The Premier at the time was William Davis.

Bill 86 was soon introduced and debated in the Legislature. It finally became *The Ombudsman Act* when it received Royal Assent on July 3, 1975. On July 4, 1975, members of the Legislature unanimously

continued on page 2

Biography

CLARE LEWIS, Q.C.

Prior to his appointment as Ombudsman, Clare Lewis was Chair of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. He was appointed as Chair of the Gaming Control Commission on April 20, 1994, and as Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario on October 25, 1995, a position which he held concurrently with that of Chair of the Gaming Control Commission until February 23, 1998, when those offices were merged into the newly created Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

Mr. Lewis received a B.A. in 1960 and an LL.B. in 1963 from the University of Toronto. He has an LL.M. degree from Osgoode Hall, Toronto, which he received in 1986. He is a lawyer, called to the Bar of Ontario in 1965. His practice was primarily restricted to criminal law.

From 1965-1975 he was a defence counsel. He was a prosecutor from 1975-1979. He was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1978 and judge of the Provincial Court (Criminal Division) in 1979, serving until October of 1985, when he resigned as a judge to become Public Complaints Commissioner, responsible, pursuant to provincial legislation, for the resolution of public complaints against members of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force. He was appointed as Police Complaints Commissioner for Ontario in December of 1990 under the provisions of the Police Services Act which expanded his jurisdiction for the resolution of public complaints against the police to all 115 police forces and to every officer in the province of Ontario. In April of 1994 he resigned as Police Complaints Commissioner to become Chair of the Gaming Control Commission.

Throughout his career, Mr. Lewis has been active in professional organizations. At the time of his appointment as Public Complaints Commissioner in 1985, he was the President of the Provincial Judges' Association – Ontario (Criminal Division). He served as President of the International Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (IACOLE) from October of 1987 to October of 1989. From February of 1992 until April of 1994, Mr. Lewis was a member of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Centre for Police-Race Relations, a body funded and supported by the federal and some provincial governments and having representation from government, police and racial minority and aboriginal communities. He also served previously as a member of the Agency Sector Advisory Council which was established to advise the Agency Sector Coordination Unit on the implementation of the recommendations of the Ontario Agency Reform Commission. He is currently Co-Chair of the Education Committee of the Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators (SOAR).

In December of 1988, in response to a police and community crisis in the wake of certain police shootings of racial minorities, Mr. Lewis was appointed by the Solicitor General of Ontario as Chair of the Race Relations and Policing Task Force, which submitted its report on April 11, 1989. In July of 1992, the Premier and the Solicitor General of Ontario asked Mr. Lewis to reconstitute the Task Force and report as to the status of implementation of its previous recommendations. The Task Force submitted its second report on November 25, 1992.

In December of 1991, the Canadian Bar Association – Ontario named Mr. Lewis as recipient of its Award for Distinguished Service – 1991 for his work as Police Complaints Commissioner and as Chair of the Task Force in making exceptional contributions to the development of law in Ontario, and in securing a significant law-related benefit for the residents of Ontario.



Anniversary... continued from page 1

requested that Mr. Arthur Maloney, Q.C. be appointed as Ombudsman.

Mr. Maloney was sworn in on October 30, 1975. In his address to the Legislature after his swearing-in, he cited Mr. Vernon Singer as "the pioneer in the field of legislation relating to the office of the Ombudsman."

Those who have previously served as Ombudsman:

Mr. Arthur Maloney, Q.C. (1975-1979)
Mr. Justice Donald Morand (1979-1984)
Dr. Dan Hill (1984-1989)
Ms Roberta Jamieson (1989-1999)



André Marin, the Department of Defense Ombudsman (left), recently spoke to an Ombudsman Ontario staff conference where he outlined the achievements of his office since its inception almost two years ago. He was joined on a panel discussing models of Ombudsman-ship by Ryerson University Ombudsperson Liz Hoffman and Michael Lauber, the Canadian Banking Ombudsman (below).



Transition and renewal provides focus at Ombudsman staff conference

For two and a half days at the end of February Ombudsman staff gathered for an annual event to focus energies on the twin challenges of transition and renewal following the appointment of a new Ombudsman. The conference agenda combined a mix of presentations by outside guests, staff panels and workshops, all designed to support the many different types of work performed in the office.

Highlights included panel discussions on "Models of Ombudsmanship," "The Changing face of Toronto" and "Former Inmates – Overcoming Barriers to Re-integration." These panels featured invited guests who presented a wide range of material and facilitated very animated discussions with staff. There was also a presentation by representatives from the Ontario Disability Support Program and a workshop on conflict resolution techniques by an outside consultant.

Ombudsman staff led presentations on a variety of topics including

cross-cultural communicating strategies, changes and challenges in the correctional system, regional office activities, and communications and systems update.

A special highlight was the staff social which enabled everyone to renew friendships in a relaxed atmosphere while continuing discussions generated at the conference. A total of eighty five staff were in attendance, representing six Ombudsman offices from around the province.



COA pushes for federal Ombudsman

The Canadian Ombudsman Association (COA) is continuing its efforts to promote the creation of a general federal Ombudsman by holding discussions with officials of the federal department of Justice.

Barbara Tomkins, the Saskatchewan Ombudsman and recently elected COA president (replacing former Ontario Ombudsman Roberta Jamieson), is leading a committee that is working to establish a process with the office of the federal Minister of Justice, Anne McLellan, to review the COA proposal.

Last year the COA released a discussion paper on the need for a federal Ombudsman and held meetings with members of parliament and other interested parties working at the federal level. The paper pointed out that provincial Ombudsman offices regularly receive complaints directed at federal government programmes and services for which there is no independent mechanism with investigative authority and jurisdiction.

The discussion paper is available at Ombudsman Ontario's web site. The COA membership is comprised of provincial and territorial government Ombudsman offices, with associate member status granted to various non-government ombudsman institutions.

At the recent Ombudsman Ontario staff conference, Dan Clement, the Director of New Initiatives at the United Way of Greater Toronto, presented research published in the United Way's report "Toronto at a Turning Point." As the author of the report, he painted a fascinating picture of the dramatic demographic and social changes occurring in the Toronto area. He was joined for a panel discussion on the changing face of Toronto by speakers from the City of Toronto and the Community Social Planning Council.



Ombudsman staff gather at a recent conference to focus on transition and renewal.

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Who We Are

Ombudsman Ontario helps people resolve problems by investigating complaints they have with provincial government ministries, agencies, boards, commissions and tribunals. The office cannot deal with matters regarding federal or municipal government, the courts, school boards and the private sector. Ombudsman Ontario is independent of the government and is a place of last resort when other approaches to resolve complaints have been tried. Services provided are confidential.

About our logo

This is the symbol for Ombudsman Ontario. The "O" stands for our name. Inside, three sets of arms are coming together: one each for the public, the government and our office.



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