

## ROUNDTABLE OF DIVERSITY ASSOCIATIONS (“RODA”) HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE

### NAME

Roundtable of Diversity Associations – “RODA” (Portugese for “circle”)

### HISTORY

In the spring of 2011, the Toronto Lawyers Association (“TLA”) and other diverse seeking lawyers associations came together to discuss the *DiverseCity Report*, in particular the disproportionately low number of visible minority leaders in the legal profession.

The TLA then collaborated with the diverse seeking lawyers associations in the summer of 2011 to plan the 1<sup>st</sup> **Diversity Soiree** in the fall.

The TLA hosted the first Diversity Soiree on November 24, 2011 in the TLA Lounge at 361 University Avenue. The wine and cheese event was a great success with about 135 people in attendance, including several distinguished Ontario judges and members from ten ethnic bar associations who jointly sponsored the event. Justice Harry LaForme, who is a member of the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation and the first Aboriginal person to be appointed to sit on any appellate court in the history of Canada, was on hand to provide opening remarks.

The joint sponsors of the event were:

- Arab Canadian Lawyers Association
- Association of Chinese Canadian Lawyers of Ontario
- Canadian Association of Black Lawyers
- Canadian Association of South Asian Lawyers
- Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers
- Hellenic Canadian Lawyers Association
- Hispanic Ontario Lawyers Association
- Iranian Canadian Lawyers Association
- Korean Canadian Lawyers Association
- South Asian Bar Association

The Diversity Soiree represented the first collaboration between the TLA and these ten ethnic bar associations and the results were very promising.

Subsequent to the success of the 1<sup>st</sup> Diversity Soiree of fall, 2011, representatives of the TLA and other diversity seeking associations/organizations within the legal community met in March, 2012 with a view to establishing an ongoing relationship between associations so that they could celebrate, promote and encourage diversity within the legal profession and beyond (including the bench and law schools).

The second Diversity Soiree brought together lawyers and the Judges from the Court of Appeal, Superior Court of Justice, and Ontario Court of Justice and was jointly sponsored by the following associations:

- Toronto Lawyers Association
- Arab Canadian Lawyers Association
- Association of Chinese Canadian Lawyers of Ontario
- Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario
- Canadian Association of Black Lawyers
- Canadian Association of South Asian Lawyers
- Canadian Italian Advocates Organization
- Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers
- Hellenic Canadian Lawyers Association
- Hispanic Ontario Lawyers Association
- Indigenous Bar Association
- Iranian Canadian Lawyers Association
- Iranian Legal Professionals of Ontario
- Korean Canadian Lawyers Association
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Conference
- South Asian Bar Association
- Women's Law Association of Ontario

The Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Malliha Wilson gave remarks at the Diversity Soiree.

Following the successful Diversity Soiree in fall 2012, representatives of the TLA and other diversity seeking associations/organizations within the legal community again met in April, 2013 at which time it was agreed that the group would set a mandate, terms of reference and would meet regularly both in person and by teleconference.

Since the April, 2013 meeting, the group has met by teleconference in May, 2013 and will again meet in person June 11, 2013.

#### **PURPOSE**

- Supporting each other
- promoting each other's events
- sharing newsletters
- networking
- ad hoc response to issues of concern to the group
- a stronger voice with LSUC
- coordinating the (annual) diversity soiree

#### **SHARING INFORMATION**

- achieved through emails, in person and teleconference meetings and Google calendar

## **PARTICIPATING ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS**

- Arab Canadian Lawyers Association
- Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario
- Association of Chinese Canadian Lawyers of Ontario
- Canadian Association of Black Lawyers
- Canadian Association of South Asian Lawyers
- Canadian Italian Advocates Organization
- Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers
- Hellenic Canadian Lawyers Association
- Hispanic Ontario Lawyers Association
- Iranian Canadian Lawyers Association
- Iranian Legal Professionals of Ontario
- Korean Canadian Lawyers Association
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Conference
- South Asian Bar Association
- Toronto Lawyers Association
- Women's Law Association of Ontario

## **FORTHCOMING FOR 2013**

- Terms of Reference
- CPD event and next Diversity Soiree planned for late Nov-early Dec 2013

RODA's next meeting is June 11, 2013 at 5:30 p.m.