

LAW SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

BENCHER CANDIDATE



Elect Steve Rastin as your Bencher on April, 30, 2019

KEY ENDORSEMENTS

- Ontario Trial Lawyers Association
- Current Central East Bencher Bob Evans of Evans de Vries Higgins LLP
- Former Bencher Doug Lewis
- Former Bencher Mike Adams

ABOUT STEVE RASTIN

I have practiced civil litigation throughout Ontario from my small firm based in Barrie and Midland and serving all of Simcoe County for almost 25 years. I practiced for a short time in Toronto, and I articulated at a large firm in London. I have had the privilege of trying cases at all levels in the Courts including the Ontario Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada. I have also appeared before many tribunals including OHRT, WSIAT, LAT, FSCO, PAB and others.

I have earnestly served the profession through volunteerism including acting as President of the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association. I also speak at conferences regularly for OTLA, Canadian and Ontario Bar Association, Osgoode and the LSO.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEERISM

I have served in my community having held positions as Rotary Club President, my local Hospital Board President, member of the Midland Police Services Board, and working on various charity drives. Currently I chair the Simcoe County "Helmets on Kids" program.

WHY I'M RUNNING

I am running for Bencher because I am concerned about the future of the profession, the preservation of the independent practitioner, and finding ways to ensure lawyers can continue to provide outstanding service in an age of disruption. I want to make a contribution.

IF YOU ELECTED ME, MY PRIORITIES WOULD BE

- THE PUBLIC INTEREST
- ACCESS TO JUSTICE
- EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND DIVERSITY

The LSO should engage government and law schools to examine whether rapid increases in law school tuition and the number of new lawyers may hinder access to justice and diversity in the profession. Law should not be a profession only for the affluent. We need to foster lawyers seeking to embark on careers providing access to justice to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Rather than embark on divisive policies pursuant to which the LSO seeks to force licensees to provide lip-service approval to diversity values, the LSO should actively promote rigid adherence to the Rules of Professional Conduct. LSO has the right and the duty to require that lawyers agree to follow the law, but not the right to require that lawyers agree with beliefs.

I also believe that access to justice would be enhanced by shorter trials. I believe that the LSO should work with government and the Courts to facilitate Court reform to reduce the length of Ontario trials which are significantly longer than trials in other jurisdictions

PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES

I support pro bono legal services.

EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The *Law Society Act* directs that the Society's primary function is to ensure that all persons who provide legal services in Ontario meet standards of learning, professional competence and professional conduct. I believe that the LSO should govern and conduct itself in accordance with its legislative mandate.

- The public interest is served by ensuring that we maintain a healthy, independent and professional bar.
- In order to fulfil its place within Ontario society, law must be a profession, not a commodity.
- LSO should emphasize ethical and community-minded conduct.
- LSO must protect robust and properly funded regional law libraries.
- LSO should set clear rules with respect to advertising and referrals and should take fast and decisive action to penalize practices that bring the entire profession into disrepute.
- The public interest would be served by a mandatory, simple retainer agreement.
- LSO should exercise caution in expanding the scope of practice for paralegals into family law absent clear evidence that it is in the public interest.

THE EXPERIENCE I BRING TO THE ROLE

- Past President of the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association
- Lexpert Ranked, Consistently Recommended Lawyer (Peer Reviewed)
- Winner of the J.A. McLeish Award for contributions to advocacy, access to justice and legal scholarship (2016)
- Winner of the City of Barrie, Mayor's Recognition Award (2016)
- Winner of the Simcoe County District School Board Trustees Tribute Award (2015)

- Nominated by Canadian Lawyer as one of Canada's Top 25 Most Influential Lawyers (2015)
- Member of the Ontario Bar Association
- Member of the Advocates Society
- Member of the Simcoe County Law Association
- Called to the Bar (1995)
- Graduate of Western Law School
- Practiced in London, Toronto and Simcoe County
- Experience in personal injury, disability and insurance, labour and employment, commercial litigation, estate litigation, human rights litigation

SUPPORTED BY

- Doug Downey (MPP, Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte)
- Ron Bohm (President, OTLA)
- Allen Wynpearle (President-Elect, OTLA)
- Claire Wilkinson (Immediate Past President, OTLA)

- Maia Bent (Past President of OTLA)