

LAW FOUNDATION OF NOVA SCOTIA



2010-2011
ANNUAL REPORT

The Law Foundation of Nova Scotia is administered by a board consisting of up to nine members. Up to five members are appointed by the Governor in Council and four by the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society. The members of the board in 2010 – 2011 were:

APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL:

Christine A. McCulloch, Q.C.
Josh Arnold, Q.C.
M. Estelle Theriault, Q.C.
Anna Paton
George W. Hudson, C.A.

**APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE
NOVA SCOTIA BARRISTERS' SOCIETY:**

M. Gerard Tompkins, Q.C.
Robert G. MacKeigan, Q.C.
Margaret M. MacKenzie
A. Robert Sampson, Q.C.

**CHAIR, APPOINTED FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE
BOARD BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL UPON THE
JOINT RECOMMENDATION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
AND THE NOVA SCOTIA BARRISTERS' SOCIETY:**

Robert G. MacKeigan, Q.C.

The board meets 4-5 times per year, and reviews grant applications at its winter meeting.

**THE FOUNDATION EMPLOYS TWO
PART-TIME STAFF MEMBERS:**

Kerry Oliver, *Executive Director*
Kathy Samson, *Executive Assistant*

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The Law Foundation's most significant achievement in 2010-2011 was consistent support for its grantees despite the decline of its primary source of income resulting from record low interest rates since 2009. The board was pleased to approve twenty four grants totaling \$1.5 million.

The Foundation's income is derived primarily from interest earned on lawyers' trust accounts. The prime rate of interest rose from 2.25% in April 2010 to 3% as of March 31, 2011. Trust account revenue totaled \$471,558, up from \$331,560 for the year ended March 2010. The board authorized a transfer of \$700,000 from the Foundation's Reserve Fund to pay grants in 2010-2011, and anticipates additional transfers from the fund to pay grants approved for 2011-2012.

In addition to drawing down reserve funds, the Foundation continued its efforts to renegotiate more favorable agreements with banks for payment of interest on lawyers' trust accounts. We are pleased to report an improved agreement with the Royal Bank.

Our grantees continued to achieve outstanding results this year with diverse programs that provided Nova Scotians with access to legal information and assistance with their legal issues. They supported individuals involved in the criminal justice system, and offered legal education and guidance to youth at risk. Several of our grantees' programs focused on supporting those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable within our society, while others promoted excellence and equality within the legal profession.

Some of our grantees were recognized or rewarded for their achievements. The Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia was a finalist in the Donner Awards Program, which recognizes excellence in non-profit management and social service delivery. Of particular note in the youth category is EPIC Society's "Youth Peer and Parents PEACE", an after school program for youth in conflict with the law and support for parents. EPIC was recognized by the Canadian Donner Foundation as the 2010 highest achieving social service agency out of 514 applicant agencies in Canada across all categories.



Barry Waldman accepts the 2010 Donner Foundation Award recognizing EPIC as the highest achieving social service agency.

The Indigenous Blacks and Mi'kmaq (I B & M) Initiative at the Schulich School of Law was honored to receive the 2010 Canadian Bar Association Touchstone Award, recognizing outstanding achievements in promoting equality in the legal community in Canada. This is the first time that the Touchstone Award has been granted to an organization rather than an individual.



Director Michelle Williams-Lorde (right) accepts from Sharon Avery the 2010 CBA Touchstone Award on behalf of the I B & M Initiative.

The Tri-County Restorative Justice Agency will be a presenter at the 14th World Conference of the International Institute for Restorative Practices in June 2011. The Agency will present an overview of its peer-led school program "Bringing Restorative Practices into Schools" that encourages and promotes youth leadership by training them to act as facilitators in restorative justice circles. The Law Foundation was instrumental in the developmental stages of this program by providing project funding during its first three years of operation from 2008-2011.

The Foundation was pleased to host the Annual Meeting of the Association of Canadian Law Foundations from September 30 – October 2, 2010. Foundations from across Canada gathered for three days to discuss issues of mutual concern and future direction. Participants were inspired by a visit to the Halifax Refugee Clinic, which has been a grantee of the Nova Scotia Law Foundation for the past ten years. We were honoured to host Professor Russell Engler of the New England School of Law in Boston, who spoke about evaluating self-help initiatives, and the Honourable Justice Thomas Cromwell of the Supreme Court of Canada, who spoke about the serious problem of access to justice in this country, and the role that the courts and law foundations can play in meeting the challenges.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The year saw two changes to the board. Christine McCulloch, Q.C., Chief Electoral Officer for the Province of Nova Scotia, retired from the board in October 2010, having completed her term as chair the previous February. The Foundation and its grantees owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Christine for her vision, diligence and commitment to the office of chair and the work of the board. Christine has been replaced as board member by George Hudson, C.A., Executive Director of Finance and Administration, Department of Community Services. George brings a unique perspective and skill set to the board.

The year also saw changes to the Trustees of the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia Scholarship Fund. Christine McCulloch was replaced by board member Estelle Theriault, Q.C., and Phillip Saunders, former Dean of the Schulich School of Law, was replaced by Dean Kim Brooks.

The coming year could bring some relief for the Foundation in terms of revenue if interest rates begin to rise as predicted; in the meantime, we remain confident that we are maximizing the impact of the funds available during these challenging times.

I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to staff and to members of the board for their generous contributions to the work of the Foundation.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert G. MacKeigan, Q.C.
Chair

March 31, 2011

