

RODA's 6th Annual Diversity Conference in Partnership with the OBA: Disruption Ignites Change



Webcast

*Ontario Bar Association and Roundtable of Diversity
Associations (RODA)*

Date: Monday, December 7, 2020

Agenda: 9:00 am Program begins
5:00 pm Day Program ends

Location: Via Webcast

Program Chairs: **Adrian Ishak**, Vice Chair of RODA, Senior Corporate Counsel, Global Labour & Employment, Salesforce
Sojourner King, Sojourner King Law Professional Corporation



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The RODA-OBA Annual Diversity Conference returns by popular demand to provide thought-provoking, practical discussions on current issues affecting diverse lawyers and allies.

The first half of 2020 gave rise to a pandemic which derailed the "status quo" on many fronts, and witnessed important social movements fighting for racial equality and action to end climate change. We are living in very interesting times. This year's full-day virtual conference will feature timely discussions on:

- Embracing technology in courts and the impacts of COVID-19 on access to justice
- Keys to resilience during times of crisis
- The impact of emergency powers on marginalized communities
- Practice management and contingency planning for crises
- Disruption as an agent for positive change
- Movements that made change and their impact on the justice system
- Becoming an EDI change-maker in your own practice; and
- Exploring setbacks to disruption

Hear from fellow lawyers and other professionals, and be inspired by their experiences and the strategies they have used. Choose from sessions in both substantive and career tracks that will address the often-complex issues facing equity-seeking and racialized lawyers and their allies.

9:00 a.m. Welcome and Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

9:05 a.m. Opening Remarks from Charlene Theodore, OBA President and Dina Awad, RODA Chair

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9:15 a.m. **Keynote Address:**

No Time to Waste: How Courts Embraced Change During Disruption

There is no greater disruption to our daily lives than the pandemic we have been living through since early March. Our worlds have been turned upside down in every sense. The courts have proven to be quite nimble to adopt new technology solutions in this time of great uncertainty.

This keynote address will explore the impact the pandemic is having on the administration of justice, as well as, examine how the courts have adopted technology to help move us forward, including an assessment of some successes and the potential for permanent changes to the court system.

Speaker: The Honourable Geoffrey B. Morawetz, Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Justice

10:15 a.m. **Technology Adoption and Its Impact on Access to Justice**

The current environment has accelerated innovation in some sectors, including the justice system. This session provides an overview of the successes and challenges of adopting online technologies in New York State, and examines what new technology advancement efforts underway in Ontario.

Speaker: **Mark Berman**, Ganfer & Shore LLP (New York)

Colin Stevenson, OBA Immediate Past President

Moderator: **Sojourner King**, Sojourner King Law Professional Corporation

11:15 a.m. **Health Break**

11:30 a.m. **Select one stream below**

Breakout Session #1 (a)–Substantive (concurrent)

The Contours of Emergency Power Laws

This panel discussion will provide a broad review of the emergency power laws in Canada, and examine how and why these laws often have a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities and communities of colour. What constructive steps can be considered to start moving towards a more inclusive outcome?

Speakers: **Michael Bryant**, Executive Director and General Counsel, CCLA

Ena Chadha, Chief Commissioner, OHRC

Marie-Claude Landry, Chief Commissioner, CHRC

Moderator: **Dina Awad**, Chair of RODA

Breakout Session #1(b) -Career Track (concurrent)

Contingency Plans in Times of Crisis

Now, more than ever, it is imperative to properly prepare for the next unexpected event. This session analyzes the essential elements of a contingency plan, as required by the Law Society of Ontario, including best practices and practical measures necessary to help ensure your law practice will be resilient and adaptive to the unexpected.

Speakers: Eugene Cipparone, Director, Professional Support, Goodmans LLP
Kirsti Mathers McHenry, Operations, Mathers McHenry & Co.
Juda Strawczynski, LAWPRO

Moderator: Adrian Ishak, Vice Chair of RODA, Senior Corporate Counsel, Global Labour & Employment, Salesforce

12:30 p.m. Lunch and Health Break

1:30 p.m. Disruption as an Agent for Positive Change

As unsettling as change may be, large scale disruption can open creative pathways to change. Our distinguished panelists explore ways in which we can leverage these unsettling times to create lasting and positive change to justice in Ontario.

Speakers: The Honourable Breese Davies, Superior Court of Justice
The Honourable Rita Maxwell, Ontario Court of Justice
Ryan Peck, Executive Director, HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic, Ontario (HALCO)
Scott Robertson, Nahwegahbow Corbiere

Moderator: Laura Sharp, Nahwegahbow Corbiere

2:30 p.m. Health Break

2:45 p.m. Select one stream below

Breakout Session #2(a) –Substantive When Movements Make Changes

Social movements, such as #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, and Idle No More, aim to inspire, change and disrupt the standing social or political “norm”. The panelists in this session discuss, debate and contemplate the various short-term and long-term impacts these social movements can have on our legal and justice system.

Speakers: Rachel Sachs, Chair of OBA’s Women Lawyers’ Forum
Joshua Sealy-Harrington, Power Law
Corey Shefman, Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP

Moderator: Fatema Dada, Counsel, Ontario Human Rights Commission

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Breakout Session #2 (b) – Career Track

Become the EDI Changemaker in Your Practice

Equality, diversity and inclusion is important in every workplace. What are some practical suggestions you can consider to put into practice in your work environment. How can you change the narrative in your legal workplace to effect meaningful change.

Speakers: **Nikki Gersh bain**, Chief Inclusion Officer, McCarthy Tétrault LLP
 Haniya Sheikh, Counsel, Department of Justice
 Jorja Jackson, Senior Director Corporate Counsel, Salesforce
Moderator: **Eric Sadvari**, Goldhart and Associates

3:45 p.m. **Disruption Triggering Setbacks: Privilege Fights Back**
Disruption can foster negative implications in the diversity and inclusion arena. This session explores the setbacks arising from disruption, such as an increase in defamation, hate speech and SLAPP litigation, security breaches and "fake news". The panelists will provide guidance on how to implement protections and best practices to navigate these challenges.

Speakers: **Gerald Chan**, Stockwoods LLP
 Fahad Siddiqui, Senior Associate, Norton Rose Fullbright Canada LLP
 Naseem Mithoowani, Mithoowani Waldman Immigration Law Group
Moderator: **Sabrina Bandali**, Bennett Jones LLP

4:45 p.m. Questions and Closing Remarks

5:00 p.m. Program Concludes