



NEW ASSOCIATE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF NOVA SCOTIA

Tuesday, June 23, 2020 (Halifax, NS) – The Honourable Patrick J. Duncan, a judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia for almost 13 years, has been appointed the new Associate Chief Justice for the Court.

The federal government made the announcement in a news release earlier today (June 23). Associate Chief Justice Duncan’s appointment fills the vacancy created when The Honourable Deborah K. Smith was elevated to the role of Chief Justice on June 24, 2019.

The Supreme Court of Nova Scotia has one Chief Justice who administers both divisions of the Supreme Court — the General Division, which includes criminal and civil matters, and the Family Division. The Chief Justice is assisted by one Associate Chief Justice for each division.

The Honourable Lawrence I. O’Neil has been the Associate Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (Family Division) since February 2011.

“As Chief Justice, I depend heavily on the expertise and assistance of my Associate Chief Justices to help keep our criminal, civil and family courts running effectively and efficiently,” said Chief Justice Smith. “I am confident Associate Chief Justice Duncan is up to this task. He is an extremely hard-working and insightful jurist who is always willing to take on new responsibilities. He has been especially helpful with mentoring our new judges and preparing them for their work on the Bench.”

Associate Chief Justice Patrick Duncan was first appointed to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia on Nov. 30, 2007. A graduate of Dalhousie Law School, he has taught criminal law to newly appointed judges and presented on issues including privacy, evidence, disclosure, and criminal jury trials.

As a judge, Associate Chief Justice Duncan serves on numerous committees aimed at improving the Courts and the administration of justice in Nova Scotia. He is Past Chair of the Federal Judicial Advisory Committee, which makes recommendations on new judicial appointments in Nova Scotia.

Before his appointment to the Bench, Associate Chief Justice Duncan was a partner in the firm of Beveridge, MacPherson & Duncan, with a wide-ranging practice that included administrative law, criminal defence, civil litigation, and public inquiries.

Prior to entering private practice, Associate Chief Justice Duncan spent seven years with Nova Scotia Legal Aid. He contributed to the work of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society and other legal organizations and presented extensively in areas related to criminal justice, policing, and professional discipline.

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