



FOUR JUDGES APPOINTED TO THE SUPREME COURT (FAMILY DIVISION)

Monday, March 9, 2020 (Halifax, NS) – The Nova Scotia Supreme Court is pleased to welcome four new judges to its Family Division, the first step in the move toward a single, unified court for all family law matters in the province.

Federal Justice Minister David Lametti made the announcement in a news release this morning. The Hon. Justice S. Raymond Morse was appointed to serve in Truro; The Hon. Justice Michelle K. Christenson will serve primarily in Yarmouth and Digby; The Hon. Justice Pamela Marche will preside in Sydney; and The Hon. Justice Paul Morris was appointed in Pictou. The appointments are effective immediately.

“Our Bench has been eagerly awaiting these new appointments and we are very pleased with the experience and caliber of the individuals who will be joining us on the Court,” said The Hon. Deborah K. Smith, Chief Justice of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court. “These appointments are important to Nova Scotians dealing with family law issues. Having more judges hearing family matters on a unified family court will help reduce delays and make the process clearer and less stressful for everyone.”

Up until now, in areas outside of the Halifax Regional Municipality and Cape Breton, family law matters, excluding divorce and the division of property, were heard in the Family Court of Nova Scotia.

The Supreme Court (Family Division), a unified family court, has jurisdiction to hear all family law matters. The Family Division currently sits in Halifax, Sydney and Port Hawkesbury.

Changes made to the province’s *Judicature Act* last March allow for an additional seven federal judges to be appointed to the Supreme Court (Family Division) to support the expansion of the unified family court model to other areas of the province. Today’s appointments are the first four of those seven positions.

Justice Morse and Justice Christenson previously presided on the Family Court of Nova Scotia. Justice Morse also served as the Associate Chief Judge of the Family Court since 2015. Justice Marche and Justice Morris are new appointments.

The Hon. S. Raymond Morse

Justice S. Raymond Morse was born in Sydney, N.S. He attended Dalhousie University, graduating with a BA in 1974 and his LL.B. from Dalhousie Law School in 1977. He went on to article with Patterson Smith Matthews and Grant in Truro and joined the firm as an associate in 1978 when he was admitted to the Nova Scotia Bar. He became a partner in 1986 and received his Queen's Counsel designation in 1999.

As a lawyer, Justice Morse specialized in the areas of insurance, personal injury and child protection. He was active in the Canadian Bar Association – Nova Scotia Branch, chairing its civil litigation section and participating in several other CBA-NS committees.

Justice Morse was first appointed to the Bench as a Family Court judge in April 2011 and became the resident Family Court judge for the Truro area in June 2017.

The Hon. Michelle K. Christenson

Justice Michelle K. Christenson received her BA from Mount Allison University with first class honours in 1992 and her LL.B. from the University of New Brunswick in 1995. In 2002, she completed her Licentiate and master's degree in Canon Law from Saint Paul University in Ottawa.

Justice Christenson practised primarily family law with Pink MacDonald Harding and later Warner Jacquard. In 2003, she joined the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, where she worked as a Senior Crown Attorney until the time of her first appointment in 2013.

For the past several years, Justice Christenson has been involved in the executive of the Nova Scotia Provincial Judges Association and the Nova Scotia Judicial Education Committee.

The Hon. Pamela Marche

Justice Pamela Marche was born and raised in Stephenville, Nfld. She attended St. Francis Xavier University, where she received a BA. In 1995, she obtained her LL.B. from Dalhousie Law School, where she was awarded the A.S. Patillo Prize for Advocacy (Smith Shield). In 2010, she earned a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Victoria.

As a lawyer, Justice Marche practiced with the law firm of Ryan & Ryan and with the Nova Scotia Legal Aid Commission, before joining the Court Services Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice in 1999. Over the past 20 years of public service, Justice Marche developed and implemented a wide variety of family justice services and programs within the Differential Response to Conflict Resolution framework. She was the recipient of the Nova Scotia Premier's Award of Excellence in 2007 and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2017.

The Hon. Paul Morris

Justice Paul Morris was raised in Nova Scotia, where he obtained a BA from Acadia University and his LL.B. from Dalhousie University Law School. He was called to the bar in 1998 and practised as an associate and later as a partner with Patterson Law. His legal focus was primarily on family and insurance law. Most recently, Justice Morris was working as Lead Counsel with the Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services of Nova Scotia.

At the time of this appointment, Justice Morris was a dedicated volunteer and advocate for amateur sports in his community. He served on numerous professional committees and boards, including serving as chair of the Colchester Regional Hospital Foundation.

For more information on the Nova Scotia Judiciary and the Courts of Nova Scotia, please visit www.courts.ns.ca.

-30-

Media Contact:

Jennifer Stairs
Communications Director
Nova Scotia Judiciary
902-221-5257 (C)
stairsjl@courts.ns.ca