



SUPREME COURT *of* NOVA SCOTIA (FAMILY DIVISION)

Updates from the Family Division

December 10, 2025

Kindly accept the following updates on behalf of the Family Division.

New Judge/Vacancy

We are excited to welcome Justice Stacey D. O'Neill to the Family Division. She was appointed last month to Halifax. Her appointment leaves one current vacancy in the Family Division in Sydney.

Emergency Protection Orders

The processes we have put in place to transition the reviews of EPOs from the General Division to the Family Division have worked well. Thus, unless things change, we expect these processes will become permanent.

Indigenous Communities

In February 2025, the Family Division started sitting at Eskasoni approximately every two weeks to preside over child protection matters originating from that community. In September 2025, the Family Division started sitting in Wagmatcook to serve the communities of Wagmatcook and We'koqma'q, again to preside over child protection matters.

In October 2025, several judges of the Family Division and Chief Justice Smith attended Millbrook First Nation to learn more about that community and the services offered to its residents. It was a wonderful example of an appropriate way for judges to better educate themselves about the history and culture of the people we serve.

Bench/Bar Interaction

Judges of the Family Division have continued to do educational presentations to members of the Bar at the CBA-NS Family Section Bench/Bar Dinners. We have been advised that there have been record attendance numbers for these events which allow members of the Bar outside of the HRM to attend online. The next dinner is in January 2026. Justice Christine Doucet will present on the topic of intimate partner violence.

On November 20, 2025, eleven of the Family Division Judges were able to attend the annual CBA Bench & Bar Family Law Section Dinner. It was an event enjoyed by all the judges.

I am hoping to organize several visits to Courthouses across the province in the Spring of 2026. The purpose of the visits would be to meet with members of the Bar to listen to their ideas for process reforms. I hope to meet with as many of you as possible and welcome your ideas.

Happy Holidays

On behalf of all the judges of the Family Division, we wish all of you the best over the holidays and in 2026. We thank the Family Bar for the important work it does in helping us serve individuals, families and children.

Associate Chief Justice R. Lester Jesudason
Supreme Court of Nova Scotia (Family Division)