

Celebrating the CIAJ

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Madame la présidente, chers collègues et amis: Il me fait grand plaisir d'être parmi vous, anciens et nouveaux amis. J'ai des liens de longue date avec l'Institut canadien d'administration de la justice et c'est avec fierté que je constate le succès de cette conférence.

President Mactavish did not have to ask me twice to say a few words to mark CIAJ's 35th anniversary, which we are celebrating this evening. I am very glad to have this opportunity and thank Anne and the organizers for the invitation to be here. I am an unabashed CIAJ enthusiast. In fact, I am really here to serve a warning to others—as evidence of what may happen to you if you allow yourself to become involved in CIAJ!

It is, of course, hard to know where to start. CIAJ has accomplished so much in its relatively short life. It was a pioneer in judicial education, introducing important programs for new judges and judgment writing. It did this at a time when new judge's training meant, as one long retired judge told me, that the new judge got a Bible and pencil. CIAJ continues to be an important partner with the National Judicial Institute in continuing education for judges.

The Institute was also a pioneer in training for tribunal members, offering programs when there was little or nothing else available. It continues to have an important presence in administrative law, particularly through the annual programs for judges and the regional and national roundtables.

Then there is legislative drafting. CIAJ is a major contributor to the continuing education of legislative drafts people and plays an especially important role in this regard in our bilingual and bi-jural country.

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Add to this the annual conference like this one, the publications, the Charles Gonthier research fellowship. It is an impressive list that speaks for itself.

The Institute's virtues are self-evident. So I have decided to take a different tack; rather than extolling all of these accomplishments of which many of you are well aware, I would like to address myself primarily to those of you who may not have much experience with the Institute or its programs. I do this because you are at risk. You may be thinking about getting more involved in the Institute. So I want to warn you what may happen to you if you do.

First, you risk having to try to live up to the vision of our illustrious founders—that small group of gifted and committed jurists who put CIAJ together in 1974: Associate Dean Stephen Borins, and Dean Harry Arthurs who were the creators, with the help of the Donner Foundation, and then Professors Allen Linden and Sidney Lederman who became respectively the first Director and Associate Director. The standards were set very high at the outset. So be careful. You will be expected to meet those standards in anything you do for the Institute.

Second, involvement with CIAJ will likely expose you to a whole new range of thinking about the administration of justice because it seeks to foster interdisciplinary interchange among everyone interested in the administration of justice. Look at who is attending and speaking at this conference. Think about the hugely successful program in legislative drafting and the interchange that occurs among judges, scholars, lawyers and tribunal members at the Administrative Law Roundtables. There is a real risk that if you persist in your interest in CIAJ, any narrow, professional views that you have will be challenged. Beware.

Troisièmement, si vous poursuivez votre intérêt dans l'ICAJ, votre fardeau de travail risque d'augmenter. J'en suis la preuve vivante. J'ai accepté une nomination au conseil de direction de l'Institut pour une période de deux ans. Dix ans plus tard, j'ai quitté le conseil comme ancien président. Il y a dix ans, j'ai accepté de remplacer quelqu'un à la dernière minute comme professeur au programme de formation pour les juges de nomination fédérale nouvellement nommés. Dix ans plus tard, j'y suis encore. Soyez prudent!

Fourth, you should know that involvement in CIAJ may prevent you from being isolated in your own jurisdiction and community. This is a very large country across which is spread a very small justice

community. If you like to be separated by large distances and multiple time zones from colleagues working in the same areas that you are, this is the country for you! So beware. CIAJ works hard to bring people of similar interests together, face to face, for both formal and informal interchange. I feel it my duty to tell you that you may be lured into these sorts of exchanges if you persist in your interest in CIAJ.

Finally, CIAJ will put you at risk of having a new and diverse group of professional colleagues and friends. Perhaps you are like one now-departed lawyer in Halifax who didn't like meeting new people. In fact, he said that he smiled first thing in the morning to get it over with. If that is your style, this is not the group for you. Looking around this room, I cannot even begin to name all the wonderful professional colleagues and friends whom I have met only because of CIAJ. It will be very hard for you to avoid doing the same, so be forewarned.

Il est évident que tous ces risques sont plutôt des occasions dont vous pouvez profiter. L'ICAJ est une organisation qui crée des possibilités de collaboration, de consultation et d'échange. All of the things I have referred to as risks are of course the strengths of CIAJ. How it has and continues to accomplish all that it does is almost a mystery. The budget is inadequate. There is no core funding. The staff is small. But with that dedicated staff and countless committed volunteers, great things have happened and continue to happen.

Madame la présidente, vous avez le droit d'être très fière de L'institut. Je suis très reconnaissant pour votre invitation de souligner son importance et de souhaiter à l'Institut « bon succès » pour l'avenir.