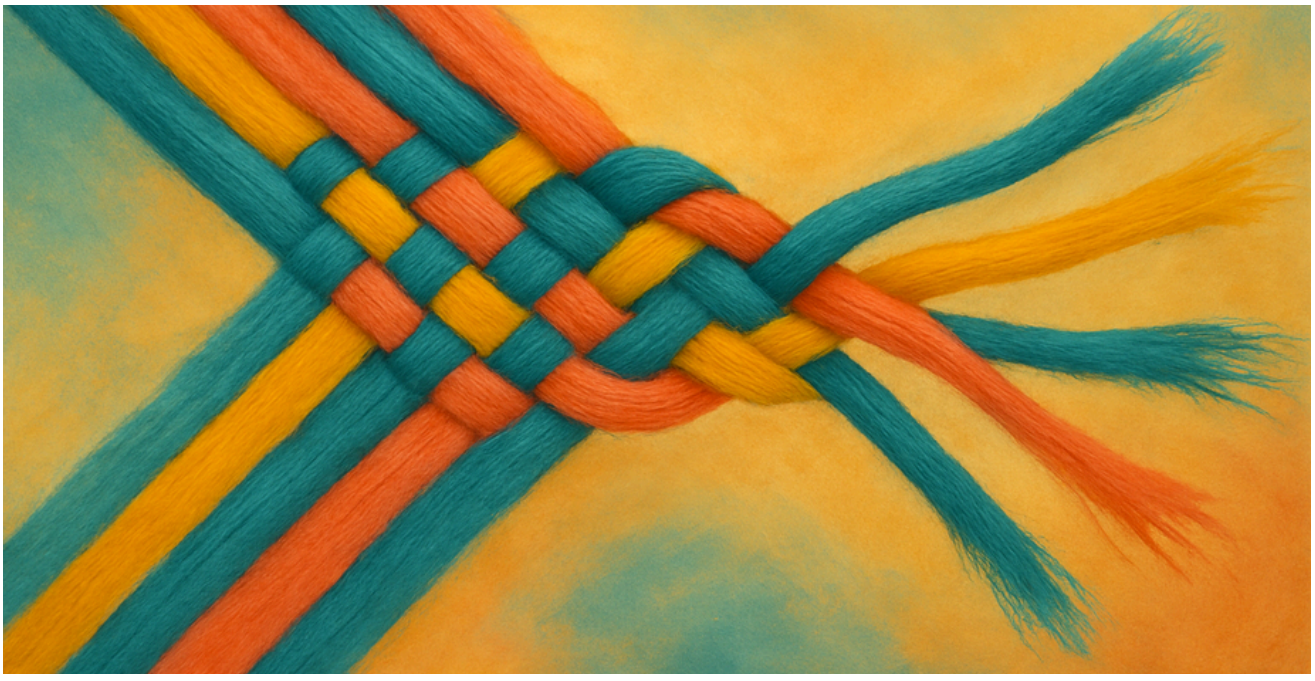
CIAJ | ICAJ
Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice
Institut canadien d'administration de la justice

50TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

REIMAGINING LAW AND JUSTICE THROUGH RESTORATIVE APPROACHES



Program

OCTOBER 27–28, 2026 | OTTAWA, ON

OVERVIEW

50TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Reimagining Law and Justice Through Restorative Approaches

This conference will explore the **growing movement of restorative approaches** in communities and examine how **restorative justice principles** can reshape our understanding of law and justice. Moving beyond a solely punitive model, restorative approaches invite a re-examination of how harm is addressed, how accountability is understood, and how relationships are repaired. The conference will consider how these principles can transform legal processes across diverse areas of law—criminal, family, administrative, and community-based contexts—and what their broader implications are for access to justice, legitimacy, and public trust in legal institutions.

Central to this conversation is a transformative shift in the role of legal actors. What is required of lawyers, judges, policymakers, and justice system leaders to support meaningful change? What legal reforms, professional practices, and institutional cultures are needed to embed restorative approaches within the legal system? Through conversations, knowledge exchanges, and applied examples, the conference will examine concrete pathways to justice that integrate restorative values. You will engage with real-world experiences, explore tools and models that are already emerging, and reflect on how law can evolve to better respond to harm, strengthen communities, and promote a more humane and responsive justice system.

LANGUAGE AND ACCREDITATION

Bilingual program with simultaneous interpretation.

Participation in this program is approved under Subsection 41(1) of the *Judges Act*.
Participation in this program is accredited in provinces where CLE requirements for lawyers are mandatory.

- **Total: 11h30**

For provinces where professional hours apply:

- **Substantive: 8h30**
- **Professionalism / EDI: 3h**

PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIR

- **The Honourable Justice Peter Willcock**, Court of Appeal for British Columbia, CIAJ President (Vancouver, BC)

MEMBERS

- **The Honourable Justice Michelle Christopher**, Alberta Court of Justice (Calgary, AB)
- **The Honourable Deputy Chief Justice Joanne Durant**, Alberta Court of Justice (Calgary, AB)
- **Matthew Hinshaw**, Senior Crown Prosecutor, Alberta Crown Prosecution Service (Edmonton, AB)
- **Jennifer Llewellyn**, Professor of Law, McNeil Chair in Restorative Justice, Director of Restorative Research at Innovation and Education Lab, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University (Halifax, NS)
- **The Honourable Justice Anna Loparco**, Court of King's Bench of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)
- **Megan Longley**, K.C., Executive Director, Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University (Halifax, NS)
- **Diana Lowe**, K.C., Justice System Consulting, Re-imagining Justice; Co-Lead, RFJS (Calgary, AB)
- **Robin Parker**, Counsel, Paradigm Law Group (Toronto, ON)
- **Megan Stephens**, Criminal and Constitutional Lawyer, Megan Stephens Law (Toronto, ON)
- **The Honourable Justice Anne Turner**, Court of Appeal for Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB)
- **Brenda Young**, Community Justice Director, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation (Muncey, ON)
- **Christine O'Doherty**, Lawyer and Executive Director, CIAJ (Montreal, QC)
- **Sarah Rowe**, Legal Counsel, CIAJ (Halifax, NS)
- **Danielle St-Hilaire,** Event Planner, CIAJ (Halifax, NS)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2026

8:00–8:55 AM **Registration and Breakfast**

8:55–9:15 AM **Opening Ceremony & Land Acknowledgement**

Chair:
- *The Honourable Justice Peter Willcock, Court of Appeal for British Columbia, CIAJ President (Vancouver, BC)*

Master of Ceremonies :
- *Stephen Bindman, Visiting Professor and Executive in residence, Faculty of Law (Common Law Section), University of Ottawa (Ottawa, ON)*

Indigenous Elder:
- *Grandma Karen MacInnis, Therapist/ Elder, Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health (Ottawa, ON)*

9:15–10:30 AM **Panel 1 • Lenses of Justice in an Evolving Legal Landscape**

This panel will review how restorative approaches to the legal system can reshape our understanding of justice. Speakers will provide examples of how these approaches present in various areas of law and describe key concepts and ideas to look out for throughout the conference.

Objectives: Understand the theoretical framework of restorative justice; Learn how a restorative approach in one area of law may be adapted to others.

Moderator:
- *The Honourable Justice Peter Willcock, Court of Appeal of British Columbia, CIAJ President (Vancouver, BC)*

Speakers:
- *Jennifer Llewellyn, Professor of Law, McNeil Chair in Restorative Justice, Director of Restorative Research at Innovation and Education Lab, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University (Halifax, NS)*
- *Erika Sasson, Attorney, Consultant and Restorative Justice Practitioner, Adjunct Professor, Vermont Law School, David Prize Winner (New York, USA)*
- *Jo-Anne M. Wemmers, Co-Director, Justice Centre for Victims of Crimes (JCVAC), Vice-President, World Society of Victimology, Full Professor, School of Criminology, Researcher, International Centre for Comparative Criminology (CICC) — University of Montreal (Montreal, QC)*

10:30–10:45 AM **Health Break**

10:45–12:00 PM **Panel 2 • Using Public Inquiries to Relate, Repair, and Restore**

Speakers will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of restorative approaches in public inquiries: how restorative justice may be used in a public inquiry, what is needed to make it effective, and the difference a restorative approach can make for the impacted community.

Objectives: Discover the success of civil restorative justice in the Restorative Inquiry – Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children; Learn about the restorative principles of the Mass Casualty Commission and the restorative approach taken by the Motherisk Commission; Consider the benefits of a restorative public inquiry over the traditional court system.

Moderator:
- *Megan Stephens, Criminal and Constitutional Lawyer, Megan Stephens Law (Toronto, ON)*

Speakers:
- *Dr. Kim Stanton, Lawyer, Consultant, Senior Fellow, Massey College — University of Toronto (Toronto, ON)*
- *The Honourable Pamela S. Williams, retired judge of the Provincial Court of Nova Scotia (NS)*

12:00–1:00 PM **Lunch**

1:00–2:00 PM **Panel 3 • A Restorative Approach in Canada**

Speakers from Alberta will discuss the restorative processes in their jurisdiction: how the processes were implemented, whether they have been effective, and how their restorative approach may be adapted to other jurisdictions.

Objectives: Learn how restorative approaches have been developed in Canada; Learn how to adapt and apply restorative processes from other jurisdictions in your practice.

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Justice Michelle Christopher, Alberta Court of Justice (Calgary, AB)*

Speakers:

- *The Honourable Deputy Chief Justice Joanne Durant, Alberta Court of Justice (Calgary, AB)*
- *Matthew Hinshaw, Senior Crown Prosecutor, Alberta Crown Prosecution Service (Calgary, AB)*
- *The Honourable Justice Anna Loparco, Court of King's Bench of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)*

2:00–3:00 PM **Conversation 1 • Lessons from Restorative Justice Processes in Criminal Law**

A restorative justice participant will share their experience alongside the lawyer who supported them throughout the process. Together, they will highlight the potential of restorative approaches to address harm in a more humane and constructive way.

Objectives: Understand the lived experience and potential benefits of restorative approaches; Explore the role lawyers can play in the design and implementation of these processes; Reflect on how restorative principles can be integrated into other areas of law.

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Justice Anna Loparco, Court of King's Bench of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)*

Speakers:

- *Laura Phypers, She who the spirit sings through (spirit name), Lawyer, Phypers Law Family and Divorce Lawyers (Red Deer, AB)*
- *Mr. Benjamin William Rabbit, Door Keeper (spirit name), Client of Laura Phypers (AB)*

3:00–3:15 PM **Health Break**

3:15-3:40 PM **Presentation • Gladue-related Practices**

Drawing on the findings of a three-year study funded by *Public Safety Canada*, this presentation will examine how Gladue practices can contribute to a more coherent and restorative approach to the criminal justice system.

Speaker:

- *Benjamin Ralston, Assistant Professor, College of Law—University of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon, SK)*

3:40-4:40 PM **Conversation 2 • Criminal Law: Youth**

Speakers working in youth criminal justice will discuss the unique elements of restorative justice in this area of the law. The discussion will include the long history of a restorative approach in the youth context, how this approach works in practice, and an opportunity for you to share your experiences and perspectives.

Objectives: Learn how restorative approaches are applied in youth criminal matters; Consider how these approaches can be applied to your own work.

Moderator:

- *Megan Longley, K.C., Executive Director, Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University (Halifax, NS)*

Speakers:

- *Serge Charbonneau, Strategic Advisor, Équijustice; Trainer in relational mediation; Mediator for Possibility of Justice Program, Correctional Service Canada; Collaborator, International Centre for Comparative Criminology (CICC) (Montreal, QC)*
- *Sgt Michael Grandia, Community Police Officer, Surrey Police Service — Youth Services (Surrey, BC)*

4:40-4:55 PM **Awards and Justice Medal Ceremony**

5:30-7:00 PM **Reception**

8:00–9:00 AM **Registration and Breakfast**

9:00–10:00 AM **Conversation 3 • Beyond Damages: Alternatives for Civil Resolution and Repair**

Where monetary compensation alone cannot address the harm, this conversation will discusse alternative approaches to civil claims, class actions, and the settlement processes.

Objectives: Learn how restorative approaches are applied in civil law cases and class actions; Consider how these approaches can be applied to your own work.

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Justice Michelle Christopher, Alberta Court of Justice (Calgary, AB)*

Speakers:

- *Laura Bruneau, Canadian Class Action Settlement Expert/Adjudicator, Program Builder & Entrepreneur (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Mike Dull, K.C., Litigation & Founding Lawyer, Valent Legal (Halifax, NS)*
- *The Honourable Justice Chris Martin, Court of King's Bench of Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB)*

10:00–11:00 AM **Conversation 4 • Restorative Approaches in Medical Malpractice: Rethinking Accountability and Healing**

Medical malpractice disputes can have profound consequences for patients, healthcare professionals and the healthcare system. This panel will explore how restorative approaches can complement traditional litigation by fostering dialogue, accountability, meaningful resolution and healing. Drawing on legal and healthcare perspectives, panelists will examine opportunities for early resolution, the challenges of determining responsibility and compensation, and how restorative approaches can contribute to patient safety and systemic improvement.

Objectives: Understand the issues facing legal and medical actors in these cases; Learn how restorative approaches are applied in these cases; Consider how these approaches can be applied to your own work.

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Justice Susanne Boucher, Ontario Superior Court of Justice (Toronto, ON)*

Speakers:

- *Pamela Eisener-Parsche, Executive Director, Member Experience, Canadian Medical Protective Association (Ottawa, ON)*
- *Raymond F. Wagner K.C., Founder and Principal, Wagners (Halifax, NS)*

11:00–11:15 AM **Health Break**

11:15-12:15 PM **Conversation 5 • Non-Adversarial Pathways for Family and Relationship-Based Violence**

This conversation will explore non-adversarial pathways for addressing family conflict and relationship-based harm, including how the legal system can incorporate trauma-informed, culturally grounded, and community-based models without privatizing the conflict or undermining public accountability.

Objectives: Understand how the "one-family model" functions as a non-adversarial pathway in family law cases; Consider the impact of the interdisciplinary overlap between family and criminal law cases; Learn about culturally grounded approaches advanced by Indigenous communities; Consider how these approaches can be applied to your own work.

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Justice Anne Turner, Court of Appeal for Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB)*

Speakers:

- *Melissa Bourgeois, Family Lawyer and Founder, One Family Law (Edmonton, AB)*
- *Wendy Leiper, Facilitator at Restorative Research, Innovation and Education Lab, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University (Halifax, NS)*
- *Brenda Young, Community Justice Director, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation (Muncey, ON)*

12:15-1:15 PM **Lunch**

12:30-1:00 PM **CIAJ Annual General Meeting**

1:15-2:15 PM **Conversation 6 • Family Law: Domestic Violence**

This session will focus on practical issues and challenges that arise when addressing domestic and intimate-partner violence through a restorative lens. Speakers will consider alternatives to the traditional justice system for these matters and highlight the impact on Indigenous people in these cases.

Objectives: Understand why Indigenous people are overrepresented in these cases; Consider when and how restorative approaches can be applied; Consider how these approaches can be applied to your own work.

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Chief Justice Marianne Rivoalen, Chief Justice of Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB)*

Speakers:

- *Mona O'Brien, Special Projects, Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network (Millbrook, NS)*
- *The Honourable Pamela S. Williams, retired judge of the Provincial Court of Nova Scotia (NS)*

2:15–3:15 PM **Panel 4 • Restorative Approaches to Dispute Resolution**

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) shares many principles with restorative approaches in the legal system by emphasizing dialogue, participation, accountability, and collaborative problem-solving rather than adversarial outcomes. ADR processes, such as mediation and facilitated negotiation, encourage parties to engage directly with one another, address the impact of conflict, and work toward mutually acceptable solutions. However, ADR processes are not always restorative. In this panel, speakers will explain how restorative approaches can be used in ADR to address the harm, needs, and obligations of the parties involved.

Objectives: Understand when an ADR process is restorative and when it is not; Learn key skills that make an ADR process more restorative; Consider how these approaches can be applied to your own work.

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Justice Julie Dutil, Court of Appeal of Quebec (Quebec, QC)*

Speakers:

- *The Honourable Justice Charles Bienvenu, Superior Court of Quebec (QC)*
- *Cherolyn Knapp, Conflict Resolution Practitioner, Civil Mediator, Workplace Investigator, and Lawyer, Knapp Resolutions (Victoria, BC)*

3:15–3:30 PM **Health Break**

3:30–4:30 PM **Panel 5 • Taking a Restorative Approach to Innovation and Systemic Change**

As you've heard throughout the conference, a restorative approach requires more than tools and tricks. It challenges us to reorient our perspective to think about the roles and responsibilities of the traditional legal system. But how are these approaches applied outside of the court system? This panel will describe the use of a restorative approach at the institutional or community level and the need for systemic change and compromise in its implementation. Through real-world examples, speakers will guide you on a journey toward restorative systemic changes, highlighting the barriers and setbacks encountered along the way.

Objectives: Consider the values restorative approaches outside of Canada share with those discussed throughout the conference; Understand the role of leadership in a restorative approach; Learn about violence prevention and the need for collective intervention.

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Justice Clayton J. Conlan, Superior Court of Justice of Ontario (Milton, ON)*

Speakers:

- *Aaron Lyons, Director and Lead Consultant, Just Outcomes (Saltspring Island, BC)*
- *Florentine Ngarambe, Legal Information Officer, French-speaking Legal Professionals Association of Alberta (Calgary, AB)*
- *Nadine Wagner, Superintendent, Learning & Sworn Recruitment Division, Calgary Police Service (Calgary, AB)*

4:30–4:45 PM **Closing Remarks**

Chair:

- *The Honourable Justice Peter Willcock, Court of Appeal for British Columbia, CIAJ President (Vancouver, BC)*

Master of Ceremonies:

- *Stephen Bindman, Visiting Professor and Executive in residence, Faculty of Law (Common Law Section), University of Ottawa (Ottawa, ON)*

DECADES OF EXCELLENCE

CIAJ IN 2026

CIAJ marks more than 50 years of leadership in the advancement of the administration of justice in Canada. Since 1974, the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice has brought together legal professionals through its annual events, webinars, and publications, reaching a diverse and influential audience.

OUR MISSION

To promote excellence in justice through knowledge, learning and the exchange of ideas.

COMMUNITY

Join us and our members in shaping the future of justice.

JUDGES, LAWYERS, LEGISLATIVE DRAFTERS, INDIGENOUS ELDERS, ACADEMICS, POLICYMAKERS, SOCIAL WORKERS, LAW ENFORCEMENT...

+2 500
Members

+13 000
Subscribers

PROGRAMS

+2 000
Program participants in judicial and non judicial activities and conferences

+300
Speakers and experts

+30
Programs, in person and online

CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIUM, ROUNDTABLES, SUMMITS, SPECIALIZED SEMINARS, WEBINARS, CUSTOMIZED TRAINING COURSES...

INDEPENDENT & PAN-CANADIAN

CIAJ is a multidisciplinary, independent, pan-Canadian, not-for-profit network across Canada.

IN ALL FAIRNESS

A podcast channel to explore ways of improving the administration of justice in Canada.

57 833
Downloads of our podcasts.

#CLAWBIES 2023
Best Podcast Award

BLOG

+140

Blog posts and expert analysis to contribute to a more efficient justice system.

WWW.CIAJ-ICAJ.CA

Planting the Seeds of Justice

Imagine a space where concrete solutions emerge to address the complex challenges of our Canadian justice system. This is what the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice (CIAJ) is all about.

Founded in 1974, CIAJ's mission is to promote excellence in justice through knowledge, learning and the exchange of ideas.

CIAJ acts as a conduit for change. As a non-profit and independent organization, we bring together individuals and institutions from diverse expertise—judges, lawyers, academics, policymakers, as well as social workers, law enforcement, and engaged citizens— to improve the administration of justice across Canada. Our multidisciplinary approach enables us to break down silos and mobilize diverse perspectives across a wide range of sectors, tackling fundamental issues in depth. Together, we develop concrete solutions tailored to the real needs of Canadians.

We are much more than event organizers: we are a driving force for change. At CIAJ, we build bridges where none existed before, ensuring that the justice system reflects the complexity, diversity, and aspirations of our society.

Join CIAJ: develop yourself, shape a better world, and make a difference.

By becoming a member of CIAJ, you join a community committed to transforming justice. Together, we have the power to influence policy, improve access to justice and build a more equitable system. Join us today to be part of this essential change.

JOIN CIAJ

Contact us

Please contact us for more information about our organization, the benefits of membership and how you can assist us with our mission.

Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice
5950, Chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges, Office 485
Montréal, Québec, Canada
H3S 1Z6
Tel: 514 -731-2855
Email: ciaj@ciaj-icaj.ca

NOVEMBER 12-13, 2026 | OTTAWA, ON

A Bench & Bar Conference

Understanding Maritime Law in Practice

Personal injury law, environmental law and Aboriginal law — **maritime law lies at the intersection of numerous fields and continues to evolve**.
This two-day conference, led by experts from the judiciary and the bar, will provide you with the tools to navigate this area of law and stay current.

Whether you are **a judge dealing with urgent in rem motions or a lawyer litigating before the Federal Court or Superior Courts**, this program covers both procedural and substantive issues — and is suitable for both seasoned practitioners and those who encounter them less frequently.

This program is bilingual with simultaneous interpretation.
Participation in this conference is approved under Subsection 41(1) of the Judges Act.

MARCH 29-31, 2027 | TORONTO, ON

Conference: AI, Law, and the Future of Justice

CIAJ will hold **a national conference on artificial intelligence and justice.** This event will build on the reflections of the roundtables held in 2026, enriched by the perspectives of the various stakeholders consulted. It will aim to **formulate concrete recommendations to guide the use of AI in the Canadian justice system.**

This conference will be **a unique opportunity to assess the current state of affairs, share best practices, highlight grey areas and explore future avenues** compatible with the fundamental values of the justice system. It may also **contribute to the development of a pan-Canadian framework on the ethical, legal and technical issues** raised by AI.

This program is bilingual with simultaneous interpretation.
Participation in this conference is approved under Subsection 41(1) of the Judges Act.