

*A Semi-Annual Newsletter Publication of
the Hellenic Canadian Lawyers' Association*

Volume 7

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Agapi Mavridis, HCLA President

Dear Members,

Welcome to this edition of The Legalese! The HCLA's newly constituted Board is already hard at work, and looking forward to continuing to serve our members. I am honoured to begin my tenure as the President of the HCLA. Please know that I am available anytime to speak with members and receive feedback on the progress of our Association.

Honouring Outgoing Directors

I would like to begin by expressing our sincerest gratitude to the outgoing directors; Christine Arruda, former President, Sam Presvelos, former Vice President, Steve Lyberopoulos, former Treasurer, Alexandra Psellas, former Student Director, and Niki Kanavas, former Community Relations Director. While it is impossible to outline every contribution each of these outgoing directors has made to the HCLA as they are extensive, I would like to provide you with a high-level understanding of their commitment to the HCLA:

FEATURED STORIES:

President's Message

Meet our 2023/2024 Justice Karakatsanis Scholarship Winners!

Meet Our 2024/2025 Tsiolis Foundation First Year Law Student Scholarships Winners!

Resilience and "Balance": The Second Hellenic Women's Networking Luncheon

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Thank You Letter From Former HCLA President Christine Arruda

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When Meritorious Opening Statements Undermine Mediations

New Year Cheer 2025

Hellenic Professionals Gala 2025

From the Editors



Under Christine's presidency, the HCLA has thrived and expanded under every aspect of our mandate of network, educate, and advocate. Christine served as a fearless leader, always open to new ideas and opportunities to support our membership and reach out to the broader Hellenic community. She served the HCLA with dedication, authenticity, professionalism, and grace. We are very grateful to Christine for her time as our President.

Sam, Steve, Alexandra, and Niki made incredible contributions to the HCLA within their respective portfolios. I encourage you to review past issues of *The Legalese* to see the extensive contributions of each of these former Directors, as there are too many to list here. Their consistent and proud representation of the HCLA in the community, including towards prospective student members, is what makes this association an important part of both our Hellenic and legal communities in Canada.

Our New Board

At our recent Annual General Meeting in November 2024, a new Board of Directors was elected to represent the HCLA. On behalf of the newly elected Board, I wish to thank you for your confidence in us to lead the HCLA in the years to come. We appreciate your membership and consistent support of our association. This is indeed our association, and we are here for you. Please reach out to any of us any time with your feedback.

Personal Note

On a personal note, I wanted to share that this holiday has been particularly difficult for me due to the loss of a dear loved one, my father. My dad, George Mavridis, was fiercely committed to the principles of community stewardship, philanthropy, mentorship, and family. I think many of us are lucky to have a family member that fits this description. He was not a lawyer, but he is who I often think about when I need to consider how a reasonable person, properly informed of Charter values, would assess the quality of my work as an Assistant Crown Attorney.

My dad testified via Zoom on a civil matter as a witness, and the Court assessed him as follows: "Mavridis presented in a straightforward manner. He did not embellish his evidence. He has no personal stake in the outcome of this litigation. He was unshaken in cross examination." (*Tsitsos v. Poka*, 2021 ONSC 3418, at para 85). These four short sentences describe my dad better than I ever could - despite my advocacy skills, I could never shake my dad in cross-examination about anything!

Thank you for taking the time to indulge me, and learn a bit about my dad. I wish all of you an incredible 2025.

With thanks,

Agapi Mavridis
President, Hellenic Canadian Lawyers' Association



MEET OUR 2023/2024 JUSTICE KARAKATSANIS STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!

Thank you to all those who applied for the Justice Karakatsanis Student Scholarships! The Board of Directors of the HCLA received several competitive and impressive applications this year and following an anonymized review decided to award the scholarships to two deserving applicants: Phil Paschali and Athanasia Thalia Petsis. Phil and Athanasia each received a scholarship in the amount of \$3,500. Congratulations! Here is some background on our winners:

Phil Paschali

Prior to law school, Phil earned a Business Management Degree with a specialization in Law and Business from Ted Rogers School of Management at Toronto Metropolitan University. During his undergraduate years, Phil excelled as a member of the school's DECAU Chapter, winning multiple awards in their business law category, and placing third overall in the International Competition. Soon after, Phil was invited to become a judge for future competitions and acted as a mentor, guiding junior members to success.

Phil began his law school journey as part of the Dual JD program with the University of Windsor's Faculty of Law and University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. During this time, he participated in three moot court competitions, two of which he was an oralist and received distinctions, and one as a legal researcher to the Donald G.H. Bowman National Tax Moot Competition where the team placed in the semi-finals. Phil's commitment to legal excellence led him to become a certified mediator in Michigan, mediating landlord-tenant disputes, and contributing to conflict resolution. After this first year at Windsor's Dual JD Program, Phil decided to transfer to Osgoode where he remained dedicated to pro-bono initiatives and joined Parkdale Community Legal Services. In this role, he provided free legal work to tenants in his final year of law school. This passion led Phil to become a member of the Hellenic Canadian Lawyers' Association (HCLA) where he was an active participant in the Pro Bono Committee and Student Initiatives Committee. Phil participated as co-moderator of the HCLA's webinar "Intro to the Canadian Legal System for Hellenic Youth" and in the development of the HCLA Student Guide to Law School. During the COVID-10 pandemic, Phil volunteered as a tutor to high-school students of Cypriot descent.

Phil completed his 2L Summer at McCarthy Tetrault LLP in Toronto and is returning to the firm to complete his articles.



MEET OUR 2023/2024 JUSTICE KARAKATSANIS STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!



Athanasia Thalia Petsis

Athanasia Thalia Petsis is a recent graduate of the Dual Canadian and American Juris Doctor at the University of Windsor Faculty of Law and the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. During her time in law school, Thalia was actively involved in the Windsor/Detroit Mercy community and served as the President of the Windsor Law Hellenic Canadian Lawyers' Association. Her leadership also included acting as her law school's HCLA student representative, developing the HCLA Student Guide to Law School and volunteering for the HCLA's 2024 Professionals Gala.

Before pursuing her JD, Thalia earned a Master of Science in Business Analytics with a concentration in Big Data from the University of Massachusetts Lowell, where she also accumulated years of experience in finance through her work at Deloitte LLP in Toronto.

Thalia also holds a double Bachelor's degree in Finance and International Business, with a minor in French, from UMass Lowell. During her time there, she excelled both academically and athletically, representing the university as an NCAA Division 1 student-athlete on the Women's Soccer team. She further enhanced her educational experience with multiple internships at the Royal Bank of Canada.

Thalia completed her 2L Summer at Rosen & Associates Tax Law and has returned to the firm to complete her articles.

Thalia's passion for her heritage is evident in her active involvement in various Hellenic initiatives and mentoring fellow Greeks aspiring to enter the legal profession. Thalia is a New Leader Board Member for The Hellenic Initiative Canada New Leaders and Executive Member of the Greek-Canadian Games.

The Board enjoyed reading all the applications and getting to know our students better. Determining the recipients of the HCLA's scholarships is always a difficult decision and is based on many factors. We would like to thank all of our applicants and congratulate them on their accomplishments.

Applications for the 2024/2025 Justice Karakatsanis Student Scholarship are now open.

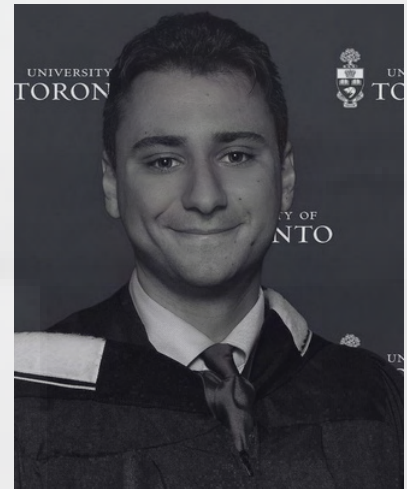
MEET OUR 2024/2025 TSIOLIS FOUNDATION FIRST YEAR LAW STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS WINNERS!

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who applied for the 2024/2025 Tsiolis Foundation First Year Law Student Scholarships. The Board of Directors of the HCLA reviewed several competitive and impressive applications this year. After conducting an anonymized review, we are pleased to announce the recipients of the scholarships: Demetre Kanargelidis and Despina Tsamis. Each scholarship, generously funded by the Tsiolis Foundation, is valued at \$1,750. We are deeply grateful for the Tsiolis Foundation's ongoing support, which helps us empower and invest in the next generation of legal professionals. Congratulations to them both! Below is some background information on our outstanding winners:

Demetre Kanargelidis

Demetre Kanargelidis is currently pursuing a JD/MBA at Osgoode Hall Law School and the Schulich School of Business. He graduated with High Distinction from the University of Toronto, where he majored in European Affairs and History, with a minor in Political Science. Demetre has a strong connection to Hellenic culture, having held various leadership roles in the Greek Students' Association, mentored peers, and conducted research on Greece-Turkey relations at the Munk School of Global Affairs. His commitment to his heritage also led him to study in Athens and participate in the Aegean Greek Immersion Summer School in Rhodes and he is currently serving as the school's Ambassador. Additionally, Demetre is the IL rep for the Osgoode Panhellenic Association (OPA).

In addition to his academic achievements, Demetre is a self-taught chef with a passion for sourdough baking, slow-cooked lamb, and making his own gyros. We look forward to seeing the continued impact of his work as he progresses through his studies at Osgoode!



Despina Tsamis

Despina Tsamis is a first-year law student at Queen's University, building on an impressive academic background with a Master's in Philosophy from Western University and an Honours BA from York University, where she graduated summa cum laude.

Her commitment to the Hellenic community has been evident throughout her life, from attending Greek school and participating in Greek dance to teaching both Sunday school and Greek school. Despina has also made a mark in mooting, founding and coaching York's Moot Law Society, leading her team to multiple national finals. She co-founded the Queen's Law Moot Society to create more opportunities for first-year students and is already planning a IL moot competition sponsored by the Toronto Bar Association. We look forward to seeing her continued success at Queen's and in her legal career.



The Board sincerely enjoyed reviewing all the applications and learning more about our students. Selecting the recipients of the HCLA's scholarships is never an easy task, as it involves careful consideration of many factors. We extend our gratitude to all applicants and congratulate them on their achievements. For those who were not selected this year, we strongly encourage our students to apply for HCLA scholarships in the future.

RESILIENCE AND “BALANCE”: THE SECOND HELLENIC WOMEN’S NETWORKING LUNCHEON

By Agapi Mavridis, HCLA President

The HCLA proudly hosted the second Hellenic Women’s Networking Luncheon on September 15, 2024 at the Centennial College Event Centre in Toronto, Ontario. This event built on the momentum of our inaugural luncheon last year, and brought together women of Hellenic heritage across all professions and career-stages to network and build lasting connections. The 1-hour panel discussion that anchored the event was accredited by the Law Society of Ontario.

This year’s theme was Resilience: balancing professional, personal, and philanthropic commitments. We were honoured to hear from our three panel speakers who shared their personal and professional experiences of building resilience in their careers, volunteer roles, and family life with the group. Despite the diversity of professional backgrounds in the room, attendees found a sense of connection through common experiences in finding equilibrium in their lives. The HCLA extends its sincere gratitude to our incredible panelists who devoted their personal time and effort to volunteer for our panel: Angela Nikolakakos, Dr Mia Skarpathiotakis, FRCPC,MD,MSc,BASc, and Jeanie Theoharis, KC.



The funds raised from this Luncheon support the HCLA’s scholarship programs. This event would not be possible without the support of our attendees and sponsors to whom we are grateful. We wish to extend a special thank you to this year’s Silver Sponsor, Biochem Environmental Solutions, for their year after year sponsorship of the Luncheon and ardent support.



RESILIENCE AND “BALANCE”: THE SECOND HELLENIC WOMEN’S NETWORKING LUNCHEON (CONT.)

A big thank you to our Patron Sponsors that contributed funds to ensure this event was a success: ALF LLP, Gina Alexandris Coaching & Consulting, Miller Thomson LLP, Penny Stayropoulos, Partner and Portfolio Manager at Treegrove Investment Management Inc, PB Total Wealth Advisory and Consulting Corporation, and Presvelos Law LLP.

This event falls under both the HCLA’s networking and educating mandates and connects us with the broader Greek community in the GTA. We hope to continue this important work in the future!



HCLA AND ONTARIO SECURITIES COMMISSION: PROTECTING SENIORS AND VULNERABLE INVESTORS AGAINST FRAUD

Written by: Niki Kanavas, former HCLA Director

Edited by: Christine Arruda, Past President HCLA (2022-2024)

Over the past year, the HCLA has been working with the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC) to bring together an important community presentation related to senior and vulnerable investors. The HCLA, along with the Greek Community of Toronto, were pleased to invite the community to Seniors: Protecting Yourself Against Scams and Fraud, which was held on September 26, 2024. The presentation and interactive discussion focused on common scams, the warning signs of investment fraud and elder financial abuse. The presentation was followed by a discussion with Maria-Christina Spingos, of Spingos Law, who provided information on the various legal options available to seniors and their families.

Chris Allum, Senior Advisor, Investor Engagement and Stakeholder Partnerships of the OSC, presented the warning signs of fraud and scams currently impacting many households. She delved into the warning signs of investor fraud and elder financial abuse and provided practical everyday tips people may use to protect themselves. These ranged from simply hanging up the phone if one couldn't verify the caller, even if they promised to be from the Canada Revenue Agency or a financial institution, to keeping full control of financial balances and paperwork and ensuring to check statements regularly for any changes.

The breadth and sophistication of scams and schemes both online and in person is quite alarming. With the onset of artificial intelligence programs, sophisticated and clever scammers are becoming more convincing. One example given during the discussion was how scammers are using telephonic means to record voice and pitch and then using software to contact unwitting grandparents in a plea to transfer large sums of money.



HCLA AND ONTARIO SECURITIES COMMISSION: PROTECTING SENIORS AND VULNERABLE INVESTORS AGAINST FRAUD (CONT.)

The infamous grandparents' scam has been elevated such that the scammer pretending to be the grandchild is contacting a grandparent, potentially even speaking in their mother tongue including Greek, and making an urgent plea for funds to be transferred. Artificial intelligence is making the plea far more convincing. The unwitting grandparent may succumb to the fraud because they genuinely believe that the voice on the phone is that of their grandchild. One simple tip Ms. Allum gave was to simply hang up the phone and call back the grandchild to confirm if they in fact made the call.

From Boiler Room Scams to Ponzis, Offshore Investment Scams, Pension Scams and Crypto Scams, white collar crime is rampant. The Ontario courts are also grappling with cases involving alleged investor scams, with one recent case being publicized after an unwitting investor lost more than one million dollars in one such mortgage investment scam and later committed homicide. In some cases, members of the bar are being duped by clients and unwittingly facilitating investor scams.

Advising our clients that promises of high returns with little or no risk, or hearing of hot tips to invest under pressure and with unregistered investors are general signs of investment fraud and these warning signs may protect them from a very expensive and life changing decision. The importance of being aware of regulatory rules and laws contemporaneously is crucial but it's also an ethical obligation.

The OSC has multiple resources to facilitate and educate the public and the bar to prevent fraud and advise our clients responsibly.

[Checkbeforeyouinvest.ca](https://www.checkbeforeyouinvest.ca) is a source available to the public regulated by the OSC which provides background checks to confirm if an investment firm or person is registered. Another source is www.getsmarteraboutmoney.ca.

As part of our work with the OSC, we are pleased to announce that the OSC has translated their fraud, investor protection and introduction to investing materials to Greek. These materials contain important information on protecting against investment fraud, including phishing attempts, identity theft, extortion, romance, and offshore investing scams. The OSC has also provided information on investment products; wills and estate planning; and financial abuse and exploitation, including protecting against financial elder abuse. The website provides a number of downloadable resource kits that include an investment fraud checklist, how to check registration and possible disciplinary action related to an individual or business.

This important information is available on the OSC's website in both [English](#) and [Greek](#) and was included in the OSC's [Investor News](#), a monthly newsletter available for free by [subscription](#). We strongly encourage you to share this important information with your families, friends, colleagues and the Hellenic community.

The HCLA extends a special thank you to Chris Allum, Judy Man, Investor Office, Investor Engagement Specialist and the OSC for their considerable work on this important initiative.



THANK YOU LETTER FROM FORMER HCLA PRESIDENT CHRISTINE ARRUDA

By Christine Arruda, HCLA Past President, 2022-2024

Dear HCLA Members,

As my term as President of the HCLA has now come to an end, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your support and commitment. I am incredibly proud of all that we have accomplished together to not only advance our strategic vision and meet our mandate, but to undertake special projects and initiatives and further support our association. Reflecting upon the last two years, I am reminded of all that we have achieved:

Advancing Our Strategic Vision

We advanced our vision of making the HCLA a truly national organization through broader provincial representation. The HCLA now has members of its Board of Directors situated in multiple provinces, members located across the country and scholarship recipients residing outside the province of Ontario. We significantly expanded the number of law student representatives to 12, representing nine law schools including two law schools in the province in Quebec.

Meeting Our Mandate

Network – This year we successfully brought back the Hellenic Professionals’ Gala, co-hosted with the Hippocrates Hellenic Canadian Medical Association and Asclepius Dental Society, following a three-year hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We continued to host our popular social events including the Under 8 After 8 and the New Year’s Cheer and vasilopita cutting, and launched new events including the Spring Cocktail Mixer and our highly successful Hellenic Women’s Networking event.

Educate - For our lawyer members, we hosted five continuing professional development (“CPD”) events, co-hosted two CPD events with our colleagues from the Roundtable of Legal Diversity Associations (“RODA”), and worked with the Canadian-Ukrainian Legal Alliance to present Legal Careers in Canada for lawyers recently displaced by war. For Hellenic youth, we hosted a webinar, Canadian Legal System for Hellenic Youth to provide an overview of the legal system in Canada.

Advocate - We continued our work with RODA on various diversity initiatives and remained active members of the Ontario Bar Association Diversity Council. We reinvigorated our Mentorship Program matching over 20 mentees with mentors and partnered with Canadian Lawyer magazine to prepare the NextGen Lawyers Survey. We were delighted to have our access to justice initiatives included in the 2023 Progress report on Canada’s Justice Development Goals in the categories of Justice Goal 1 – Address Everyday Legal Problems and Justice Goal 6 – Build Capability.

Supporting Our Association

Membership Fee Auto-Renewal – We launched the membership fee auto-renewal making it easier for members to pay their annual membership and freeing up resources to allow the HCLA to focus on bringing members quality programming and events.

Communications - The association continued our tradition of publishing The Legalese, our newsletter, curating content that focused on our members and articles of interest. Our social media presence remained robust and we enhanced our email bulletins to ensure members receive timely notice of important training opportunities, judicial vacancies, nominations for legal awards, legal events and other community-related news.

Law Students - Over the past two years, we granted four Justice Karakatsanis Scholarships and procured a new scholarship, the Tsiolis Foundation First Year Law Student Scholarship of which two scholarships were granted this past November. We supported our student members by offering interview and resume review workshops and ensured our law student members had meaningful volunteer opportunities.

THANK YOU LETTER FROM FORMER HCLA PRESIDENT CHRISTINE ARRUDA (CONT.)

Our Special Projects and Initiatives

Student Guide - For prospective Hellenic law students, particularly first-generation law students, we authored Τι είπες; You Want to be a Lawyer? Our Student Guide to Law School to assist in navigating the path to law school.

Ontario Securities Commission - For the senior and vulnerable members of our community, we hosted a seminar with the Ontario Securities Commission (“OSC”), Seniors: Protecting Against Scams and Fraud and in the process saw the OSC’s extensive fraud and investor protection materials translated to Greek.

Archives Donation – We donated the HCLA archives to the Hellenic Heritage Foundation Greek Canadian Archives at York University to be included in the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections. The donation will ensure that the work of the HCLA will be preserved to be shared with future generations and form part of the history of Greeks in Canada.

Charitable Status – We took a number of steps to begin the process of obtaining charitable status to support the longevity of the association and continue to provide law student scholarships.

Hellenic Women Lawyers – We highlighted Hellenic women judges, lawyers and law students, featuring these accomplished women in our fire-side chats, key-note speaking events, and panel discussions. We are proud to report that the HCLA Board had over 60% representation by women during the last term and that the HCLA Women Presidents Dinner continues to be success.

Thank You and Gratitude

On behalf of the HCLA, I would like to thank our Board of Directors, Honourary Directors, and volunteers for their hard work and dedication to the association. The accomplishments of the past two years would not have been possible without you. To our members, we hope that we have exceeded your expectations in delivering value and a sense of community.

As the HCLA approaches its 35th anniversary, I wish the incoming Board great success and look forward to the association’s continued growth. It has been my sincerest pleasure to serve as President and I extend my deepest gratitude to all of you for your trust, support and commitment to our shared objectives.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as HCLA President. I wish you all continued personal and professional success.

Sincerely,

Christine Arruda
Past President, Hellenic Canadian Lawyers’ Association, 2022-2024



AGM, PRESIDENT'S DINNER & CPD IN PHOTOS

Thank you to everyone who attended our in-person AGM, President's Dinner and CPD in November 2024!



AGM, PRESIDENT'S DINNER & CPD IN PHOTOS

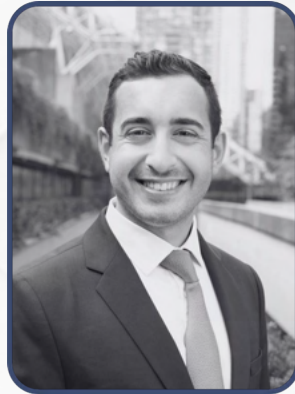
Thank you to everyone who attended our in-person AGM, President's Dinner and CPD in November 2024!



2024/2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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President



**James
Trougakos**
Vice-President



**Sotiri
Katsuras**
Treasurer



**Constantine
Kanargelidis**
Student &
Membership Director



**Melinda
Marghetis**
Student &
Membership Director



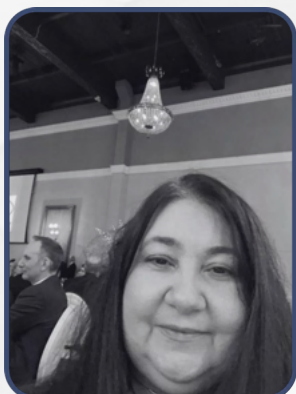
**Danielle
Tavernese**
Communications
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Paola Beci
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Ria Sena Dimos
Director

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George Bougadis
Tom Karvanis
George Karayannides, Q.Arb
George Ellinidis
Betty Vavougios

New Year Cheer 2025

Ring in the New Year with sweet traditions

As the clock strikes midnight and fireworks paint the sky with light, communities across the globe welcome the New Year with hope, gratitude, and celebration. But for those of us who are lucky enough to be of Greek heritage, we are surrounded by the warmth of family, community, and Vasilopita!

Following tradition, in January we held our annual event at La Birroteca, in the lower level of Eataly in Toronto, Ontario. The evening was more than just a gathering —it was a celebration of heritage, hope, and the unbreakable bond of culture. This year, the lucky gal was Trish Vrotsos, our former Treasurer and a long standing member of the HCLA, who we are sure will be blessed with luck and prosperity for 2025.

More than anything, the evening was a testament to the strength of our community - member or not, lawyer or not, seasoned lawyers or those just starting their legal careers, we all gathered together. In a world often too fast-paced and fractured, we paused for a few hours to gather, give thanks, and carry forward what matters most.

As we step into this new year, may we all carry the spirit of the Vasilopita: the sweetness of tradition, the hope of good fortune, and the joy of discovering life's hidden blessings.

Here's to a 2025 filled with meaning, connection, and cheer.

Kali Chronia!



Hellenic Professionals Gala 2025

*A Night of Heritage and Hope:
The 24th Annual Hellenic Professionals Gala*

Every February, usually on a crisp winter night, three associations, being the Hellenic Canadian Lawyers' Association (HCLA), the Hellenic Medical Society of Ontario (HMSO), and the Hellenic Canadian Dental Association (HCDA) come together to plan the annual event bringing together the vibrancy of Hellenic culture and the excellence of a community that continues to shape industries across Canada and beyond.

This year, the gala was held at Liberty Grand - a venue steeped in tradition in downtown Toronto.

These three professional bodies, each a powerhouse in its own right, have come together year after year to create an evening that not only celebrates individual excellence but unites the entire Hellenic professional community under one roof.

The entrance buzzed with laughter, elegant gowns brushed past midnight-black tuxedos, and old friends embraced while new introductions sparked the kind of conversations that could change lives—or at the very least, spark collaborations. This wasn't just a formal affair. It was a reunion, a celebration, and a forward-looking dialogue, all in one.

Before all the dancing started, the associations handed the well deserved recognition to all scholarship recipients.

Join the Gala Committee for 2026:

Inspired by the evening? We'd love to have you on board for next year's planning. Whether you're full of fresh ideas or just want to lend a helping hand, reply to this email to express your interest—we'll be in touch with more information.

Thank you for making the 24th edition of the Hellenic Professionals Gala an unforgettable celebration!



@HellenicProsGala



@HellenicProsGala



@HellenicProsGala



@HellenicProsGala

WHEN MERITORIOUS OPENING STATEMENTS UNDERMINE MEDIATIONS

By Nick Lavkulik, Devry Smith Frank LLP

It's the norm: opening statements focused on the merits of the case end up angering people more than helping them see the case differently. Mediation, a process where a neutral third party helps both sides negotiate a resolution, often becomes the best way to bridge the gap. But in many cases, trading numbers back and forth, tempered through a shuttled diplomat mediator, can become the only hope for progress. Is there a better way?

Neuroscience confirms that "95% of purchase decisions are driven by emotions subconsciously and then justified with logic afterward."

Intuitively, it makes sense, but rationally it might seem less applicable in technically oriented legal negotiations and more aligned with consumer marketing. While the law's intricacies may not be intuitive to the uninitiated layperson, aren't lawyers the technical experts here?

While many negotiators already engage with their (lay) clients emotionally, it's perhaps even more critical to do so with opposing counsel and sophisticated parties, rather than focus solely on technical and rational specifics. Emotional intuition pervasively influences everyone subconsciously—not only the uninitiated—and can be especially impactful on those who tend to discredit intuition in complex situations.

When understood, we begin to recognize when to let legal arguments flow or hold back, choosing instead to address the emotions of an opposing party. When misjudged, it becomes evident in caucus discussions that speaking to the wrong side leads to assumptions of another other side's naivety, ignorance, or outright dishonesty. This undermines merits-based negotiations, reduces the chances of a favourable settlement, and potentially damages a lawyer's reputation.

Good litigators frame facts persuasively, but great litigators present facts with sensitivity. This sensitivity isn't about avoiding conflict—it's about building credibility. "There's a world of a difference between truth and facts. Facts can obscure the truth." While zeal can reveal good reason, it can also conceal precision. And even if the truth supports one side, an *avoidable* step on another's offside foot is likely to inspire small invisible emotional decisions for the worse. Points we all know, but are harder in practice, especially when the burden of proof lays on an opposing party.

The greatest litigators carefully navigate the intertwined threads of each listener's heart and mind. They pace the nuance of their points throughout the mediation, rather than "front loading" it all in openings—a tactic as unrealistic as breezing through DVP rush hour traffic. This patience helps avoid the all-too-common "argument avalanche".

Hazard: Spreading support thin may spread a *decision maker's attention* thin.

Injury: Overwhelming an already *begrudged attendee* risks irritation or disengagement.

Urgent Response: Stopping rolling rocks with *tempting top-of-mind* counters—secondary arguments to rebut and fair generalizations to needlessly complicate.

Outcome: Preventing *what's most important* from being fairly heard, leaving the initiator of the avalanche buried in the rubble.*

*This rubble can become the focal point for an entire mediation, blocking the road to resolution.

Less is more, often when less invites more. When we focus on the right problem at the right time, it maintains momentum and makes room for more. Sensitivity allows for meaningful contributions, helping us understand each other's beliefs, address them, and move steadily toward settlement—one small step at a time.



I'm pretty straightforward. I mediate personal injury cases. And I do them at Roster rate.

I help lawyers present their cases in a way that's persuasive, credible, and cooperative. With experience coaching everyone from AM200 lawyers to solo practitioners and hands-on mediation starting years ago in small claims court, I know how to cut through the noise and keep things on track. My goal is to get you to the finish line—a good deal, case settled, and file closed.

For practical advice to enhance your mediation skill set (and to approach negotiations in your own way), connect with me on LinkedIn or email me at nick.lavkulik@devrylaw.ca.

FROM THE EDITOR

It has been a pleasure putting together this latest edition of Legalese, and we are grateful for your continued readership and engagement. Your enthusiasm fuels this publication, and we strive to bring you content that informs, inspires, and strengthens our community.

This issue reflects the many ways our members contribute to the profession and to the broader Hellenic community. From celebrating our scholarship recipients to highlighting important discussions on advocacy, mentorship, and legal developments, the Legalese remains a platform for sharing knowledge and fostering connections.

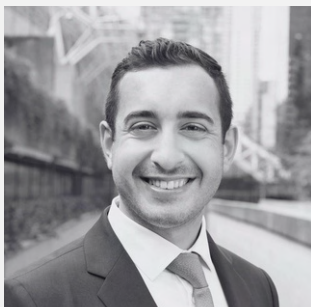
It was wonderful to see so many of you at the 2025 Hellenic Professionals Gala—an event that continues to bring together Hellenic doctors, lawyers and dentists to celebrate excellence and community. These gatherings remind us of the strength of our network and the importance of supporting one another in our professional and personal endeavors.

As always, we welcome your thoughts, feedback, and contributions. If you have an idea for a future edition, we encourage you to reach out at hcla.information@gmail.com.

Thank you for being part of the HCLA community. We hope you enjoy this edition of Legalese.

Yours truly,

James Trougakos, Vice-President



James Trougakos is an Associate at Legacy Tax + Trust Lawyers in Vancouver and Vice-President of the Hellenic Canadian Lawyers' Association.