



COURT OF APPEAL FOR ONTARIO
COUR D'APPEL DE L'ONTARIO

March 1, 2023

Dear Participants,

Thank you for participating in this year's Braiding Diversity into Justice Program.

We live in an increasingly global interconnected world, in which migration of people between international borders has become an economic imperative. With increased migration comes social, cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity within national borders. Canada is no exception. In fact, the very existence of Canada as a country is based on immigration and the co-existence of nations such as the various Indigenous First Nations and European settlers, such as the British and the French, and of course, in subsequent years, people from all over the globe. Canada is now a diverse country in every aspect of its social make up.

Unfortunately, certain professions within Canada are much slower to follow suit. The legal profession is one of those professions. Historically, the legal profession has not been a diverse and representative profession. While this is changing, there is still room for more improvement in this area. Greater diversity in the legal profession enhances the legitimacy of the profession as well as a greater understanding and appreciation for the Rule of Law. Greater diversity in the legal profession increases its accountability and credibility and allows it to become more responsive to the legal needs of all Ontarians.

My own personal life experiences are a testament to both the diversity and inclusiveness of Canada, as well as the changing nature of the legal profession. As you may be aware, I was born in Jamaica, and immigrated to Canada at the age of 9 to join my parents.

Growing up in Toronto in the 1970s, there were very few Black or other racialized lawyers, and I certainly did not know any of them. When I was admitted into law school and commenced my first year in 1986, there were only three Black students in the first-year class.

Over the years, as I matriculated through the profession, I did encounter challenges along the way, but I did not allow these challenges to become barriers. In fact, through the years, I have learned that my background has given me certain advantages in allowing me to better understand cross-cultural diversity and backgrounds.

I am encouraged by the changing nature of the legal profession. When I meet new lawyers entering the profession, there are increasing numbers of bright women like yourselves who are transforming the face and nature of the legal profession. But there is certainly more work to be done.

Your participation in this program is an important step in this process of transformation. Some of you will hopefully choose to pursue careers in legal professions. But whether or not you choose to embark on a legal career, you will hopefully gain greater knowledge of the justice system, which will help you in your life and career and that you will be able to share with your family, friends and acquaintances.

I thank you for taking the time to participate in this program and I hope you will find it a rewarding experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael H. Tulloch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael H. Tulloch
Chief Justice of Ontario
Court of Appeal for Ontario