

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL ETHICS CONFERENCE V

Title

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Conference Co-Chairs**

In July 2012 over 200 academics, legal practitioners, regulators and judges, representing 19 countries, gathered in Banff, Alberta, Canada for the 5th biennial International Legal Ethics Conference (ILEC5). Following previous conferences in England, New Zealand, Australia and the United States, ILEC5 was the beneficiary of the commitment to the conference from the international ethics community, including the International Association of Legal Ethics, strong national support from the Canadian academy, and significant financial support from Canadian legal regulators and law firms.

The conference included four sessions of six concurrent panels on each of the Friday and Saturday. The panels were organised into five pervasive streams intended to cover the landscape of theoretical and practical issues arising in the field.

Empirical Approaches to Legal Ethics included panels addressing empirical issues in relation to measuring and creating professionalism, gender equality, demography and diversity, access to justice, and the appropriate direction for empirical research going forward.

Culture, Ethics and Society focused on a wide variety of social and social justice related questions such as cause lawyering, lawyering and social change, judicial independence and ethics, regulation of lawyers' mental health, gender equality, access to justice and pro bono, developments in East Asia, and lawyering in different contexts.

Philosophy and Legal Ethics generated discussions on a range of theoretical questions, including the role of adversarialism, the intersection between philosophy and specific practice settings, the role of theory in legal education, challenges to current philosophical approaches, and new directions for philosophy to take.

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Regulation of the Profession emphasised regulatory questions related to judicial ethics, loyalty and confidences, global comparisons, the role of the judiciary in legal regulation, access to justice, challenges of specific practice contexts and professional independence, as well as discussing specific initiatives such as LawWithoutWalls, ABA's Ethics 20/20, and Australian regulatory reforms.

Finally, *Ethics and Education* provided attendees with an opportunity to reflect upon innovations in teaching, the role of education in professional formation, the significance of globalisation, comparative perspectives, and mandatory undergraduate law degrees. It also included a tribute to the late ethics professor Larry Ribstein.

The conference also included an opening reception hosted by the Federation of the Law Societies of Canada (FLSC) and a conference dinner sponsored in part by Miller Thomson, a Canadian national law firm. Both included brief keynote addresses. John Hunter QC, President of the FLSC, reflected upon the dynamic regulatory landscape in Canada and the challenges of professionalism and civility in a rapidly changing world. Chief Justice Neil Wittmann of the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench focused on several topics relating to judicial ethics in Canada. These included access to justice for self-represented litigants; the relationship between the judiciary and the executive; and the challenges of designing appropriate and effective procedures for dealing with complaints against judges.

The universal feedback received by the conference organisers was that the presentations and panels were engaging and thought-provoking. Several of the Canadian regulators attending the conference were particularly complimentary. One claimed that it was the best conference he had attended in 25 years. Another noted that usually at such events he hopes to have one new thought or idea, and at ILEC5 he felt that he was receiving several new thoughts or ideas at each session. The quality of presentations speaks to the level of scholarship produced by the international legal ethics community, which is quickly developing stronger institutional networks of international, regional and national organisations and conferences for sharing and advancing scholarship. The ILEC series itself has become a central means of connecting these networks.

The sixth ILEC will be held at City University, London, in 2014.