

The Honourable Petra Newton Justice (ret.) of the Ontario Court of Justice

The Honourable Petra Newton was born in Winnipeg, MB, and received her Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Law Degrees from the University of Manitoba. She also received the Certificate de Langue Française from the Sorbonne in Paris.

She was called to the Manitoba Bar in 1976 and the Ontario Bar in 1979.

Prior to her appointment to the Bench, she was a Prosecutor with the Department of Justice in both Manitoba and Ontario. She was seconded to the Legal Sector of the Department of Supply and Services, in Ottawa where she was Legal Advisor to the New Fighter Aircraft Program. Petra was also a Criminal Defence Counsel and Legal Aid Duty Counsel.

Petra was appointed to the Ontario Court of Justice in December 1989.

She has been a panelist at numerous continuing education and law school programs with respect to a variety of issues including; women and girls in the justice system, retention of women in the legal profession, criminal advocacy and aboriginal justice. However, her most significant contribution has been to the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ), and The Gale Moot.

Petra was on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Chapter of the IAWJ (CCIAWJ) from 2005-2018, having served as Secretary, Vice President, President, Past President, Chair of the Nominating Committee and International Director.

Nationally, Petra was a speaker at numerous conferences sponsored by the CCIAWJ and NJI. She was a member of the Planning Committee of several conferences including “Why Gender Equality Still Matters”; “Women and Girls in the Justice System”; “Convergences, Divergence and Intersections; Emerging Issues”; “Judging as Canada Changes”; “Balancing Rights”.

She was Co-Chair of the national conference entitled “Judging Women, Aging, Mental Health and Culture”, sponsored by the CCIAWJ/NJI and the University of British Columbia Faculty of Law.

Internationally she was a member of the Canadian Delegation at IAWJ Conferences in Australia, Panama, South Korea, London and Washington.

In 2014 she was elected to the IAWJ World Board of Directors representing North America for the term 2014-2016 and was re-elected in 2016 for the 2016-2018 term.

In this capacity she attended and participated at Board Meetings in the Philippines, Washington, the Hague and Rome.

At the Invitation of Pope Francis as Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences she was a speaker at The Summit of Judges and Prosecutors on Human Trafficking and Organized Crime at The Vatican.

Although, a participant in a variety of moots, her most significant involvement is with The Gale Moot. She was on a panel of judges for The Gale Moot annually since her appointment.

Petra was a member of the Organizing Committee for many years and Chair of The Gale Moot from 1999-2001, during which time former Chief Justice Brian Dickson and former Supreme Court Justice Peter Cory were honoured.

As President of the CCIAWJ, the McLachlin Prize for the Best Female Mooter was instituted. She introduced Chief Justice McLachlin at The Gale Cup dinner who presented the inaugural prize.

Petra has presented the award at The Gale Cup banquet from 2012-2019.

Petra is married to Lionel Newton and they are the proud parents of Samantha (Matthew) and Zachary (Caitlin) and the adoring grandparents of Parker David. Samantha graduated from the University of Ottawa Law School and Zachary received his JD/MBA degree from the University of Toronto Law School and the Rotman School of Management.

Justice Newton retired from the Bench on May 1, 2019.