

# Long-Term Care Homes Inquiry Announces Counsel

TORONTO, Aug. 1, 2017 /CNW/- The Honourable Justice Eileen E. Gillese, Commissioner of the **Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System**, today announced the appointment of the Inquiry's counsel.

William C. McDowell was named Lead Counsel; Elizabeth Hewitt, Senior Counsel, and Rebecca Jones and Megan Stephens were named Counsel.

Mr. McDowell is a partner in the Toronto law firm Lenczner Slaght. He has appeared as counsel in many important cases focusing on issues of public law and commercial litigation. From 2005 to 2008, Mr. McDowell was Canada's Associate Deputy Minister of Justice, with responsibility for civil litigation and national security. He supervised the design of several federal public inquiries, and the implementation of recommendations made by other Commissions.

Upon his return to private practice in 2008, he was appointed by the Chief Justice of Ontario to mediate issues arising from the initial Truth and Reconciliation Commission into residential schools. He was subsequently appointed to an Amicus role by the Superior Court in connection with a series of land occupations in Brantford.

In 2009 he was named Chief Commission Counsel to the City of Mississauga Judicial Inquiry, which delivered its report in October 2011. The report recommended a series of institutional and ethical changes to municipal governance, both provincially and within Mississauga.

Mr. McDowell has appeared in the Supreme Court of Canada a number of times in recent years on cutting-edge media and internet cases, and argued on behalf of Google before the Court in December 2016 in the landmark *Equustek* case. In addition, he has acted as counsel to several Ontario universities.

**Elizabeth Hewitt**, Senior Counsel, graduated from Queen's University in 1984 with a Bachelor of Arts and graduated with distinction from the University of Western Ontario in 1988 with a Bachelor of Laws.

She was called to the bar in Ontario in 1990 and has practiced extensively in the area of employment and commercial litigation with a particular expertise in human rights, harassment and discrimination. Ms. Hewitt has represented clients at both the trial and appellate level in Ontario and has appeared on behalf of employers in proceedings under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, the Ontario *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* and the Ontario *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Over the past 16 years Ms. Hewitt has built a practice as an independent, external investigator into various matters, including claims of workplace harassment, sexual harassment, abuse, breach of privacy, discrimination and workplace violence. She has practiced exclusively in that capacity since 2011. In addition to conducting external investigations, Ms. Hewitt provides training to organizations on how to conduct fair internal investigations and ensure compliance with applicable legislation.

Ms. Hewitt is the former Chair of both the Board of Trustees of Brescia University College and the Board of Directors of King's University College. She is also a former member of the Board of Directors of McCormick Care Group (formerly WCA), and Wellspring London and Region.

**Rebecca Jones**, Commission Counsel, is an experienced trial and appellate lawyer. She is a partner at Lenczner Slaght LLP, where she represents public and private sector clients in a wide range of matters, including professional liability cases, class actions, commercial disputes and administrative law proceedings. Rebecca has extensive experience in health law matters, and has been recognized for her work in that area. Rebecca is a graduate of the University of Toronto Law School, and was called to the bar in 2003.

**Megan Stephens**, Commission Counsel, is a graduate of McGill Law School. She clerked at both the Court of Appeal for Ontario and for Chief Justice McLachlin at the Supreme Court of Canada. Ms. Stephens was a Fulbright Scholar and Associate-in-Law at Columbia Law School, where she completed her LL.M. She has been Crown Counsel at the Crown Law Office - Criminal at the Ministry of Attorney General of Ontario since 2006. In that role, Ms. Stephens has argued appeals before both the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada, prosecuted criminal matters before Ontario's trial courts, and participated in policy development for the province. She was called to the bar in 2003.

The Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System was established on August 1, 2017 by the Government of Ontario under the Public Inquiries Act, 2009. Its mandate is to inquire into the events which led to the offences committed by Elizabeth Wettlaufer who pled guilty to and was convicted of eight counts of first degree murder, four counts of attempted murder and two counts of aggravated assault. Additionally, the Inquiry is directed to inquire into the circumstances and contributing factors allowing these events to occur, including the effect, if any, of relevant policies, procedures, practices and accountability and oversight mechanisms.

The Inquiry's website is at [www.longtermcareinquiry.ca](http://www.longtermcareinquiry.ca)

SOURCE The Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System

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