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Law Society of Upper Canada elects third-ever female leader

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The Law Society of Upper Canada, which governs the law profession in Ontario, has just elected a new head - its third woman since the society's founding in 1797.

Laurie Pawlitzka, a family lawyer and partner at Torkin Manes LLP, was elected as treasurer of the Law Society - its top elected official - on Tuesday, replacing the outgoing **Derry Millar**, who has made improving civility among lawyers and in court a key part of his tenure.

Ms. Pawlitzka, originally from Saskatchewan, spearheaded the first same-sex adoption case in Ontario in the 1990s.

She has also been active on the contentious issue of trying to keep women in the practice of law, co-chairing the committee on the problem that launched the Justicia Project, a partnership of 56 law firms working on ways to retain women in private practice.

Ms. Pawlitzka will now chair Convocation, as the Law Society's board of directors is known.

"I am deeply honoured and privileged to be elected treasurer of the Law Society," Ms. Pawlitzka said in a statement on the Law Society's website. "Change is happening quickly, both in our increasingly diverse profession, and in the way we provide legal services. I look forward to leading the lawyers and paralegals of Ontario in serving the public interest in these exciting and challenging times."

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