

For Immediate Release
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ATTORNEY GENERAL APPOINTS COMMISSIONERS TO THE ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

TORONTO — The McGuinty government is strengthening the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) and enhancing its role in promoting human rights by appointing seven new commissioners, Attorney General Michael Bryant announced today.

“This diverse and distinguished group of commissioners has strong expertise in human rights issues,” said Bryant. “These seven individuals have the knowledge and breadth of experience that will allow them to make a significant contribution to the OHRC and Ontario.”

“Our new commissioners have the qualifications we need to help build a stronger human rights system that deals effectively with discrimination at both the individual and systemic level, acts in the public interest and promotes respect for human rights,” said Barbara Hall, Chief Commissioner of the OHRC. “I look forward to working with them to protect and promote the rights of every citizen in Ontario.”

The seven new commissioners are:

Patrick Case, director of the University of Guelph’s Human Rights and Equity Office, which drafts policy and advises the university community on human rights issues. He is immediate past chair of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, as well as immediate past co-chair of the Equality Rights Panel of the Court Challenges Program of Canada.

Ruth Goba, a women’s program coordinator and staff lawyer at the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation, where she represents clients in housing matters under the Ontario Human Rights Code. Previously, she was an instructor on disability issues at Ryerson University, and a law associate for Scott & Oleskiw, representing clients before the OHRC and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

Kamala-Jean Gopie, who spent eight years as a member of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, and 30 years as a teacher and education officer. She is a past president of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, and past member of the Anti-racism and Multicultural Educators’ Network of Ontario. Gopie is currently a member of the Board of Trustees for the United Way of Greater Toronto.

Raja Khouri, a human rights advocate and organizational and community development consultant. He is a member of the Hate Crimes Community Working Group, and a past national president of the Canadian Arab Federation and past president of the Canadian Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Toronto chapter.

Alana Klein, a senior policy analyst for the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, where she researches, analyzes and advises on issues related to HIV/AIDS and human rights. A lawyer, she was previously an adjunct lecturer and associate-in-law at Columbia University, and a law clerk for former Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour.

Maggie Wente, an associate lawyer at Olthuis Kleer Townshend Barristers and Solicitors. She represents First Nations and band councils, and her practice includes providing legal advice on land claims, self-government negotiations, commercial litigation and corporate law. She is a former labour relations officer for the Ontario Nurses Association, and her community work includes serving as a board director and secretary for Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto.

Albert Wiggan, Harry Jerome Award-winning community leader and entrepreneur. He speaks at high schools about learning disabilities and has also spoken publicly in support of literacy. Wiggan is a community activist who has received service awards for advising and assisting those in need in the community.

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