



## APRIL 1, 2021 - REIMAGINING ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE

### Nick O'Brien, co-author of *Reimagining Administrative Justice*



Nick O'Brien read Classics at Oxford University before qualifying as a solicitor in 1987. In 1991 he was appointed Legal Adviser to the Legal Services Ombudsman for England and Wales, becoming Deputy Ombudsman in 1999. In 2000 he joined the GB Disability Rights Commission as the first Legal Director and served as a member of government taskforces on the establishment of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and on Public Legal Education. In 2007, he was appointed a fee-paid judge in the mental health tribunal and served as an adviser on human rights to the UK Parliamentary Ombudsman and Health Service Ombudsman for England (PHSO). He has held an honorary research fellowship at Liverpool University since 2007, and has written on ombudsmen, human rights, and disability rights. In 2013 he was appointed specialist

adviser to the House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee on its inquiries into PHSO and public service complaints. In January 2016 he was appointed additionally as a fee-paid tribunal judge in the Special Educational Needs and Disability tribunal. In 2019 he won the Bernard Crick Prize awarded by the *Political Quarterly* for his article, *Administrative Justice in the Wake of 'I, Daniel Blake'*, *Political Quarterly* Vol.89 Issue 1, 2018. He is co-author, with Mary Seneviratne, of *Ombudsmen at the Crossroads: The Legal Services Ombudsman, Dispute Resolution and Democratic Accountability* (Palgrave 2017), and, with Margaret Doyle, of *Reimagining Administrative Justice: Human Rights in Small Places* (Palgrave 2019).

## **Susan Opler, Ombudsman, Ombudsman Toronto**



Susan is the City of Toronto's Ombudsman, a role she has held since 2016. She leads the team at Ombudsman Toronto, the independent voice for fairness in City of Toronto services and administration. She brings to her role the skills of an experienced lawyer, adjudicator, mediator and educator. In 2014, she was honoured by the Law Society of Upper Canada with the Laura Legge Award, awarded annually to "a woman lawyer in Ontario who has exemplified leadership within the profession." In 2019, she was proud to receive the SOAR (Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators) Medal, which recognizes outstanding contributions to Ontario's administrative justice community.

A graduate of McGill (Hons B.A., '82) and the University of Toronto (LL. B. '85), Susan spent the first decade of her career in litigation as an associate then partner at McCarthy Tétrault. She also worked as a criminal prosecutor. For 15 years, Susan was a member and leader of the Consent and Capacity Board. She also sat on both the Hearings and Appeal Divisions of the Law Society Tribunal. A trained and experienced mediator, she led a transformation in case management on both tribunals. Susan has taught trial advocacy at both the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall law schools. She was the lead instructor of the SOAR/Osgoode adjudicator training program for over a decade. She has taught judges, justices of the peace, adjudicators and other decision-makers on various topics, in Canada and internationally. Active in her community, Susan served on the Board of Directors of UTS (University of Toronto Schools) and on the Research Ethics Board of Sick Kids' Hospital.

## **Deborah Pressman, Legal Counsel, Office of the Chief Justice – Ontario**



Deborah is a lawyer, educator, published author, and dispute resolution enthusiast. She is currently working as counsel at the Office of the Chief Justice (Ontario Court of Justice). Previously, she was counsel with the Ministry of the Attorney General at Tribunals Ontario. She was also a mediator, arbitrator and the Director's Appeals Delegate at the Financial Services Commission of Ontario. Deborah leads, designs and delivers various training and education initiatives, including Osgoode's Certificate in Online Dispute Resolution, Professional LLM programs and the Certificate in Adjudication in partnership with the Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators (SOAR). When she's not working, she spends time with her family and friends, and a terrier named Gilly.