



### **Torkin Manes, Pape Chaudhury Donate \$80K costs awards to Pro Bono Ontario**

October 28, 2019 – Law firms Torkin Manes LLP and Pape Chaudhury LLP have donated costs awards totalling \$80K to Pro Bono Ontario's (PBO) #InvestInJustice fundraising campaign. This generous donation underscores their commitment to ensuring access to justice for all Ontarians (regardless of ability to pay) and to the ongoing viability of PBO. While many law firms, with the support of their pro bono clients, have previously donated costs to PBO, this marks the first instance where a firm serving as pro bono *amicus curiae* has done so.

The costs awards arise from a medical malpractice case that found its way to PBO's Free Legal Advice Hotline in September 2018. Torkin Manes provided pro bono representation at trial, and Pape Chaudhury assisted as pro bono *amicus curiae* on appeal. PBO will use the cost awards to support programs that provide free direct legal services to low-income Ontarians like the hotline, court-based Law Help centres, and medical legal partnerships across Ontario.

"It is a benefit to both the Court of Appeal and to litigants that the Court can call on Pro Bono Ontario to find *amicus curiae* in cases that need another perspective," said Shantona Chaudhury, partner at Pape Chaudhury. "We were happy to do our part and we donated the costs because we believe it is absolutely critical that PBO has the resources it needs to continue its essential role in our justice system."

While most clients contact PBO directly, judges and court staff occasionally reach out to the access-to-justice charity when they are concerned that unrepresented litigants before them need additional assistance in the interest of the administration of justice. This is exactly what happened when a judge called the Hotline at the start of the trial in this matter. Torkin Manes agreed on the eve of trial to represent the plaintiff and did so successfully. When the matter was appealed, the Court of Appeal for Ontario reached out to PBO. This time the court sought *amicus curiae* support, which was offered by Pape Chaudhury. Both firms took the position that if the unrepresented party succeeded, any costs awarded should be donated to PBO.

"Torkin Manes has long supported PBO's important mission through gifts of time and money," said partner Ron Manes, one of PBO's founders. "We jumped at the chance to assist when we learned of the call to the Hotline. It is vitally important for the Bar to step up in these situations. Donating the costs award to Pro Bono Ontario was an easy and rewarding decision."

"PBO is extremely fortunate to be able to call upon talented and dedicated lawyers who display the finest traditions of the Bar by doing pro bono work," said Lynn Burns, executive director. "We are especially grateful for the donation of the costs awarded in this case as they bring us closer to achieving our fundraising goal for 2020."

#### About PBO

Founded in 2001, Pro Bono Ontario is a registered charity that provides free legal services to nearly 30,000 people each year, representing vulnerable Ontarians with the civil, non-family legal problems

that account for approximately 60 percent of unmet legal needs in the province. Donations are accepted year-round and an annual fundraising campaign (#InvestInJustice) is held each year in the fall.

For more information, please contact:

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