Canadian Conference on Elder Law to Focus on Legal Issues Facing Aging Population

Vancouver, B.C. – November 10, 2008 – BC’s Solicitor General and Minister of Public Safety, the Hon. John van Dongen, will be the opening keynote speaker at this year’s Canadian Conference on Elder Law being held November 13 – 15, 2008 jointly with the International Guardian Network, at the Sheraton Centre in Vancouver.

Elder law is a relatively new and evolving field of law dealing with legal issues that affect the growing aging population ranging from estate planning issues, long-term care needs, guardianship, elder abuse and legal reform among other areas.

The three-day Canadian Conference on Elder Law, which is sponsored by Westminster Savings Credit Union, is expected to attract delegates from across Canada, the United States, as well as Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. This year’s conference, with the theme “Aging Citizens, Evolving Practices,” will feature a session on guardianship issues as well as workshops, panels and symposia covering a broad range of socio-legal topics including elder abuse, assisted living/supportive housing, aging in place, regulation of long-term care facilities, wills, private care agreements, trusts, estates, consent, comparative analysis of interjurisdictional Elder Law issues, reverse mortgages and seniors’ settlements.

“There are numerous emerging legal issues that will grow in prominence as the Canadian population ages and this conference is designed to broaden our understanding of these issues so they can be affectively addressed,” said Laura Watts, National Director of the Canadian Centre for Elder Law.

Seniors are the fastest growing population segment in Canada. Currently 4.2 million Canadians are 65 or older. In the next 25 years, that number will double to almost nine million people, representing one quarter of Canada’s population.

“As with legal issues, financial issues will also continue to increase in importance as the Canadian population ages,” said Barry Forbes, President and CEO, Westminster Savings Credit Union, who will be speaking at the Conference on Elder Law opening ceremonies. “Westminster Savings Credit Union felt it was important to get involved in the Conference on Elder Law so we can ensure our financial products and services continue to keep pace with our members’ evolving needs.”
This year’s Elder Law conference will feature a keynote dinner address on November 14 by Moses Znaimer, media innovator and new Executive Director of the Canadian Associations of Retired Persons. Other noteworthy speakers include lectures by Dr. Makoto Arai, Dean of Tsukuba University Law School, Tokyo and President of the Japan Adult Guardianship Association and Oliver Lewis, Executive Director of the Mental Disabilities Advocacy Centre, Budapest.

About Canadian Centre for Elder Law
The Canadian Centre for Elder Law ("CCEL") is the national non-profit charitable organization which works to improve the lives of older adults in their relationship with the law. Its goal is to be the best in elder law reform and outreach relating to elder law and elder rights issues. The CCEL produces legal reports, scholarly articles, public legal education materials, the peer-reviewed Canadian Journal of Elder Law workshops, and annually, organizes the Canadian Conference on Elder Law. The CCEL is a division of the British Columbia Law Institute.

About Westminster Savings Credit Union
As one of Canada’s largest credit unions, Westminster Savings Credit Union provides a full range of banking and wealth management products and services. Its 345 employees serve more than 50,000 members through 11 retail branches in the Lower Mainland, including a state-of-the-art Member Service Centre that provides telephone and internet service before, during and after business hours. The commercial services group provides a broad range of deposit and loan services to meet the needs of businesses. WS Leasing Ltd. and Mercado Capital Corporation, the credit union’s wholly-owned leasing subsidiaries, provide services throughout B.C., Western Canada, and Ontario.

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