

ONCA Brief Bio

Justice Blair was appointed to the Court of Appeal for Ontario on November 5, 2003. Prior to that appointment, he had been Regional Senior Justice for the Toronto Region of the Superior Court of Justice since October 1999.

Justice Blair received his B.A. (Hons.) from Queen's University in 1965 and his LL.B. from University of Toronto Law School in 1968. He was called to the Bar in Ontario in 1970 and was designated a Queen's Counsel in 1982. He practiced primarily in the field of general civil litigation, with an emphasis on corporate/commercial litigation and administrative law, during his career at the Bar.

Justice Blair was appointed to the Ontario Court of Justice (General Division), now the Superior Court of Justice, in 1991.

Justice Blair was Co-Chair of the Civil Justice Review, which conducted a broad review of the civil justice system in Ontario and made extensive recommendations regarding the implementation of an integrated series of reforms to that system in the mid 1990's. He was active in the development and implementation of alternative dispute resolution techniques both before and after his appointment to the Bench. He was a member of the Steering Committee which oversaw the implementation of a Court-connected ADR Center in Toronto, the first of its kind in Canada, and was closely involved with the Mandatory Mediation project in Toronto and the introduction of case management and mediation into the court system in Ontario.

Justice Blair has been an active member of the Canadian Superior Court Judges Association. He was the Chair of the Association's Compensation Committee through the 2000 Quadrennial Commission process. In 2002, he became a Table Officer and in 2005-2006 was the President of the Association. He continues to chair the CSCJA's committee on judicial independence.

At present, Justice Blair is a continuing representative of the CSCJA at meetings of the International Association of Judges, an organization promoting judicial independence and the rule of law throughout the world and comprised of member associations from approximately 85 countries. From November 2010 through November 2014, he was a vice-president of the IAJ and president of its Asia, North America and Oceanic Regional Group.

Justice Blair has spoken at and participated in numerous legal and judicial education programs, both as a lawyer and judge, and has participated in various judicial and legal education and justice reform initiatives internationally, including projects in Uganda/Kenya/Tanzania, Rwanda, and Jamaica.

As a trial judge he presided in all areas of the work of the Superior Court, with particular emphasis on cases on the Commercial List at Toronto.