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■ **THE LAW:** Riopelle Griener Professional Corporation welcomes new lawyer

Bar calls Lambert-Bélanger

Mathieu Lambert-Bélanger is dressing up today: White wing-tip collar shirt, crisp black wool waistcoat, white tab tie, black pants and a flowing black robe.

Today in Ottawa, Lambert-Bélanger receives his call to the Bar a year after graduating from Université de Moncton with a Bachelor of Laws degree.

His desire to pursue a law career was established early on, but surprisingly, not solely because there are legal professionals in his family — his uncle is Justice Martin Lambert, a justice of the Ontario Court of Justice, and his brother, Pierre Lambert-Bélanger, is a Timmins litigator.

"My friend's father, Gary Bonney, was a lawyer and I had such great respect for him," Lambert-Bélanger said. "I thought I could do what he did, that I could help people like he did."

For the past year, Lambert-Bélanger has articulated at Riopelle Griener Professional Corporation in Timmins but after today he joins the firm as a lawyer working alongside his brother Pierre, Robert Riopelle, Joshua Bond, Gordon Conley, Kelly Watson, Paula Riopelle and Kevin Griener.

Coming back to Timmins was never in question. There was no other place he wanted to do his articling component; he was set on returning home.

"I'm a small-town guy at heart," he admits. "I love the lifestyle, being close to the wilderness, lakes and trees. I enjoy getting from one place to the other in five minutes. This is where, one day, I hope to raise a family."

Lambert-Bélanger's year at Riopelle Griener gave him an exclusive, first-hand education as a prospective litigator.

He was the envy of articling student peers, who traditionally spend much of their time conducting research and writing papers in the doldrums of law libraries around the country.

The education was unique in that he was able to work as a student agent with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada and on behalf of the City of Timmins as a prosecutor of municipal offences and matters under the Provincial Offences Act, all under the guidance of his brother Pierre and Gordon Conley, lead agent for the Public Prosecution Service of Canada in Northeastern Ontario.

The opportunity took Lambert-Bélanger to courtrooms throughout the region.



Submitted photo
Mathieu Lambert-Bélanger, seated, is congratulated by Riopelle Griener Professional Corporation managing partner Robert Riopelle, left, and his brother Pierre Lambert-Bélanger prior to his being called to the Bar today in Ottawa.

"Not many articling students get to have the experience I did," he said of his participation with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada team.

"For that matter, not many private law firms get to prosecute and defend. Being in the

courtroom gave me a perspective from both sides."

Lambert-Bélanger, a graduate of École secondaire catholique Thériault and the University of Ottawa's criminology program, said Riopelle Griener also gave him the con-

fidence and assurance that he made the right career decision.

"From the beginning they treated me like a lawyer and made me feel like a lawyer, even though I wasn't one yet. I had the feeling like I mattered

and that my work was valued and I was making a difference."

While litigation seems to be the direction he will pursue, Lambert-Bélanger will receive mentoring in wills and real estate law and continue as an

agent of the Public Prosecution Service of Canada and prosecute on behalf of the municipality and under the Provincial Offences Act.

"There is a variety of law practised here and an abundance of opportunities," Lambert-Bélanger said.

"The fact that Riopelle Griener has offices in Timmins and Ottawa and because of the technology they have in place, I can be working for clients in both communities at the same time, regardless of where I am physically."

“ Mathieu has shown great potential as a lawyer. He has performed very well as a student-at-law, taking on anything we threw his way. He is extremely bright and eager and is an excellent fit within our firm. We're lucky to have Mathieu.”

Robert Riopelle, managing partner
Riopelle Griener Professional Corporation

Robert Riopelle, managing partner, said while Lambert-Bélanger gained valuable experience and knowledge at Riopelle Griener, the firm benefitted greatly by the young man's presence.

"We were so pleased to welcome Mathieu aboard as an articling student and now as an associate lawyer," Riopelle said from the firm's office in Orleans, Ont.

"Mathieu has shown great potential as a lawyer. He has performed very well as a student-at-law, taking on anything we threw his way. He is extremely bright and eager and is an excellent fit within our firm. We're lucky to have Mathieu."

Always eager to bring local talent aboard, Riopelle Griener will welcome another articling student looking to learn and develop a practice in his hometown.

David Foster, currently a law student at the University of Calgary, has agreed to do his articles at Riopelle Griener in spring 2010.

When Lambert-Bélanger is called to the Bar and crosses the stage today — dressed in a wing-tip collar shirt, wool waistcoat and traditional legal robe — just as his uncle, brother and mentor did before him — he does so with the knowledge he is walking in very familiar footsteps down the right path.

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