

News Release  
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For Immediate Release

## M. Lee Cohen Q.C. and Shu H. Yoon MD, FRCSC to receive Honorary Degrees at AST Convocation

Halifax, NS – During Convocation ceremonies on May 3, 2014, Atlantic School of Theology (AST) will award a **Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa***, to M. Lee Cohen, Q.C., in recognition of his work in human rights and immigration law, where he advocates for fairness and equality for all people. AST will also award a **Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa***, to Shu H. Yoon, MD, FRCSC, in recognition of his keen interest and support of theological education.

### **M. Lee Cohen, Q.C.**

Lee Cohen, whose career spans three decades, has dedicated his law practice to all matters relating to immigration, refugees and human rights. He has assisted hundreds of foreign nationals seeking entry into Canada or wishing to remain in Canada and is a frequent contributor to local, national and international media on matters that relate to immigration and human rights. Mr. Cohen was born and raised in Saint John, New Brunswick, where he attended Princess Elizabeth School and Saint John High School. He graduated from the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton with a Bachelor of Education in 1977, and from Dalhousie University Law School in 1980. He is the former chair of the Canadian Bar Association–Nova Scotia Branch Immigration Law Section and has appeared before Canadian parliamentary committees to comment upon proposed amendments to immigration legislation. In June 2000, Mr. Cohen created the non-profit Halifax Refugee Clinic which provides pro bono legal representation, educational and settlement services for eligible refugees seeking political asylum in Nova Scotia. He is now setting his sights on establishing a similar refugee clinic in the province of New Brunswick. Mr. Cohen's other notable achievements include a Queen's Counsel appointment (2002), the Nova Scotia Human Rights Award, the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Commemorative Medal, and the Weldon Award for unselfish public service from the Dalhousie Law School Alumni Association. He is a founding director of the Halifax based Centre For Law and Democracy. In 2004, *Life and Times*, CBC TV's premiere biography series, profiled "Cohen's War: The Life and Times of Lee Cohen" in a one-hour documentary, and, in 2004 and 2005, Ziji Film and Television Production completed its feature length documentary titled "Regarding Cohen." A believer in peaceful resolutions to complex issues, Mr. Cohen challenges listeners to take personal responsibility to confront injustice and bring social and legal change to our communities.

### **Shu H. Yoon, MD, FRCSC**

A retired medical doctor, Dr. Yoon has taken a keen interest in theological education in recent years and is a regular visitor to AST's campus. A prime example of a lifelong learner, Dr. Yoon has audited more than 20 courses at AST. His compassion for people and his wisdom, developed over many years as a medical professional, is a source of inspiration to students, faculty, and staff alike. Dr. Yoon resides in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and has family in the Boston area.

In addition to the above-noted honorary degrees, AST will honor Buffy Harper and Barry Banks as **Associates of Atlantic School of Theology** in recognition of their outstanding service to the school. Both Ms. Harper and Mr. Banks have established themselves as leaders in the area of spiritual care practice and education.

### **Barry Banks**

Barry Banks is the Professional Practice Leader in Spiritual Care within the Mental Health program at East Coast Forensic Hospital. Barry's connection with AST began in 1998, when he enrolled in the MDiv program. He made the most of his education and became actively involved in the life of the school while attending as a full-time student. During the third year of his studies, he also completed a full-time Spiritual Care Residency at the Nova Scotia Hospital. His MDiv, coupled with this residency, cemented his place in Capital Health's Mental Health Program. It also cemented his ongoing relationship with AST. Since 2002, Barry has supervised in excess of 30 AST students in the Capital Health CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) Intern and Residency programs with the specialization in mental health. He has also supervised AST SFE students and two research projects by AST MDiv students at East Coast Forensic Hospital. Barry is a past member of the AST ethics review board and is currently a member of the AST harassment and discrimination review panel. For several years, he added to the music at convocation, and he has brought a (very popular!) brass ensemble to AST's annual tree lighting celebration every year since 1998.

### **Buffy Harper**

Buffy Harper is a certified Spiritual Care Specialist and Teaching Supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). She has worked in a diversity of settings, beginning with her early training at the Nova Scotia Hospital psychiatric facility. Since then she has been employed as an interfaith chaplain in long-term, acute and palliative care, the ICU, HIV/AIDS outpatients' clinic, NS Rehabilitation Centre and the IWK maternity/children's hospital. She is presently Professional Practice Coordinator for Spiritual and Religious Care at the QEII in Halifax and the Dartmouth General Hospital. A graduate of the AST MDiv program, Buffy values and supports diversity in the workplace and is a strong proponent of ecumenical dialogue and interfaith understanding. She has served as the president of the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC) and has been an active leader both locally and nationally, striving with other leaders to provide excellence in both the practice of spiritual care and the education of theology students in the clinical setting. It has been a particular pleasure and privilege for Buffy to be part of the pastoral education of students from AST, her alma mater. Buffy is married to Don and they are the proud parents of five adult children and one precious grandchild.

All are welcome to attend AST's convocation exercises, which take place on Saturday, May 3, at 11:00 a.m. in Saint Benedict Catholic Church, 45 Radcliffe Drive, Halifax, Nova Scotia. The convocation address will be given by Michael Valpy, a journalist and teacher known across the country for his work on social and political issues. Mr. Valpy will also be the guest speaker at AST's gala dinner on May 2. Ticket information for this event is available on the AST website: [www.astheology.ns.ca](http://www.astheology.ns.ca).