

NEW PROVINCIAL COURT JUDGE APPOINTED TO TAKE OVER DESMOND FATALITY INQUIRY

Monday, July 10, 2023

Effective immediately, The Hon. Pamela Williams, Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Nova Scotia, has appointed Judge Paul Scovil to take over all responsibilities related to the Desmond Fatality Inquiry.

Judge Warren Zimmer was originally appointed to preside over this Inquiry; however, his status as a Provincial Court judge expired on Friday, June 30, 2023, and the Province of Nova Scotia has decided not to extend him under the *Regulations Respecting Part-time Judges of the Provincial Court*.

Judge Scovil is also retired but has continued to sit as a per diem (part-time) judge, as needed across the province. He will still appear for those court dates already scheduled before him, but otherwise Judge Scovil will focus solely on completing the report and recommendations that Judge Zimmer started in 2022.

“From the beginning, Judge Zimmer has been committed to thoroughly investigating the circumstances under which these tragic deaths occurred, so it is unfortunate that he will not be the one to see the Inquiry through to its end,” said Chief Judge Williams. “I want to thank Judge Zimmer for his close and considerate attention to this important task.

“I am confident that Judge Scovil will pay the same attention to this work, keeping in mind the urgency of the task at hand. The families involved have been waiting patiently for answers and recommendations on how to improve the options and supports available for people affected by mental illness and intimate partner and family violence.”

As per the *Fatality Investigations Act*, when the final report and recommendations are complete, they will be filed with the Provincial Court. A copy will also be provided to the Minister of Justice and released to the public on the [Desmond Fatality Inquiry website](#).

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