The Honourable Louise Arbour appointed the 31st Governor General of Canada

Former Supreme Court justice and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to serve as federal representative of the Canadian Crown

Key facts

- The Honourable Louise Arbour has been appointed Canada's next Governor General and, upon installation, will become the 31st to hold the office.
- The appointment was announced on May 5, 2026 by Prime Minister Mark Carney.
- Madam Arbour has served as Senior Counsel at Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) since 2014.
- A former justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, she has also served as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and as Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda.
- Madam Arbour will assume office following her installation ceremony.

Montréal, (May 5, 2026) – Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) congratulates The Honourable Louise Arbour, Governor General-designate, on her appointment as Canada's 31st Governor General since Confederation and the first Governor General of Canada appointed by His Majesty King Charles III, announced today by Prime Minister Mark Carney. Madam Arbour has served as Senior Counsel with BLG since August 2014.

"Louise Arbour's appointment as Governor General is a recognition of one of the most extraordinary legal careers in Canadian history," said David Di Paolo, National Managing Partner and CEO of BLG. "That she chose to spend the past decade at BLG has been an immense privilege for our firm. There are very few legal minds in Canada with Louise's combination of judicial, international and human rights experience. Her appointment to Rideau Hall is richly deserved and we are proud to have been part of her journey."

Since joining BLG in 2014, Madam Arbour has provided strategic advice on a whole host of issues, including governance, disputes, mentoring younger lawyers and leading commissions of inquiry. Her advisory role has enriched BLG's disputes and governance practices and her legacy of mentorship will continue long after her appointment.

Madam Arbour's career represents one of the most distinguished trajectories in Canadian legal history. She served as a justice of the Supreme Court of Canada from 1999 to 2004, following appointments to the Court of Appeal for Ontario and the Supreme Court of Ontario. Fluently bilingual in English and French, Madam Arbour has served Canadians and the international community at the highest levels of justice and public service. From 1996 to 1999, she served as Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, bringing war criminals to justice at The Hague.

Following her tenure on the Supreme Court, Madam Arbour was appointed United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, serving from 2004 to 2008. She later served as the UN's Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration, leading to the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration in 2018. In 2021, she was appointed to conduct an independent review of the Canadian Armed Forces and Department of National Defence in response to reports of harassment and sexual misconduct within Canada's military.

Madam Arbour has received numerous honours and awards throughout her career. She has been a Companion of the Order of Canada since 2007, a Grand Officer of the Ordre national du Québec since 2009, a Commander of the Légion d'honneur and a Commander of the Ordre de Montréal. She has also received numerous honorary doctorates from Canadian and international universities.

Madam Arbour will assume office following her installation ceremony.

BLG wishes Madam Arbour every success as she prepares to assume this historic role serving Canada and representing the Crown. This recognition of her extraordinary career is richly deserved and we are immensely proud of her association with BLG over the past decade.

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