

Lawyer charged in \$1-million fraud gives up practice

by Laurie Miladin
Staff Writer

A local lawyer, who was charged last week by Hamilton-Wentworth regional police with two counts of fraud involving about \$1 million, has permanently given up his Stoney Creek practice.

Albin Rogala signed an undertaking Jan. 11 with the Law Society of Upper Canada to cease practising law.

Mr. Rogala has been charged with fraud involving the solicitation of funds from clients and the alleged false representation of the funds over the past four years.

With the consent of the law society, Ronald T. James has assumed Mr. Rogala's current cases, including storage of completed files and wills.

"The law society wants his current clients to be taken care of so their interests are protected and not prejudiced," Mr. James, a Stoney Creek lawyer, said.

Mr. Rogala's clients have the choice of retaining a new counsel or continuing with Mr. James.

"In both events they now have a new lawyer. It will either be me or it will be another lawyer of their choice," said Mr. James.

Stephen Sherriff, senior disciplinary counsel for the law society — the governing body of Ontario lawyers responsible for discipline and professional conduct — said an investigation into the charges against Mr. Rogala is underway.

"In a case like this where there's concern about monies, yes, it is a very normal first step for the law society's auditors to go out to the law office," said Mr. Sherriff.

Despite the transfer of files, the investigation will continue said another society spokesman.

"If there's an investigation going, I doubt very much that his resignation would halt it," according to John Beaufoy.

Mr. Rogala, a long-standing member of the Stoney Creek Chamber of Commerce, also resigned from his position as president last week.

Tim Kott, a local businessman who took over the presidency, said he was surprised by the charges against Mr. Rogala.

"To be totally honest, I was shocked; I think as most of our directors are. We certainly consider him an intelligent person," said Mr. Kott.

An active participant in the local political arena, Mr. Rogala has worked on the campaigns of former regional chairman Bill Sears, Lincoln MP Shirley Martin and Larry Grossman's bid for the leadership of the provincial Progressive Conservative party.

Chief Crown Attorney David Carr said an attorney from outside the Hamilton-Wentworth region will likely prosecute the case.

Mr. Rogala makes his first court appearance Jan. 24.



ALBIN ROGALA
Charged with fraud

ALBIN ROGALA

Wishes to announce that as of January 11, 1989, he will no longer be practicing law. Effective on January 11, 1989, Ronald T. James, Barrister & Solicitor, with the consent and approval of the Law Society of Upper Canada, has assumed the current files of Albin Rogala and will hold in storage the complete filed and Wills of the practice of Albin Rogala. Ronald T. James may be contacted at:

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