



## ICLA and Friends – A First Norooz<sup>1</sup>

For members of the Iranian Canadian Lawyers' Association (ICLA) - it was a particularly special Norooz this year.

On March 18, 2005, ICLA hosted its first public event since officially being formed in 2002. The who's who of the Iranian community, family and friends of ICLA (both Iranian and *Farangi*) and members of the press all gathered at the so-called Debutante Ball, a sold-out event which was generously sponsored by the law firms of Blake Cassels & Graydon LLP and Aird & Berlis LLP. And ICLA, like a young woman whose time had finally arrived to be presented to the society, was welcomed that night into a world of civic responsibility and social awareness.

Mr. Frank Marrocco, the Treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada was the key note speaker. In his remarks which were thoughtful and gracious (like the man himself), Mr. Marrocco welcomed ICLA into the legal community in Ontario and spoke, among other things, of the changing face of the law and the importance of upholding the law in the "truly free society" within which we live.

It seemed fitting therefore, that on this night of first's, ICLA would screen *Babak and Friends – A First Norooz*. Little Babak's quest for identity as an Iranian living in North America resonated strongly with the audience, the majority of whom, as new immigrants left behind everything that was familiar and precious to them, in order to make a new life for themselves and their children in North America. The simple and beautiful message from the animation was not lost on us – we need to celebrate our culture and our traditions and as Iranians, it is up to each and every one of us to do what is necessary to preserve our language and heritage for future generations to come, even if, perhaps, especially because, we are oceans away from our *vatan*, our beloved Iran.

With help from its own friends, ICLA was catapulted forward into the legal community in Ontario and the Iranian community and with the help of Babak and Friends, ICLA celebrated a very special Norooz indeed. The sentiment of excitement and glee felt by the ICLA team who organized the successful Norooz celebration of March 18<sup>th</sup> is best captured by these words from one of our team members "this was my best GIFT (in a long time) from Amoo Norooz. I felt like a little kid who received his first bicycle or favourite gift."

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