

# Small Firms, Sole Practitioners and In-house Counsel CPD

Nov 20/2024

## Conference Chair:



**Leslie Jack** joined Shillington McCall as an associate lawyer in 2024. Leslie is bilingual and completed a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) at the University of Toulouse 1 Capitole (2014). She also completed two Masters of Laws (LL.M.) at the University of Ottawa (2016) and at Osgoode Hall Law School (2020). Her practice focuses on insurance defence, including accident benefits, breach of fiduciary duty, and tort claims.

Since Leslie's call to the bar in 2021, she has worked for multiple regulatory bodies and major insurance companies focusing on investigations, regulatory compliance, and regulatory litigation. When she is not serving her clients, Leslie is involved with Fanshawe College as a Professor at the School of Public Safety.

## Committee Members:



**Christina McCreery** is a Solicitor at the City of London. She obtained her Bachelor of Music, Master of Arts in Musicology and Juris Doctor at Western University. She joined the City of London as an articling student and continued working for the City of London as a lawyer following her call to the bar in 2022.

Her practice focuses on planning and expropriation law, providing advice and representing the City of London in appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal. In her spare time, Christina can be found baking, hiking and attempting sewing projects.



**Kristen Dearlove** is litigation counsel at Aviva Trial Lawyers' London office having joined Aviva Trial Lawyers in 2022. Her area of practice is civil litigation with a focus on motor vehicle accidents, property damage, municipal, and occupiers' liability matters. Kristen attended law school at the University of Western Ontario, where she received her Juris Doctor Degree in 2011 and was the recipient of the Brad Hodgson Civil Litigation Award. She was called to the bar in 2012.

Prior to joining Aviva Trial Lawyers, Kristen spent 10 years working at a boutique insurance defence firm in London. Kristen is a member of the Middlesex Law Association and Canadian Defence Lawyers. Kristen has appeared before all levels of court in Ontario, as well as the Licence Appeals Tribunal, Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal and the Human Rights Tribunal. Kristen's personal interests include reading and "glamping" with family.



**Kristen King** started her legal career in 2018, as a plaintiff-side class action lawyer at a large London law firm. She was involved in a number of high-profile competitions, consumer protection, and product liability class actions, through which she developed advocacy and negotiation skills. Interested in a new challenge, she joined Wallace Smith in 2022. Her practice is now focused on insurance law.

She represents insureds and insured in personal injury and property damage actions, and defends health professionals. Originally from Stouffville, Ontario, Kristen attended McMaster University where she obtained a Bachelor of Science, specializing in geochemistry. She later attended Western University and earned a master's degree in Environment and Sustainability. After graduating in 2011, she worked as an Environmental Scientist at a global engineering firm. She spent a large amount of time outdoors in the "field" and travelled across Ontario, often finding herself in abandoned industrial warehouses, overgrown fields, or in busy commercial plazas downtown Toronto. In 2017, she graduated from law school on the Dean's List and was called to the bar in 2018. For over a decade, Kristen was a member of the varsity and club rowing teams in Hamilton, Toronto, London, and Ottawa. At the time, waking up at 4:30 a.m. every morning to row was easy. Looking back, she does not know how she did it. She has since completed several half-Ironman races and long-distance triathlons and a few 30-km running races.

Once a highly competitive athlete, Kristen has learned (or has been forced) to slow down. She now enjoys running, walking her Portuguese water dog, George, and lazy weekend afternoons. She is always looking for a new hobby to replace the void of rowing.

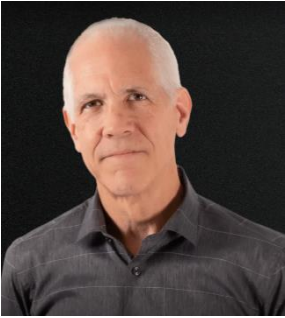
## Speakers:



**Alysia Christiaen** is a partner and the Chief Privacy Officer at Lerner's. Her business law practice is focused on assisting business owners with corporate reorganizations, corporate governance, contract matters and the purchase and sale of businesses. She also advises non-profit organizations and charities. Her privacy practice focuses on advising businesses and other organizations across Ontario on privacy issues, including developing privacy management programs and training programs, conducting privacy impact assessments, and managing privacy breaches. Alysia spent several years at the start of her career as a litigator, appearing before tribunals, the Superior Court of Justice, and the Divisional Court. Alysia serves as a board director for the London

Health Sciences Foundation and the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame and is the Vice-Chair of the board of directors for the Parkinson's Society Southwestern Ontario.

She is the founder of Child-Free Women in the Workplace, a digital community. She enjoys playing softball, watching the Blue Jays, and travelling. She would describe herself as a fashionable foodie and is happy to offer recommendations for hidden gem restaurants.



**David Canton** is a business lawyer and trademark agent with Harrison Pensa LLP focusing on technology issues and technology companies. He leads the firm's Technology and Privacy Law and Intellectual Property practice. David advises on information technology and e-business matters such as software licenses and SaaS, outsourcing agreements, consulting agreements, intellectual property including trademarks and copyright, technology transfer, privacy, social media law, anti-spam law, AI law, internet, website, and e-business issues.

His clients are those both creating and using technology and content. David is co-author of *Legal Land Mines in E-Commerce* published by McGraw-Hill, and publishes the Tech Law Weekly blog, including a newsletter of the week's top tech news from around the world. David is a member of the Canadian Technology Law Association. He is a Lexpert-ranked lawyer recognized as a leading lawyer in the Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory for Data Protection and Privacy, has been recognized by The Best Lawyers in Canada™ for Technology Law and Privacy and Data Security Law, and additionally recognized by Who's Who Legal Top IT Lawyers and Top Technology, Media, and Telecommunications Lawyers.



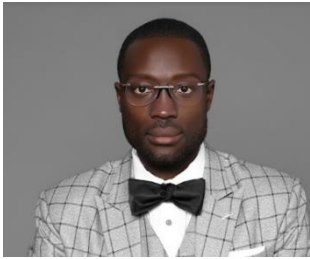
**Doug Wallace** is a lawyer, mediator and the managing partner of Wallace Smith LLP, a 6-lawyer litigation boutique based in London, Ontario. Doug represents Plaintiffs and Defendants in civil actions with a focus on health law and professional negligence. He is experienced trial and appellate counsel and has successfully handled cases in the Ontario Superior Court, Divisional Court, Court of Appeal, and Supreme Court of Canada.

He is certified by the Law Society of Ontario as a specialist in Civil Litigation. He has been selected by his peers for inclusion in Best Lawyers in Canada® (Personal Injury Litigation) since 2018 and was named Lawyer of the Year in 2022 in the southwest region. Doug writes and presents papers in his area of expertise and speaks frequently at legal education and industry conferences. His most recent article is "The Risks and Benefits of AI: A Defence Lawyer's Perspective" published in the 2024 Summer Edition of *The Litigator Magazine*. In his spare time, Doug plays hockey poorly and has an even less impressive golf and tennis game. He coached basketball and soccer for many years and supports the Oakridge and Norwest Optimist Clubs. He is a strong advocate for education and research into brain injury and is an active supporter of several community causes.



**Gordon Lee** has held a variety of management and technical positions in high-tech, working for companies such as IBM and Nortel. He specialized in the adoption of new technologies and deployment into growth industries.

After a 25-year professional career, Gordon entered academia and taught post-secondary courses at UOIT and Seneca. His field of expertise is cybercrime, and students have included police forces, law enforcement, and business professionals, in North America and abroad. Gordon has a Bachelors in Engineering and MBA from the University of Toronto and a PhD in Education.



**Lakin Afolabi** is a criminal lawyer in London, Ontario. He was called to the bar in 2009. He is the principal of Lakin Afolabi Law Professional Corporation in London, Ontario where he focuses exclusively on criminal defence. The office employs 3 additional lawyers who assist in the litigation.

Outside of law, Lakin is a father and a husband with varied and eclectic interests ranging from wood-fired pizza making to men's fashion.



Managing Partner of Cohen Highley LLP, **Laura Gurr**, is a member of the Multi-Residential Housing Group, with a focus on condominium law and affordable housing. Laura represents condominium corporations, non-profit housing providers, property managers, and developers in every faction of their business including development, governance, operations, and litigation matters. Laura prides herself on her practical, creative, and sustainable solutions that prevent and resolve disputes.

Laura is passionate about affordable housing, equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives, and community service. She is actively involved in the condominium and multi-residential housing industry and has served on the Board of Directors for the Canadian Condominium Institute (London Chapter), and the non-profit housing provider Homes Unlimited (London) Inc. Because of her active involvement with numerous non-profit organizations, Laura was recognized as one of London Inc. Magazine's 20 Under 40.



**Michael Lamb's** practice focuses on all aspects of real estate law, as well as wills and estate preparation and administration, and litigation. Michael was called to the bar in 1986 and worked primarily as a sole practitioner until joining Cohen Highley as Counsel in 2023.

Outside of his practice, Michael is very involved in educating soon-to-be lawyers: he served as an instructor for 20 years for the Law Society of Upper Canada, Bar Admission Course, and still holds a position as an Adjunct Professor of Real Estate Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario, which he has held since 1992.

Outside of work, Michael's passions include spending time with his wife, playing golf, and advocating for Elder Abuse Awareness and Education.



**Nicole Rogers** has recently returned to the Middlesex Law Association Board of Trustees after a very long hiatus (She was last a Trustee sometime around 2008).

In that time, she raised children, moved firms, moved homes, and generally been dedicated to surviving the practice of law through life's changes. She is currently Associate Practice Counsel leading a group of young insurance defence litigators at Aviva Trial Lawyers, based in the London office. With older children now into adulthood and taking up far less of her time, she's happy to be able to give back to the profession.



**Phillip Millar** is a leading personal branding expert and co-founder of Third Eye Insights, a marketing and consulting agency trusted by professionals, particularly lawyers and doctors, to elevate their personal and professional brands. With a career that spans law, business, and military strategy, Phillip has earned a reputation for reshaping how individuals and firms present themselves in highly competitive industries.

His no-nonsense, strategy-first approach cuts through the noise, helping clients build authentic, results-driven brands that truly stand out. From nationally recognized trial lawyer to successful agency owner, Phillip understands firsthand what it takes to develop a powerful personal brand, especially in the legal world. Having spoken on stages across North America, he equips professionals with practical, actionable tools to enhance their personal brand and digital presence. Known for delivering real, tangible value, Phillip ensures that attendees of his sessions walk away empowered and ready to elevate their personal brand to new heights.



**Sam Puchala** is a criminal lawyer and the founder of Velox Law Professional Corporation / Société professionnelle Droit Velox. Called to the bar in 2019, Sam practices exclusively in criminal law in both English and French with a focus on litigating offences against the person, including all levels of assaults, homicides, and sexual offences. She has offices in both London, where she resides, and Woodstock, her hometown.

Sam is known as being a trailblazer in the legal community, including in her roles as Regional Women's Director of the Criminal Lawyers' Association, Treasurer of the London Criminal Lawyers' Association, and her involvement within the Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario (AJEFO). Winner of the 2022 Middlesex Law Association Rising Star Award, and when she's not in court, you can find her riding her motorcycles and her Velox Law vehicle dubbed the "NO JAIL" mobile.



**Savvas Dagainis** is a cross-border business and privacy lawyer licensed in Ontario, Illinois, and Washington, DC, where he advises clients on Canadian and U.S. business, privacy, technology transactions, and cybersecurity laws.

He assists clients in developing, implementing, and maintaining data processing practices, and helps them audit their data collection, use, disclosure, and retention within their organization; plan the lifecycle of data, including the development of consent and data workflows; create policies and procedures for privacy impact assessments and draft them when required; and draft, maintain, and negotiate data processing agreements. Savvas helps clients answer complicated questions arising from today's digital-first economy.



**Tara Pollitt** is the Deputy City Manager, Legal Services at the City of London. She was called to the bar in 2005 and initially practiced plaintiff-side personal injury. She began practicing insurance defence in 2008, representing municipalities, transit authorities, institutions, and individuals in a variety of claims relating to motor vehicle, occupier's liability, building, defamation, wrongful dismissal, property damage and emergency services claims.

Tara joined the City of London in 2022 in their litigation department continuing her work in a wide range of municipal claims. She became the Deputy City Manager, Legal Services in 2023. Her current role involves advising Council on various legal matters, and running the City's Legal, Risk Management, Clerks and Provincial Offences departments.