



Date: November 23, 2017

Women at Cassels Brock

Ranked & Recognized

Our women lawyers are leaders in their field, regularly recognized for their outstanding achievements. Meet these leaders below.

[Suhuyini Abudulai](#) (Financial Services)

- 2016 Precedent Setter Award Recipient; 2016 Canadian Business Magazine Change Agent

[Eva Bellissimo](#) (Securities)

- Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory (Mining); Lexpert Guide to the Leading US/Canada Cross-Border Corporate Lawyers in Canada 2015 (Corporate Lawyer to Watch); 2014 Lexpert Rising Stars Award Recipient

[Wendy Berman](#) (Advocacy)

- Chambers Global (Dispute Resolution); Chambers Canada (Dispute Resolution; Class Actions); Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory (Securities Litigation; Corporate/Commercial Litigation); The Best Lawyers in Canada (Securities Law; Class Actions Litigation); 2010 & 2011 International law Office Client Choice Award Recipient; 2013 Lexpert Zenith Award Recipient (Leading Women Lawyers)

[Mary Buttery](#) (Restructuring & Insolvency)

- Chambers Global (Restructuring/Insolvency); Chambers Canada (Restructuring/Insolvency); Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory (Insolvency Litigation; Financial Restructuring); Best Lawyers in Canada (Insolvency and Financial Restructuring Law); The Legal 500 Canada (Restructuring and Insolvency); Benchmark Canada (Litigation Star, Insolvency); Martindale-Hubbell, Distinguished Peer Review Rated; Lexpert Zenith Award Recipient; Lexpert Rising Star Recipient

[Jane Dietrich](#) (Restructuring & Insolvency)

- Chambers Global (Restructuring/Insolvency); Chambers Canada (Restructuring/Insolvency); Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory (Insolvency & Financial Restructuring; Insolvency Litigation); Lexpert Guide to the Leading US/Canada Cross-Border Corporate Lawyers in Canada (Corporate Lawyer to Watch); Best Lawyers in Canada (Insolvency and Financial Restructuring Law); TMA Toronto Women of Excellence Award Recipient (Today's Leader)

Andrea Fitzgerald (Securities)

- Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory (Mining); The Best Lawyers in Canada (Mining Law)

Alison Hayman (Intellectual Property)

- Managing Intellectual Property (IP Star); Managing Intellectual Property (Top 250 Women in IP)

Lara Jackson (Securities)

- Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory (Securities Litigation); Best Lawyers in Canada (Securities Law - Litigation)

Bernice Karn (Business)

- Chambers Global (Information Technology); Chambers Canada (Information Technology); Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory (Technology Transactions; Computer & IT); Best Lawyers in Canada (Information Technology Law); The Legal 500 Canada (Technology, Media and Telecoms); 2015 National Law Journal's Cybersecurity & Data Privacy Trailblazer Award Recipient

Laurie LaPalme (Insurance)

- Chambers Canada (Insurance: Transactional & Regulatory); Who's Who Legal: Canada (Insurance & Reinsurance); The International Who's Who of Insurance & Reinsurance

Signe Leisk (Municipal)

- Lexpert Guide to the Leading US/Canada Cross-Border Corporate Lawyers in Canada 2014 (Corporate Lawyer to Watch); 2013 Lexpert Rising Stars Award Recipient

Alison Manzer (Financial Services)

- Chambers Global (Banking & Finance); Chambers Canada (Banking & Finance); Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory (Asset Equipment Finance/Leasing; Banking & Financial Institutions); IFLR1000 (Banking); Best Lawyers in Canada (Equipment Finance Law); The Legal 500 Canada (Banking & Finance); 2009 Lexpert Zenith Award Recipient

Cathy Mercer (Mining)

- Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory (Mining); Best Lawyers in Canada (Natural Resources Law); Latinvex Top 100 Female Lawyers in Latin America

IN THE LEAD

We are proud that our women hold significant leadership positions at the firm.

- Kristin Taylor, Deputy Managing Partner
- Eva Bellissimo, Chair, Practice Excellence Committee
- Wendy Berman, Chair, Audit & Risk Management Committee

- Jane Dietrich, Chair, Women's Practice Development Committee
 - Laurie Jessome, Chair, Advocacy Group
 - Lara Jackson, Deputy Chair, Advocacy Group
 - Laurie LaPalme, Deputy Chair, Financial Services Group
 - Alexandra Iliopoulos, Deputy Chair, Business Law Group
 - Patricia Southern, Chief Financial Officer
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The 30% Club

Cassels Brock is proud to be a member of the 30% Club. Members of this club are listed companies or leading professional services firms. By joining the 30% Club, we publicly indicate our support for the notion that it is good business practice to have women holding 30% of board seats and share the aspiration to collectively reach this goal. We believe businesses, business leaders and law firms should drive this change.

Justicia Project

Cassels Brock has pledged its support to the Law Society of Upper Canada's Justicia Project, designed to retain and advance women lawyers in private practice. The project is the first of its kind in Canada and is committed to identifying and adopting principles and best practices that promote the retention and advancement of women. Cassels Brock has been an active participant in this project.

women's practice development committee

Cassels Brock strives to ensure that all lawyers in the firm are given the support required to assist in their practice development, and the opportunity and training required to become strong contributors to the partnership. The Women's Practice Development Committee was formed in recognition of the particular challenges facing women lawyers in this regard, and to implement strategies to mentor, train, and otherwise assist the women lawyers in the firm with all aspects of their practice development including their professional and business development requirements.

objectives

The Committee's objectives include:

- increasing the profile of our talented women lawyers
- providing initiatives that address development, training, and the mentoring need of our women lawyers

- providing programs that bring together women lawyers with potential clients
- benchmarking other organizations regarding women's initiatives, particularly professional service firms

Recent Training Initiatives and events

- **Client Development Through Networking:** This seminar underscored the importance of advance preparation for a networking event and the necessity of following up with contacts in order to make attendance at a networking event worthwhile.
- **Briefcase Moms:** This program presented a broad approach to addressing the emotional and practical issues of being a woman in the workplace, focusing on women who face the many competing priorities of career and life.
- **She Speaks; He Speaks:** This program addressed speech patterns that undermine a woman's credibility and authority with a goal to heighten awareness so that women can be more mindful of communicating with confidence and professionalism.
- **Bridging the Gender Gap - Leadership Communications Skills:** This seminar looks at the key differences between the communication styles of men and women with an objective to achieve better communication and, thus, better business results.
- **CBB Women Welcome CBB Women:** In September of each year, the women lawyers of the firm gather to welcome all the new women lawyers who have joined over the past year, including those who have moved up the ranks from our student program as well as those that have left other firms to join us.
- **OWN Your Career:** This event is an annual networking event hosting by the Osgoode Women's Network (OWN), a student association located at Osgoode Hall Law School, dedicated to the advancement of women in law through networking, mentorship and skills building. The firm is proud to have been a title sponsor of this event.
- **An Evening With Lawrence Hill:** This event was held in support of the Aminata Fund, a charity supporting girls and women in Africa named after the protagonist in Hill's award-winning novel, *The Book of Negroes*.
- **Pub Nights:** These events, hosted at local restaurants throughout the year, focus on topics of importance to women lawyers including "Sponsorship" and "Difficult Situations, Difficult Conversations."
- **Mentor Lunches:** These lunches are held outside of the office in an effort to give associates an opportunity to meet senior women throughout the firm in an informal environment, broaden their internal networks, and gain support and insight into how our partners have achieved success.

A History of Inspirational Women

Margaret Hyndman: First Canadian woman to appeal before the imperial privy council

Cassels Brock has a long history of women lawyers who have broken gender barriers, starting with Margaret Hyndman. Margaret Hyndman's call to the bar in 1926 was greeted with, as she described it, "apprehension".

However, her ability, intelligence and integrity won her the respect of the legal profession and the judiciary, which she enjoyed for the rest of her life. She was an important part of Cassels Brock until her retirement in 1984.

Margaret's many accomplishments included being appointed a King's Counsel in 1938, only the second woman in the British Commonwealth to receive this honour.

Margaret was the first Canadian woman to appear before the Imperial Privy Council. She was made an officer of the Order of Canada in 1973.

Margaret organized the first legal aid in Ontario for the families of soldiers during World War II. She received the City of Paris Medal from General de Gaulle for work for the Free French. She became president of the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Canada and of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women.

Cassels Brock has a boardroom named in honour of Margaret Hyndman.

The Evolution of Women's Groups at Cassels Brock

To learn more about the evolution of women's groups at Cassels Brock, [see an interview here](#).
