



(The Honourable) Thomas Albert Cromwell C.C.

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[Disputes](#)
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Thomas is an active disputes mediator and arbitrator, particularly in complex commercial and public sector mediations. He provides strategic advice to members of the firm and to other firms on some of the most high-profile and precedent-setting cases before the courts across Canada including the Supreme Court and the courts of Appeal in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Québec. He frequently gives advice on applications for leave to appeal and conducts “mock hearings” as part of the preparation for court appearances at all levels of court. He has conducted high-profile independent reviews including the Governance Review of Hockey Canada.

His contribution to the legal community and society as whole has been widely recognized and he has received numerous awards, including his appointment as a Companion of the Order of Canada, the highest honour of the Order of Canada in December 2017, recognizing him as one of Canada’s most important voices on enhancing access to justice.

Thomas sat on the Supreme Court of Canada from December 2008 to September 2016 and on the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal from 1997 to 2008. From 2008 until 2018, he chaired the Chief Justice of Canada’s Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters.

Prior to his appointment to the bench, he was executive legal officer to Chief Justice Antonio Lamer from 1992 to 1995. Thomas also taught law at Dalhousie University and was active as a labour arbitrator. He began his career practising law in Kingston and Toronto.

Experience

- 2022 independent review of Hockey Canada's governance structures and systems.
- Mock hearings for matters at trial and appeal levels in three provinces.
- Advice concerning appeals and applications for leave to appeal.
- Complex mediations involving large public-sector entities.
- Interest arbitration for large public-sector employers and unions.
- Chair 2019 Judicial Compensation Commission, Province of British Columbia

Insights & Events

- La COVID-19 d'un point de vue juridique - Litiges virtuels : changements, options et pratiques optimales, BLG Video, June 2020
- Speaker, "Fireside Chat with Thomas Cromwell," BLG Family Law Seminar, June 2019.
- Author of a monthly column in The Lawyer's Daily dedicated to access to civil and family justice, 2017-2019
- Distinguished visitor, University of Manitoba faculty of law, March 9, 2017
- Author of over 400 appellate opinions
- Contributed to six books and numerous articles
- Served as Chair of the Editorial Board of the Canadian Bar Review
- Served on the editorial boards for CRIMJI and the Canadian Journal of Administrative Law and Practice
- The Dublin Lecture, The Advocates' Society
- The Marc Rosenberg Memorial Lecture (Vancouver)
- The Michael Hill Memorial Lecture, International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law (Edinburgh)

Beyond Our Walls

Professional Involvement

- Chair, Chief Justice of Canada's Action Committee on Access to Civil and Family Justice, 2008-2018
- Director, Access Pro Bono B.C.
- Director, International Centre of Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy
- Advisory Board Member, Vancouver Anti-corruption Institute

Community Involvement

- Mentor, Trudeau Foundation, 2017-2019

Awards & Recognition

- Recognized as a 2023 *Thomson Reuters* Stand-out Lawyer

- Recognized as 'Lawyer of the Year' in 2023 and also, in the 2026 edition (and since 2025) of *The Best Lawyers in Canada* (Alternative Dispute Resolution), in 2019-2024 (Administrative and Public Law) and in 2022-2024 (Appellate Advocacy)
- Voted one of Canada's 25 most influential lawyers in 2018 (*Canadian Lawyer* magazine)
- Appointed as a Companion of the Order of Canada in 2017
- Awarded the 2017 Justice Medal from the Canadian Institute of the Administration of Justice and 2016 Medal from the International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law
- Recognized through the establishment of the annual Honourable Thomas Cromwell Award for Public Service by the law faculty of Queen's University in 2015
- Awarded Her Majesty's Jubilee Medals in 2012 and 2002
- Honorary director, Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice
- Honorary member, Golden Key International Honour Society
- First recipient of the Canadian Bar Association's Louis St. Laurent Award of Excellence in 1992
- Recognized with four honorary doctorates in law — from Dalhousie University, Queen's University, the Law Society of Upper Canada and the Université de Moncton
- Recognized with the Dalhousie Law Students' Society and Dalhousie Law Alumni Association Award for Teaching Excellence in 1992
- Recognized as an honorary member of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Institute of Canada
- Recognized as an honorary fellow of Exeter College, Oxford
- Recognized as an honorary fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers
- Recognized as an honorary fellow of CREATE Justice at the University of Saskatchewan

Bar Admission & Education

- British Columbia, 2017
- Nova Scotia, 1984
- Ontario, 1979
- LLB, Queen's University, 1977
- ARTC, Royal Conservatory of Music, 1974
- B.Mus., Queen's University, 1973

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