

Kathleen McDormand

Partner and Lead, Team North

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Estate & Trust Litigation
Banking Litigation
Disputes
Contract Disputes
Employment Disputes
Team North®
Private Client

Kathleen is the regional group manager for the Ottawa Disputes Group (commercial litigation and construction). She practises as a commercial litigator and an estate litigator.

She is experienced in all aspects of estate and incapacity litigation (guardianship applications, applications seeking removal of trustees, applications to pass accounts, will challenges, *etc*.). Kathleen has acted as counsel for trustees and for beneficiaries. She has extensive mediation experience, both as counsel and as mediator in estates matters.

As the lead of BLG's Team North, Kathleen works with a team of lawyers from across the country who practice in all areas of law and are familiar with the unique needs of Northern-based clients. Kathleen also has expertise in disputes for matters in Nunavut and has several Nunavut-based clients.

Experience

- Represents clients in all aspects of estate litigation and civil litigation.
- Appears before numerous courts in Ontario and administrative tribunals including the License Appeal Tribunal.
- Appears before the Nunavut Court of Justice.

Insights & Events

- Speaker/Author, “Best Practices for taking will instructions from vulnerable clients and clear client reporting", Practice Management and Professionalism Updates, Law Society of Ontario, July 2026
- Speaker, “At the Margins: Navigating the Grey Zone Between Capacity and Incapacity", STEP Canada National Conference, June 2026
- Speaker/Author, “Best Practices for taking will instructions from vulnerable clients and clear client reporting", Six Minute Estates Lawyer, Law Society of Ontario, April 2026
- Speaker, “Leading the Way: Women In Law", CCLA, March 2026
- Speaker/Author, “Break On Through (To The Other Side): Thresholds in Estates Law", CCLA litigators conference, November 2025
- Speaker, “When the Estate Sues - The Litigator’s Perspective When Attacking the Drafting Solicitor and the Solicitor’s Perspective on How Best to Meet the Standard of Care", Cambridge Forum for senior estates practitioners (2nd Gen), November 2025
- Co-Chair/Presenter, “Estates and Trusts Summit: Litigation (Day One)", Law Society of Ontario, October 2025
- Speaker/Author, “Trust Law Across Canada – A Review of Recent Trends", STEP Canada National Conference, June 2025
- Chair, “Dinner with Your Honourable Ottawa Estates Judges", OBA, June 2025
- Co-Author, "Bringing Principles into Tune with Practice: Pour- Over Wills, Secret Trusts, and Fixing Trust Mistakes," STEP Inside, October 2024
- Co-Author, "Pour things (Recent Developments in Canada Regarding Pour-Over Provisions in Wills)," Published in STEP Journal, Trust Quarterly Review, June 2024
- Speaker/Author, “Ssshh – I Have a Secret (Trust) For You! (And How to Fix Trust Mistakes!)", STEP Canada National Conference, June 3-4, 2024
- Speaker, "Interesting grounds for will challenges," CCLA litigator's conference, November 2023
- Co-Chair/Presenter, “Estates and Trusts Summit: Litigation (Day One)", Law Society of Ontario, October 2023
- Chair, "Fireside Chat with Your Honourable Ottawa Estates Judges," OBA, May 2023
- Chair, "OBA: Fireside Chat with Your Honourable Ottawa Estates Judges," May 9, 2023
- Speaker, “Professionalism and Civility", Law Society of Nunavut, April 2023
- Speaker, “Professionalism and Civility," Law Society of Nunavut, April 20, 2023
- Author/Speaker, “Cover Your Assets – Estate Planning Issues," STEP Ottawa, March 2023
- Author/Speaker, “Tips on Taking Will instructions and reporting letter”, Six Minute Estates Lawyer, Law Society of Ontario, May 25, 2022
- Speaker, “Top Appeals of 2021”, Ontario Bar Association, April 26, 2022
- Author/Speaker, “Waiver of Privilege” Privilege – A Litigator’s Guide, The Advocates Society, March 29, 2022
- Chair, “Legal Update 2021-2022: A Review of Key Trust and Estate Cases" with speaker Thomas Grozinger, STEP Ottawa, February 9, 2022
- Author, "Unusual Ways To Attacks The Validity Of Wills" Law Society of Ontario, October 2021
- OBA: Fireside Chat with Your Honourable Ottawa Estates Judges, February 25, 2021

Beyond Our Walls

Professional Involvement

- Member, Steering Committee, Cambridge Forum for Senior Estates & Trusts Practitioners – 2nd Generation

- Member, Awards Committee, County of Carleton Law Association
- Trustee, Board of Trustees, Booth University College
- Member, Law Society of Ontario
- Member, Canadian Bar Association and Ontario Bar Association
- Member, OBA Trusts and Estates Law Section Executive
- Member, Law Society of Nunavut
- Member, County of Carleton Law Association
- Member, Society of Trust and Estates Practitioners

Community Involvement

- Member, Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda Territory National Advisory Board
- Youth Programs Coordinator, Salvation Army Ottawa Citadel
- Past Chair, Board of Governors, Ottawa Grace Manor
- Past Member, Camp Quality Eastern Ontario (camp for children living with cancer)

Awards & Recognition

- Recognized in the 2027 edition (and since 2019) of *The Best Lawyers in Canada* (Trusts and Estates and Corporate & Commercial Litigation).
- Recognized in the 2027 edition (and since 2021) of *Chambers Canada - Canada's Leading Lawyers for Business* (General Business Law (Northern Canada and Arctic)).
- Recognized in the 2026 edition (and since 2021) of *Benchmark Litigation* as a "Litigation Star" (Commercial; Estate)
- Recognized in the 2026 edition (and since 2017) of *The Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory* (Estate & Personal Tax Planning - Estate Litigation). Also recognized in the 2019 edition for Commercial Litigation.
- Recipient of the 2025 *CCLA* Gordon F. Henderson Award.

Bar Admission & Education

- Nunavut, 2010
- Ontario, 2002

- Workplace Mental Health Leadership Certificate, Faculty of Health Sciences, Queen's University, 2018
- Program on Negotiation: Mediating Disputes Course, Harvard Law School Executive Program, June 2018
- Accelerated Leadership Program, Harvard Law School, March 2018
- Business Leadership for Women Lawyers Program, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, 2016
- LLB, University of Ottawa, 2001
- B.Soc.Sci. (Hons.), University of Ottawa, 1998

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As the largest, truly full-service Canadian law firm, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) delivers practical legal advice for domestic and international clients across more practices and industries than any Canadian firm. With over 800 lawyers, intellectual property agents and other professionals, BLG serves the legal needs of businesses and institutions across Canada and beyond – from M&A and capital markets, to disputes, financing, and trademark & patent registration.

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