Leading Legal Innovation

In a profession where there is a lot of movement, Miller Thomson's insurance litigation team including James Bromiley, Patricia Forte, Nicholaus De Koning and Timothy McGurrin have staying power.

"All of us started out as articling students, got jobs here, moved through the ranks from junior to senior associate and were accepted as full fledged equity partners," explains James Bromiley. As a result, each lawyer has deep roots in the community. With many clients they have long-standing, personal relationships extending back decades.

"Dedication to our clients and their needs is something we put first as opposed to our short term business needs."
Timothy McGurrin

In addition, the firm itself is deeply established in the region. Miller Thomson traces its local origins back to 1858, through the merger with Kitchener based Sims Clement Eastman in 2002. The legacy of the early days is an important part of Miller Thomson's local culture as evidenced by the historical artefacts and artwork adorning its office walls.

The merger did not lessen the appetite for continued growth, either nationally or locally. In the early 2000's, space was at a premium and split between three floors in Miller Thomson's downtown Kitchener office. With technology it was no longer necessary to be physically proximate to the courthouses, land registry office and government agencies that populated the downtown.

The relocation to Waterloo's Research and Technology Park placed the firm on one floor, which helped increase interaction between lawyers and foster a more innovative culture. The location in the heart of Waterloo's technology district has provided new synergies while additional space has provided more room for legal professionals. "Since 2006, we have almost doubled the number of lawyers, which has allowed us to expand our service to the community," states Timothy McGurrin.

Above: Miller Thomson's Insurance Litigation team includes from left; James Bromiley, Patricia Forte, Nicholaus De Koning and Timothy McGurrin.

Profile and Photography: John Thompson

Miller Thomson does not rest on the laurels of the past. According to Patricia Forte, Miller Thomson are the local leaders with innovative client service. "You have to assume all lawyers know the law. I think what distinguishes our firm and what we are striving for is how we are providing client service."

Fee structures beyond traditional billable hours are being implemented. Legal project management software identifies the steps in the legal process and associated costs at any point. Client service standards and responding to the insurance industries evolving needs are a strong focus within Miller Thomson's culture. McGurrin adds, "Dedication to our clients and their needs is something we put first as opposed to our short term business needs."

Miller Thomson's commitment extends beyond the business law sphere into the community as a whole. "We get so much from the community and from our clients, it's a professional obligation, a moral obligation to give back," declares Forte. Miller Thomson lawyers contribute their time to community-based organizations, and the firm supports worthy causes at both a local and national level.

Miller Thomson stays on the cutting edge of the legal profession while celebrating its storied history. This is reflected in their history filled and modern office environment. "The law is moving forward. We don't forget our roots as we move forward and that's exemplified by our office here, " concludes Forte.•

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