

Michael Clifton

Associate Counsel

Waterloo Region

OFFICE

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Industries & Expertise

INDUSTRIES

Real Estate

EXPERTISE

Condominium & Strata

Biography

BAR ADMISSION

Ontario, 2000

EDUCATION

- 1998 LL.B. (University of Toronto)
- 1994 M.A. (University of Waterloo) – Philosophy
- 1992 B.A. (4-yr) (St. Jerome's University / University of Waterloo) – Philosophy
- 1988 Non-degree studies (York University) – courses in Administrative Studies and East Asian History

Michael is a leader in Ontario condominium law, with over 20 years' experience advising clients, municipalities, and other industry professionals in regard to condominium development, management, governance, and dispute resolution. He has worked with condominium developers, boards, managers, and unit owners to help them create and maintain thriving communities. Since 2017, Michael has been a member and vice-chair of the Condominium Authority Tribunal of Ontario.

At Miller Thomson LLP, Michael guides clients through all stages of condominium development, from land acquisition to registration (including municipal approval processes, clearing conditions, and Land Titles Absolute applications), corporate organization, unit or POTL sales, and turnover, and assists existing condominiums with all kinds of governance and management issues including document interpretation and enforcement, enacting rules, by-laws, and various kinds of agreements, and resolving conflicts. His extensive industry involvement and alternative dispute resolution services make him a trusted resource for helping clients understand and work through complex condominium issues.

Michael has served in executive roles locally and nationally for the Canadian Condominium Institute (CCI) and holds both the ACCI and LCCI designations. He has written and taught extensively about condominium law for CCI and other organizations, and participated in government consultations on Ontario's condominium legislation, contributing to industry development and education. Michael's commitment to excellence in legal practice is represented by his efforts to initiate the Ontario chapter of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society.

Outside of his legal practice, Michael is actively involved in community organizations and events. He is the founder of Strummerfest, an annual non-profit music festival in Waterloo honoring Joe Strummer, which raises awareness and funds for suicide prevention and local charities. He also serves and has served on multiple interfaith and community boards, including Interfaith Grand River and the Grand Philharmonic Choir, reflecting his deep commitment to fostering unity and supporting charitable causes.

Industry involvement

Recognition

- Initiated the Ontario chapter of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society – an international non-profit professional association that encourages lawyers to “strive through public service and professional excellence to promote fairness and virtue founded upon the rule of law” 2023.
- Obtained ACCI (2009) and LCCI (2021) designations from the Canadian Condominium Institute (CCI).
- CCI National Executive Board member, National Education Committee member, and National Executive Liason for Ontario region chapters, 2016-2019.
- Participant with other industry professionals on round-tables and panels consulting the Province of Ontario with respect to proposed amendments to condominium legislation, 2013-2015.
- Director and executive (vice-president, president, past-president) of CCI's Golden Horseshoe Chapter, 2009-2015.
- Honorary member of the Brant Condominium Corporations Association since 2008.

Thought leadership

Publications

- "Up and Across," CM Magazine, Spring 2020
- "Pro Tips for Achieving Compliance with New Law," CM Magazine, Spring 2018
- "How Safe is Your Office?" Ontario Home Builder, Spring 2016
- "How the Proposed Reforms Might (or Might Not) Help," CM Magazine, Spring 2015
- "Principles in the Condominium Act, 1998," CM Magazine, Spring 2012
- "Questions and Answers," (with K. Sales) Condo News, Spring 2012
- "How do Boards Get Paid?" The Condo Voice, Summer 2011
- "A Bit About Proxies," The Condo Voice, Winter 2011
- "Questions and Answers," (with A. Siaroff) Condo News, Winter 2011
- "Coming and Going on the Right of Accessibility," Spring 2010, Condo News
- "Condominium Liens," 2009/2010-1 Issue, CCI Review, The Newsletter of the Canadian Condominium Institute – London and Area Chapter
- "What the Condominium Board Should Be Considering Every Year – An Annual Checklist," The Condo Voice, Spring 2010
- "Effective Condominium Management – A 'Team Sport'," (with S. Dooman), CM Magazine, Summer 2010
- "Obligations & Liabilities of a Condominium Corporation and its Board of Directors," The Condo Voice, Summer 2009
- "Smart Metering and the Declaration," CM Magazine, Summer 2008
- "What's Wrong with 'Group' Section 98 Agreements?" CM Magazine, Winter 2008
- "Explaining and Defining the 'Standard Unit'," 2007/2008-1 Issue, CCI Review, The Newsletter of the Canadian Condominium Institute – London and Area Chapter

About Condo (informational memoranda)

- Lawyer Be Good, and What Happens When She's Not, March 2017
- Timely Lien Registration Necessary to Protect Priority, August 2016 – with Jessica Spataro
- 'Business Judgement Rule' Affirmed for Condominiums, September 2016
- Pay What You Should, or Pay Even More Later On, June 2016
- Good Faith and Honesty on the Rock, June 2016
- Annual Checklist Update 2011: New Issues for a New Year, January 2011
- Charter Rights and Communications, February 2011
- Re-disclosure and the Condominium Act, Section 55, February 2011
- Keep it Simple; Do it Right, April 2010
- How Do Boards Get Paid?, June 2009

- Conduct Not Oppressive, But Likely Still Not Right, June 2009
- Requisitioned Meetings, March 2008
- A Bit About Proxies, October 2008
- Information Meetings, December 2008
- Determining and Extending Confirmed Occupancy Dates, April 2007
- Amending the Declaration or Description, April 2007
- Organization and Turn-Over of a Condominium Corporation, June 2007
- Matters of Privacy, September 2007

Books

- A Planners' and Municipalities' Guide to the Condominium Act, 1998, By Craig Robson, Michael Clifton, Greg Carpenter, Ron Danks and Avril Lavallee, published by CCI-Golden Horseshoe Chapter (2005)
- Essential Issues for Realtors in the Condominium Act, 1998, By Craig Robson, Michael Clifton and Ron Danks, published by CCI-Golden Horseshoe Chapter (2004)

Presentations

In addition to the specific conference presentations and courses listed below, since 2007 Michael has participated in numerous general and themed panels, "leaders circles," roundtable discussions, and Q&A sessions relating to Ontario condominium law hosted by the City of Cambridge, the City of Waterloo, Stantec, BMO, Sanderson Management Inc., Coldwell Banker Peter Benninger Real Estate Brokerage, Brant Condominium Corporations Association, and at conferences and other events of the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario (ACMO) and chapters of the Canadian Condominium Institute (CCI). Michael was keynote speaker at annual general meetings of the Brant Condominium Corporations Association each year from 2008-2015, and has participated annually in the popular CCI London & Area Chapter's program, "There are No Stupid Questions," since 2017.

- "The Condominium Authority of Ontario" (London) May 2025
- "Condo Law Q&A" (multiple dates and locations) April 2025
- "Condominium Board and Management Relations" (Waterloo) March 2025
- "Condominium Governance Roles and Relationships" (Waterloo) March 2025
- "Accounting Basics/Understanding Financial Statements," CCI (Kitchener), October 2024
- "Aging in Place and Human Rights," CCI (Kitchener), April 2024
- "Property Management Issues," CCI (Kitchener), October 2023
- "Condominium Governing Documents," CCI (Kitchener), May 2022

- "Condominium Board Obligations," CCI (Kitchener), May 2018
- "Bill 106," CCI (Kitchener), October 2015
- "Amendments to the Condominium Act," CCI (London), November 2015
- "Condominium Governing Documents," CCI (Hamilton), May 2009
- "Condo Insurance – Who Is Responsible?" Toronto Condo Show, October 2008
- "Condominium Disputes," CCI (London), November 2007
- "Fraud," CCI (Kitchener), Spring 2006

Educational Programs

- Reserve Fund Fundamentals – CCI Directors' Course No. 105 (CCI Grand River Chapter, March 2025)
- "Buying and Selling New and Used Condominiums" (KW Association of Realtors, Sept/Nov 2007, Nov/Dec 2008, October 2009, October 2011, January 2013, Feb/Mar 2015, November 2016, February 2018, April 2021, June 2022)
- Level 100 Condominium Directors' Course (CCI Golden Horseshoe Chapter, April 2007, April 2008, October 2016)
- Level 200 Condominium Directors' Course (CCI Golden Horseshoe Chapter, October 2007, October 2008, October 2009, April 2010, Spring/Fall 2011, Spring/Fall 2012, September 2013, October 2013, September 2014, October 2015)
- Level 300 Condominium Directors' Course (CCI Golden Horseshoe Chapter, May 2013)
- Pre-Level 100 Condominium Director's Introductory Presentation (CCI Golden Horseshoe Chapter, May 2009, May/June 2010)

Community roles

- Steering Committee (Board) member, Christians Together Waterloo Region, 2015-present
- Founder/Producer, Strummerfest (community-based charity fundraising music festival and related events), 2012-present
- Steering Committee (Board) member, Interfaith Grand River, 2010-present
- Organizer, Multifaith Prayer Vigil for victims of Sri Lanka bombings, 2019
- Speaker (Christianity), Ahmadiyya Muslim Ja'amat's World Religions Conference, Waterloo, 2018
- Charity Fundraising Concert Producer: From Rock to Rhapsody (2011); Out of the Ashes (2013)
- Director & Secretary, Grand Philharmonic Choir (formerly, Kitchener Waterloo Philharmonic Choir), abt. 2002-2007
- Director, Leading Tone Arts Productions (dedicated to the artwork of David Tomlinson and Amanta Scott) (late 1990's/early 2000's)

- Member, Metro Toronto Multifaith Antiracism Committee, 1996-97

Memberships & affiliations

- J. Reuben Clark Law Society
- Canadian Condominium Institute