Thornton Grout Finnigan LLP
RESTRUCTURING + LITIGATION

John L. Finnigan
Partner

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John has a broad practice in complex commercial litigation which includes significant experience in insolvency and restructuring litigation. As one of the founders of Thornton Grout Finnigan (TGF), John is called upon for the firm's most pressing litigation matters, leveraging his depth of knowledge with clients throughout Canada's diverse corporate marketplace.

John has been lauded as "a spectacular lawyer in huge insolvency proceedings" and "a very credible, no-nonsense litigator who is extremely effective in court" in Chambers Global. In addition to being a skilled litigator, John is known for his strong rapport with clients, and being attentive and good-natured in a range of challenging legal and business situations.

John is consistently recognized as one of Canada's top lawyers in the Lexpert/American Lawyer Guide to the Leading 500 Lawyers in Canada, as a leading lawyer for US/Canada Cross-border Litigation in Lexpert and is recommended for dispute resolution (Canada) by Chambers Global. The Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory has repeatedly listed John as a leading lawyer for both Insolvency Litigation and Financial Restructuring.

Outside of his legal practice, John was a founder of the Canadian Chapter of Worldwide Orphans Foundation of Canada, a charity dedicated to improving the lives of orphans throughout the world.

Representative mandates:

+ Counsel to PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc. in its capacity as receiver and manager of Bridging Finance Inc. and its related entities. This mandate involves maximizing returns for 26,000 investors in the context of alleged mismanagement and misappropriation of tens of millions of dollars of investor funds.
+ Lead counsel for a Big Four accounting firm in the defence of nine-figure auditor negligence claims arising out of the insolvency of Bondfield Construction.

- Counsel to JTI-Macdonald Corp., one of the largest tobacco companies in Canada, in its proceedings under the CCAA with a goal to achieve a global resolution of the myriad of litigation claims against it exceeding $500 billion. The two other largest tobacco companies have also filed for CCAA protection resulting in unprecedented industry-wide proceedings.
- Canadian litigation counsel representing the Trustees of the UK Pension Plan and the UK Pension Protection Fund (on behalf of 42,000 UK pensioners with a US$4 billion pension plan deficit) in successfully obtaining a groundbreaking pro rata allocation among the global Nortel Networks insolvency estates following an unprecedented joint trial of the Canadian and US Courts, involving US$7.3 billion in proceeds.
- Canadian litigation counsel on behalf of the UK Pension Claimants in successfully proving and obtaining an Order allowing a CA$600 million claim against the Canadian Nortel estate following its disallowance by the court-appointed monitor.
- Worked with the TGF team as court-appointed counsel representing 630,000 policy holders in the demutualization of Economical Mutual Insurance Company. This was the first demutualization of a property and casualty company in Canada, and involved representing policy holders in negotiating the allocation of $2 billion in benefits among the policy holders.
- Acted on behalf of a committee of contesting bondholders in the BCE privatization, which involved the world's largest leveraged buy-out with an enterprise value of $52 billion, ultimately appearing at the Supreme Court of Canada.
- Court-appointed litigation counsel to the litigation trustee of Cash Store Financial Services Inc.
- Acting on behalf of the Ontario Municipal Employees' Retirement System before a major municipal judicial inquiry.
- Representing the former principal of Lakeport Brewing Corp. in the defence of a $50 million officer and director liability case. The case resulted in a $1.8 million cost award in favour of TGF's client.
- Counsel to KPMG Inc., in its capacity as receiver in the receivership and bankruptcy of the Portus Group of Companies, which involved more than $800 million of investor funds at risk in Canada's largest hedge fund scandal.
- Counsel to the receiver, RSM Richter Inc., in the Norshield hedge fund scandal involving the tracing and attempted recovery of more than $400 million in funds in several jurisdictions.

Professional Involvement

John is a member of:

- Canadian Bar Association
- Ontario Bar Association, Civil Litigation Section
- INSOL International
- The Advocates' Society
- Toronto Lawyers Association

Recent professional appearances include:

- Oct 04, 2021
  John Finnigan, Leanne Williams & Mitch Grossell are panelists at the ACFI 23rd Annual Fraud Conference.

+ Jan 20, 2017
  John L. Finnigan is a panelist at The Advocates' Society program "Cross-examination: Strategies for Success"

Recognition

John is recognized as a leading lawyer in:

+ The Best Lawyers in Canada® 2026 and prior years (Corporate and Commercial Litigation, Insolvency and Financial Restructuring Law)
+ The Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory 2026 & prior years (Litigation – Corporate Commercial and Insolvency & Financial Restructuring)
+ Lexpert Special Edition on Litigation – Leading Litigators in Canada (2023 and prior years)
+ Who's Who Legal - National Leader - Commercial Litigation 2023 and 2021
+ Benchmark Canada: The Definitive Guide to Canada's Leading Litigation Firms and Attorneys 2026 & prior years (Litigation Star in Ontario)

Publications

+ Dec 12, 2023
  Pari Passu Prevails: The Court of Appeal's Decision in Bridging Finance
+ Oct 30, 2020
  Ontario Court of Appeal confirms landlord's rights under letters of credit in tenant's bankruptcy.
+ Mar 31, 2017
  The Curtain is Coming Down on Nortel's eight-year run on the Global Insolvency stage
+ Jul 01, 2012
  Canada's Newest Tort
+ Apr 03, 2012
  The Tort of Snooping: Intrusion upon Seclusion
+ May 31, 2009
  The Supreme Court of Canada provides guidance for corporate directors, shareholders, creditors and their advisers
+ Dec 31, 2000
  Directors' Due Diligence: Tips and Traps

Education

Bar Admissions

+ Ontario, 1984

Education

+ J.D. (Western University), 1982