



Robert I. Thornton
Partner

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Robert is a widely-recognized and highly sought-after lawyer, noted as one of the foremost insolvency practitioners in Canada. Bob is a founding partner of Thornton Grout Finnigan (TGF) and works on some of the firm's most high-priority and complex insolvency matters. His breadth and depth of experience is unparalleled in the industry and has resulted in Bob enjoying a well-earned reputation as a pillar in the legal profession.

Known for his creativity, energy, and collaborative approach, Bob is frequently noted for his articulate client service and legal advice. He brings an intelligent, well-rounded, and affable presence to each mandate, ensuring clients are supported throughout what are often the country's largest and most pressing legal situations.

A natural leader and mentor, Bob is active within the insolvency law industry and is committed to the development of the practice of law. Bob is the only lawyer in full-time practice to hold fellowships with both the Insolvency Institute of Canada and the American College of Bankruptcy. Among his recent leadership roles, Bob is the Past President of the Insolvency Institute of Canada, and he invests his time in mentoring the next generation of insolvency leaders, both within TGF as part of its student and associate development programs and more broadly in the industry.

Among his many industry recognitions, Bob is widely acknowledged as one of the foremost insolvency practitioners in Canada. Bob is recognized as a Band 1 Leading Individual in Restructuring/Insolvency by both Chambers Global and Chambers Canada in 2023 and prior and has been lauded as "a leading light" and "the most innovative in the field." Bob is recognized in the 2024 edition of Best Lawyers in Canada as a leading lawyer in Insolvency and Financial Restructuring Law and has been repeatedly recognized as a leader in the industry by Best Lawyers, Lexpert, and Who's Who Legal.

Representative mandates:

- + Assisted the World Bank with mandates that involved reviewing and refining insolvency laws across various Caribbean countries. This required a comprehensive analysis of existing legal frameworks and the development of strategic recommendations to modernize and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of insolvency processes in the respective regions.
- + Counsel to two aircraft lessors in connection with the complex CCAA proceedings of Lynx Air, which involved providing advice on novel issues arising from the intersection of Canadian insolvency law and the Cape Town Convention and Aircraft Protocol.
- + Lead 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 \$700 billion. The two other largest tobacco companies have also filed for CCAA protection resulting in unprecedented industry-wide proceedings.
- + Counsel to the monitor in the ongoing restructuring of the Carillion Group in Canada.
- + Counsel to FTI Consulting Canada Inc. as court-appointed monitor of the Just Energy Group pursuant to the CCAA, a successful cross-border restructuring under the CCAA and Chapter 15 of the US Bankruptcy Code.
- + Counsel to the largest creditor in the second restructuring of Stelco Inc., Canada's largest integrated steel manufacturer.
- + Counsel to Ernst & Young Inc. in its role as the court-appointed monitor of Performance Sports Group Ltd. and its subsidiaries, which debtors filed dual plenary cross-border restructurings under both the CCAA and Chapter 11 of the US Bankruptcy Code. Bob is a 2018 recipient of the Turnaround Management Association's Large Transaction Award in respect of this mandate.
- + Counsel to PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc. in its role as the court-appointed monitor of Pacific Exploration & Production Corporation and its subsidiaries, which debtors successfully completed a cross-border restructuring under the CCAA, Chapter 15 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and a foreign recognition under Law 116 of 2006 in Colombia. Bob also received a 2017 Turnaround and Transaction of the Year Award in the International Company category by the Turnaround Management Association in respect of this mandate.
- + Represented the court-appointed monitor Ernst & Young in the first restructuring of Stelco, one of the most complex CCAA restructurings in Canadian history.
- + Counsel to Coopers & Lybrand Chartered Accountants in their novel and complicated CCAA restructuring that implicated more than 400 partners and former partners.
- + Counsel to Ernst & Young, court-appointed monitor in the restructuring of the Canadian AbitibiBowater entities, one of the world's largest publicly-traded pulp and paper manufacturers.
- + Acting as lead restructuring counsel to Hollinger Inc. in the wind-up and resolution of Hollinger and its subsidiaries, with extensive involvement in the company's pursuit of litigation claims.
- + Acting on behalf of a committee of contesting bondholders in the BCE reorganization, which involved the world's then-largest leveraged buy-out with an enterprise value of \$52 billion.

Specialties

- + Canadian insolvency law
- + Cross-border (Canada-US) insolvency matters

Committees

- + Chair of the Nominating Committee of the IIC

- + Chair of the UNCITRAL Working Group V Support Committee of the IIC
- + Counsel to the plan sponsor in Takata Corporation's recognition proceedings under the CCAA, in respect of Takata's foreign restructuring proceedings in the US and Japan. The Plan Sponsor purchased certain assets of Takata for approximately \$1.58 billion.
- + Counsel to Endurance Energy Ltd. in connection with its proceedings under the CCAA, an Alberta-based oil and gas production company, which successfully sold its assets as part of its restructuring efforts.

Professional Involvement

Bob is the Past President of the Insolvency Institute of Canada. He is a Fellow of both the Insolvency Institute of Canada and the American College of Bankruptcy.

Bob is a member of:

- + Canadian Bar Association
- + Ontario Bar Association, Insolvency Section
- + Canadian Insolvency Foundation
- + INSOL International
- + International Insolvency Institute
- + The Advocates' Society
- + Toronto Lawyers' Association
- + Turnaround Management Association
- + American Bankruptcy Institute

Recent professional appearances include the following:

- + [Jun 24, 2025](#)
Robert I. Thornton delivered the commencement address to the Western Law Class of 2025.
- + [Sep 05, 2022](#)
Four TGF Lawyers will be speaking at the International Insolvency Institute's 22nd Annual Conference on September 5-8, 2022.
- + [Nov 11, 2021](#)
Rachel (Bengino) Nicholson interviews Robert Thornton as part of TMA Toronto's Podcast Series.
- + [Nov 04, 2021](#)
Robert Thornton will be chairing a panel at the Insolvency Institute of Canada's Annual Conference and General Meeting on November 4, 2021.
- + [May 14, 2021](#)
Robert I. Thornton is opening Western's 100 Years of Insolvency Law conference.
- + [Oct 04, 2019](#)
R. Thornton will speak at OsgoodPD's Annual Update in Corporate Insolvency and Restructuring on "Restructuring Options in Mass Tort Liability Cases"
- + [Oct 02, 2019](#)
Robert I. Thornton will be speaking on the topic "Environment versus the Economy: Consequences of the Redwater Decision"

- + [Feb 01, 2019](#)
Robert I. Thornton will be speaking on the panel “Conflicts of Interest” at the 16th Annual Review of Insolvency Law Conference in Montreal.
- + [Oct 17, 2018](#)
Robert I. Thornton will be speaking on the topic “What Do I Tell a Client Who Asks About Secret Deals?”
- + [Feb 08, 2018](#)
R. Thornton presented at the National Judicial Institute Insolvency Seminar “Providers of Capital in Restructurings in Canada: Who Does What and Why?”
- + [Jun 07, 2017](#)
Robert I. Thornton and Leanne M. Williams are speaking at The Advocates’ Society Program “Insolvency Litigation” on June 7, 2017.
- + [May 15, 2017](#)
Bob Thornton is presenting at the CAIRP, 2017 Insolvency & Restructuring Exchange: “Legal & Judicial Case Analysis”.
- + [Feb 17, 2017](#)
Bob Thornton is presenting at the Annual Review of Insolvency Law: “What Price Insolvency?”
- + [Nov 05, 2016](#)
Bob Thornton is presenting at the Insolvency Institute of Canada Annual Conference & General Meeting: “Lessons on Director Claims, Equitable Subordination and Distressed Assets”.
- + [May 11, 2016](#)
R. Thornton is presenting at the CBA Passport Series “Understanding & Minimizing Environmental Liabilities for All Players in the Insolvency Context”

Recognition

Bob is recognized as a leading lawyer in:

- + The Best Lawyers® in Canada 2026 and prior years (Insolvency & Financial Restructuring)
- + The Best Lawyers® in Canada 2018 as the ‘Best Lawyer of the Year’ in Toronto (Insolvency and Financial Restructuring Law)
- + Chambers Canada Guide 2026 and prior years (Restructuring & Insolvency)
- + Chambers Global Guide 2026 and prior years (Restructuring & Insolvency)
- + The Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory 2026 & prior years (Insolvency & Financial Restructuring)
- + Lexpert/American Lawyer Guide to the Leading 500 Lawyers in Canada 2025 and prior years
- + Who’s Who Legal - Global Elite Thought Leader - Restructuring & Insolvency 2022
- + Who’s Who Legal - Global Leader – Restructuring and Insolvency 2022
- + Who’s Who Legal - National Leader – Restructuring and Insolvency 2023 & 2021
- + Lexpert Special Edition on Litigation – Leading Litigators in Canada 2023, 2021, and 2020
- + Benchmark Canada: The Definitive Guide to Canada’s Leading Litigation Firms and Attorneys 2026 & prior years (Litigation Star in Ontario)
- + The 2019 Lexpert Guide to the US/Canada Cross-Border Lawyers in Canada (Insolvency and Financial Restructuring)

- + Euromoney's Best of the Best 2018 (Top 5 in Canada & Top 30 in the World in Insolvency and Restructuring)

Publications

- + Feb 04, 2013
Charting A New Course: Best Practices When Dealing with Employees, Retirees, and Union Stakeholders in a Restructuring
- + Nov 30, 2011
The Implications of Indalex on Restructuring in Canada
- + Dec 31, 2004
Electronic Service Protocol Brings Unwelcome Substantive Change for Canadian Restructurings in the Guise of Procedural Recommendation
- + Nov 30, 2004
What's New in the "True North" - Recent Canadian Restructurings
- + Oct 31, 2004
Canada-U.S. Cross-Border Restructurings: A Unique Case that does not need an UNCITRAL Solution
- + Dec 31, 2001
The Interim Receiver under Section 47 of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act (Canada)
- + Dec 31, 1999
Supplying Goods And Services To An Insolvent Company

Education

Bar Admissions

- + Ontario, 1984

Education

- + LL.B. (with distinction) (Western University), 1982
- + B. Sc. (Hons.) (Western University), 1979