

Michelle A. Willette, KC

she/her

PARTNER

ST. JOHN'S

Phone: (709) 570-5335
Fax: (709) 726-4948
mwillette@coxandpalmer.com

LEGAL ASSISTANT

Diane Daly
Phone: (709) 570-5503
Fax: (709) 738-7999
ddaly@coxandpalmer.com

PRACTICE AREAS

Employment & Labour • Administrative

BIOGRAPHY

Michelle was admitted to the Newfoundland and Labrador Bar in 1999, having completed her law degree at Dalhousie University (LLB, 1998).

Michelle practices primarily management-side employment and labour law, acting on behalf of provincially and federally regulated employers. In 25 years of practice, Michelle has advised employers in public health, social enterprise, municipal government, post-secondary education, and private industry on all aspects of workplace law. She is familiar with and has advised employers about both provincial and federal legislation. Michelle has also advised administrative panels in health authorities in relation to investigations conducted, and discipline imposed, under Medical Staff Bylaws. She is a committee member of the Disciplinary Panel of the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Michelle has appeared before various administrative tribunals and before all levels of court in the Province and before the Federal Court, Trial Division.

INDUSTRY RECOGNITION & AWARDS

- Listed as a leading practitioner by the publication *The Best Lawyers in Canada* for her practice in the areas of Labour & Employment Law.
- Recognized by the Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory as a leading practitioner in Employment law and Labour law.

LANGUAGES

- English

LAW SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS

- Canadian Bar Association
- Law Society of Newfoundland & Labrador

BAR ADMISSION

- Newfoundland and Labrador (1999)

LAW SCHOOL

- Dalhousie University

EDUCATION

- Memorial University of Newfoundland (B.Comm., 1988)
- Dalhousie University (LLB, 1998)
- Certified Workplace Investigator (August 2019)

PUBLICATIONS

- Election Day Obligations of Employers
- Temporary Lay-off Period Extended in Newfoundland and Labrador
- Newfoundland and Labrador's COVID-19 Response – Information for Businesses
- Employee Refusals to Work: Employer Rights and Obligations under OHS Legislation
- COVID-19 Public Health Measures and Essential Services in Atlantic Canada
- COVID-19 – How Employers Can Manage the Workplace in These Uncertain Times
- How to Prepare for Coronavirus in the Workplace
- Workplace Investigations: Navigating Respectful Workplace Policies

LECTURES & PRESENTATIONS

- Panelist, Lancaster House Atlantic Labour Law Conference: Is it Harassment or Not? An interactive panel with case studies and scenarios, May 2024
- Panelist, CACE: Ethics – Post Pandemic Realities. The Rise of Self-Represented Litigants and Generalists, September 2022
- Co-Presenter, St. John's Board of Trade: Employment Law and COVID-19: Returning Employees to Work and Recent Labour Standards Act Amendments, June 2020
- Co-Presenter, Business and Arts NL: Navigating Contracts During COVID-19, May 2020
- Co-Presenter, National Webinar – Advocates for Employers of Canada: COVID-19, April 2020
- Presenter, Client Presentation: OHS Amendments and Respectful Workplaces, March 2020
- Panelist, CACE: #What's Next?, September 2019
- Panelist, Lancaster House Audio Conference: After #MeToo, Now What? Victims' rights, procedural fairness, and reputational risk, June 6, 2019
- Moderator, Regional Cox & Palmer Webinar: Workplace Investigations: Navigating Respectful Workplace Policies, May 2019
- Co-Presenter, Regional Cox & Palmer Webinar: Crisis Planning: Mitigating Risk Under Pressure, February 2019
- Co-Presenter, Labour & Employment Breakfast Seminar: #MeToo and Your Corporate Culture, October 2018
- Presenter, Atlantic Universities and Colleges Human Resources Association Conference, October 2018
- Presenter, Automobile Dealers Association AGM: Cannabis in the Workplace, June 2018
- Co-Presenter, Regional Webinar: Getting Down in the Weeds: Cannabis in the Workplace, May 2018
- Co-Presenter, Labour & Employment Breakfast Seminar: Managing Mental Health Issues in the Workplace, November 2017
- Co-Presenter, Newfoundland & Labrador Construction Association: Drugs and Alcohol Testing, September 2017
- Co-Presenter, International Personnel Managers Association of Canada, June 2017

- Co-Presenter, Client Seminar: Managing Mental Health in the Workplace, May 2017
- Co-Presenter, Labour & Employment Breakfast Seminar: Drug & Alcohol Testing: Part 2, November 2016
- Co-Presenter, Labour & Employment Breakfast Seminar: Drug & Alcohol Testing: Part 1, October 2016
- Co-Presenter, Labour & Employment Breakfast Seminar: Gender Expression, Gender Identity, October 2015
- Co-Presenter, Newfoundland & Labrador Employers' Council Case Law Update: Duties and Obligations of Employers in Termination, May 2015
- Co-Presenter, Labour & Employment Breakfast Seminar: Employment & Labour Hot Topics Panel, May 2015

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & AFFILIATIONS

- Member, Canadian Association of Counsel to Employers (CACE) (2006 – Present)
- Board of Directors, Canadian Association of Counsel to Employers (CACE) (2013-2015)
- Member, Newfoundland and Labrador Employers Council
- Chair, Labour and Employment Section of the Canadian Bar Association, Newfoundland and Labrador Branch (2007-2008; 2008–2009 and 2010-2011)

ACTIVITIES WITHIN FIRM

- Chair, Employment & Labour Practice Group, St. John's office (2024-present)
- Regional Chair, Labour & Employment Practice Group (2014 – 2016) (2019 – 2021)
- Co-chair, Regional Gender Diversity Committee (2018 – 2020)

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

- Co-chair, Iris Kirby House (September 2022 – present)
- Vice-chair, Iris Kirby House (October 2018 – September 2022)
- Board Member, Iris Kirby House (September 2016 – present)
- Board Member, Child & Youth Advocacy Centre (August 2020 – 2024)
- Board Member, Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (October 2011-December 2016)
- Board Member, Peter's Foundation (2007-2013)