



KAREN R.
ZIMMER*
PARTNER

* Professional Law Corporation

BIOGRAPHY

Karen R. Zimmer is the leader of our firm's Defamation + Publication Risk Management and Information + Privacy Practice Groups. She is also a member of the firm's Appellant Advisory, Business Disputes, Class Actions, Health, Education, Local Government, and Charities + Non-Profit Practice Groups. Her practice is primarily focused on the following areas of litigation and compliance: libel and slander, privacy, society governance and litigation matters, and commercial litigation.

Karen has extensive experience in pursuing her clients' interests in urgent interlocutory applications, short and lengthy trials, appeals, arbitrations, mediations, complaints and inquiries before the privacy commissioners, and judicial reviews. She has appeared at all levels of court in British Columbia, as well as in courts in other provinces and territories.

She was a speaker on several topics at the 2022 Continuing Legal Education Society of BC seminar on *Defamation, Privacy and Media Law*.

Karen is recognized in The Best Lawyers in Canada™ 2023 for her work in privacy and data security law.

Karen believes in the importance of assessing risk exposure early on in her retainer and providing ongoing risk management advice to ensure that contentious matters do not escalate. Where litigation is to be avoided, she is experienced in working with her clients to achieve a resolution. Karen appreciates that her areas of practice frequently require quick action and responds accordingly.

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EDUCATION

- 1999 LL.B. [Queen's University](#)
- 1996 B.A. (Honours) [Simon Fraser University](#)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- 2000 Admitted to the British Columbia Bar
- 2015 Admitted to the Yukon Bar

PRACTICE AREAS

BUSINESS

- Defamation + Publication Risk Management
- Business Disputes
- Information + Privacy
- Charities + Non Profit
- Franchise
- Intellectual Property + Technology

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

Karen is married with a son, a daughter, and an adorable goldendoodle. She enjoys her free time supporting her kids in their athletic endeavors, travelling and skiing with her family, running, gardening, and enjoying wine with friends.

RECOGNITION

- 2022-2025 Best Lawyers® in Canada Privacy and Data Security Law, and 2025 Best Lawyers® in Canada Insurance Law

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Extensive experience in defending universities, media (including CBC), health authorities, school boards, insurance benefit providers, non-profit associations, and professionals, in a variety of libel and slander matters.
- Success obtaining summary dismissals of defamation actions, without the need for a full trial, including relying upon the *Evidence Act*, absolute privilege, qualified privilege, justification, and the court not having jurisdiction over academic matters or matters which fall under the collective agreement: see for examples *Crisci v. Vancouver Island Health Authority*, 2023 BCSC 1883; *Skyllar v. The University of British Columbia*, 2022 BCSC 439, aff'd 2023 BCCA 90, leave to appeal to SCC refused, 41030 (30 May 2024); *Zhao v. Corus Entertainment* 2021 BCSC 349 aff'd 2021 BCCA 408; *Oler v. Wheeler*, 2018 BCSC 664.
- Successfully obtaining security for costs orders from the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, as well as special costs awards.
- Pursuing dismissal applications pursuant to the *Protection of Public Participation Act*. *Galloway v. A.B.*, 2021 BCSC 2344; *Rooney v. Galloway*, 2024 BCCA 8.
- Successfully defending breach of privacy actions.
- Opposing certification of privacy class actions and defending privacy-related class actions.
- Frequently advising public and private organizations, including tribunals and universities, on their statutory privacy obligations with respect to freedom of information requests and discretionary and mandatory severance of information.
- Representing clients in complaints and inquiries before the federal and

- Appellate Advisory
- Health
- Cyber Breach Response + Defense

PERSONAL

- Defamation + Publication Risk Management
- Information + Privacy
- Intellectual Property + Technology
- Appellate Advisory

INSURANCE

- Defamation + Publication Risk Management
- Information + Privacy
- Appellate Advisory
- Local Government
- Directors + Officers
- Professional Liability
- Cyber Breach Response + Defense
- Class Actions

INDUSTRIES

- Charities + Non-Profit
 - Education
 - Franchise
 - Health Care
 - Local Government
 - Technology
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provincial privacy commissioners, as well as advising on judicial reviews of same.

- Drafting privacy-related policies and procedures, consents, and privacy impact assessments.
- Reviewing publications to provide pre-publication advice and recommending strategies to minimize the risks of being sued in defamation.
- Mitigating damages caused by defamatory publications, including through cease and desist demands, compelling hosts to remove defamatory publications, and seeking relief through legal action.
- Providing governance advice to non-profit clients, including on membership and election disputes, drafting bylaws and policies, and defending non-profits in legal proceedings brought under the *Societies Act* and the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*.
- Successfully obtaining various urgent injunctions in commercial litigation matters, including an order to remove a director and shareholder from management.
- Urgent applications on behalf of media clients, including applications related to publication bans and for cameras in hearing rooms: see for example *v. Zehaf-Bibeau*, 2014 BCPC 253.
- Successfully defending with David Gooderham, a local school board and four trustees in a claim by a former school superintendent arising out of extensive coverage in the local media. The claim was dismissed in its entirety after a very lengthy trial and with costs awarded in favour of our clients for approximately \$700,000: *Lane v. Board of School Trustees of School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)*, 2006 BCSC 129.
- Successfully litigating various matters involving contract disputes, guarantees, and intellectual property matters.

PUBLICATIONS

- Privacy and defamation expert legal annotator for Quickscribe
- March 1, 2022, “Defamation, Privacy and Media Law 2022”, *The Continuing Legal Education Society of BC* – Course, Speaker
- March 2022, “[Utilizing the Courts for an Online Reputational Scrub, and the Potential Emergence of a Right to Be Forgotten in Canada](#)”, *The Continuing Legal Education Society of BC*, Author
- January 28, 2021, “[Insurance Considerations for Not-For-Profits and](#)



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Charities”, *Canadian Bar Association: Charities & Not-For-Profit Law Section*, Speaker

- November 11, 2020, “Cyber”, *Critical Uncertainties Webinar Series Autumn 2020* – a joint presentation by the Legalign Global Breach Response Team, Speaker
- October 2020 – *Critical Uncertainties – Technology – Four mismatches and misconceptions that could cost cyber dear* – a joint publication by the Legalign Global Cyber Team, Contributor
- November 28, 2019, “What They Wish They Knew Before Posting Their Own Words, and Hosting or Hyperlinking the Words of Others”, *BC School Trustees Association Academy*, Presenter
- May 7 – 9, 2019, “Navigating Privacy and Defamation Laws when Investigating and Reporting Benefit Fraud”, *Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association Conference Vancouver*, Presenter
- May 4, 2018, “Damages and Other Consequences for Breaching Privacy”, *Risk Management Branch Conference Vancouver*, Presenter
- 2014 – 2017, Various presentations on defamation issues for her insurance clients
- August 18, 2017, “Best ways for non-profits to navigate B.C.’s new Societies Act”, *Business in Vancouver*, Author
- August 2017, “Privacy vs. free speech on the internet: An update on the right to be forgotten”, *BarTalk Magazine*, Author
- July 2017, “What an insured needs to know when defending a defamation action”, *Claims Canada*, Author

EVENTS

- 07/05/2019, Navigating Privacy and Defamation Laws when Investigating and Reporting Benefit Fraud

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

- *Ad IDEM/Canadian Media Lawyers Association*, Member
- *International Association of Privacy Professionals*, Member
- *Law Society of British Columbia*, Member
- *Canadian Bar Association*, Member



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- [Vancouver Bar Association](#), Member



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