



Diane Bell, K.C.

Partner

Mediation & Arbitration
Family Law

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Profile

Mediation gives people more control over the outcome of their disputes and provides privacy over what are often highly sensitive issues for the parties involved. Many people do not fully realize the lack of control one faces at trial nor do people understand the truly public nature of the courthouse.

As a mediator, Diane helps clients overcome legal challenges in a fair and efficient manner. She manages emotions and expectations, and, by engaging in an active risk analysis, she helps to achieve the best possible outcome for all parties.

Work Highlights

Diane is engaged to help people overcome impasses that, even to their counsel, appear to be impossible impediments to a resolution. By working closely with the parties and their counsel, Diane achieves compromise where there only appears to be deeply entrenched positions. This process allows all parties to move forward with certainty as to the outcome.

Commercial Mediation Services

- > Non-MVA insurance claims
- > Business disputes
- > Disputes involving estates and trusts

- > Shareholder disputes
- > Pension issues

Family Mediation Services

- > Division of property and debt
- > Spousal and child support
- > Child custody/parenting issues
- > Pre- and post-nuptial agreements
- > Co-habitation agreements

Family Law Services

- > Non-litigious resolution of highly complex family law issues
- > Preparation of and independent legal advice related to co-habitation, pre- and post-nuptial agreements

Although approximately 80% of Diane's time is now devoted to mediation, she has maintained a small, restricted family law practice. Having practiced family law for over 25 years, she has garnered a broad skillset, which includes a solid understanding of tax issues, complex business structures, corporate reorganizations, off-shore investments, trust law, estates and pensions. All of these areas become familiar territory for a seasoned family law lawyer. In addition, Diane has a well-honed ability to effectively deal with emotions as they inevitably run high in most family law cases.

Whether it is securing the financial future of children after a divorce or resolving a dispute between shareholders of an ongoing business enterprise, the issues are highly visceral, complicated and problematic. Clients appreciate that Diane's skillset includes being a quick study of complex issues (factual and legal), being able to manage multiple goals that seem to be contradictory and, through a hands-on risk analysis, finding compromise on competing positions.

As an honouree of the King's Counsel, Diane has garnered a strong reputation as a successful mediator with practical business sense. She is also recognized by Best Lawyers and Lexpert.

Diane strongly believes that there are very few cases that cannot be resolved. The legal process is stressful; therefore, assisting people in reaching a resolution is truly her passion.

Credentials

Awards & Distinctions

- > Best Lawyers in Canada, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Family Law, Family Law Mediation, and Trusts and Estates, since 2011
- > Best Lawyers, Vancouver's Lawyer of the Year, Family Law, 2013, Alternative Dispute Resolution, 2015 and 2018, and Family Law Mediation, 2023
- > Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory®, Repeatedly Recommended Lawyer, Family Law, 2010-2023

Industry Involvement

- > British Columbia Law Institute, Pension Division Project Committee member
- > Canadian Bar Association, member
- > Canadian Bar Association, Alternative Dispute Resolution Section member
- > Canadian Bar Association, Family Law Section executive member
- > Family Mediation Canada, member
- > Law Society of British Columbia, member
- > MediateBC, member
- > Canadian Bar Association Women Rainmakers Section past co-chair and treasurer

Education & Call to Bar

- > Call to Bar: British Columbia, 1985
- > University of British Columbia, Bachelor of Laws, 1984

External Publications & Presentations

- > Contributing author, Family Law Agreements Manual, The Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia
- > Contributing author, The British Columbia Family Practice Manual, The Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia
- > Contributing author, Family Law Sourcebook for British Columbia, The Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia
- > Contributing author, Professional Legal Training Course (PLTC) materials, The Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia
- > Editor, Financial Aspects of Family Law Sourcebook for British Columbia, British Columbia Law Institute
- > Presenter, "Implementing Virtual Mediation for Conflict Resolution", Canadian Bar Association (April 20, 2020)