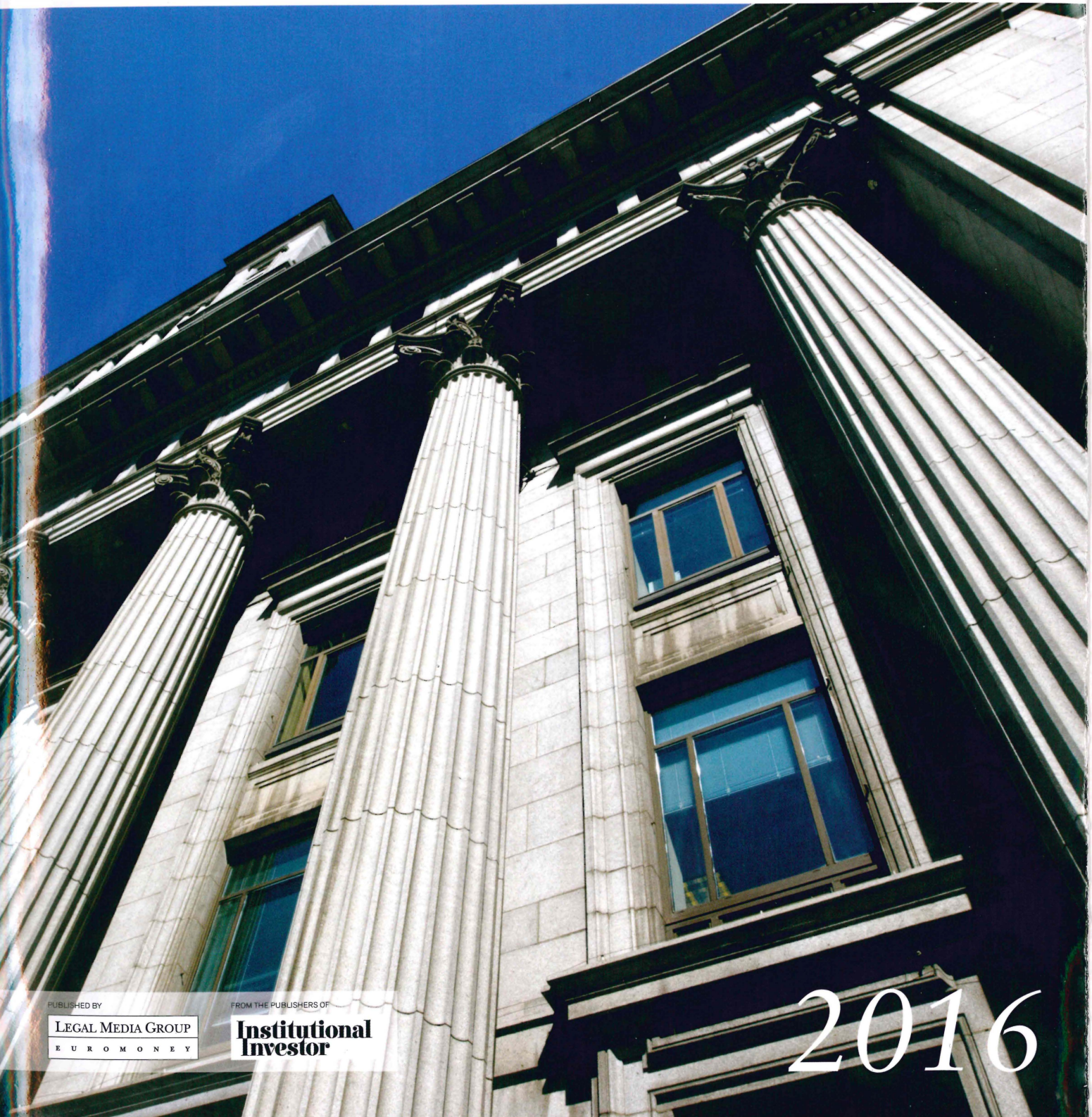


BENCHMARK CANADA

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO CANADA'S LEADING LITIGATION FIRMS & ATTORNEYS



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B

Québec

Highly recommended firms

Blake Cassels & Graydon

The Montréal office of full-service national firm Blake Cassels & Graydon is relatively young, having been established in 2001, and, although it has grown to 18 litigators, also houses one of this national business titan's smaller litigation groups. In its lifetime, however, this compact crew of lawyers has firmly etched its impression on the community. "Blakes means business," offers a peer, reiterating the firm's slogan, "but the Montréal litigation team is not just sitting around waiting for their corporate department to send them work. They have a very strong group attending to class actions; they seem like they've got at least 15 new class actions in their pipeline since last year!"

In this office's venerated class actions capacity, managing partner and litigation department head **Robert Torralbo** is a unanimous mention. "He is still top of the heap over there, and, unlike many managing partners, he is still a very active leading presence in court." Along with alumni from the firm's Toronto office, Torralbo is counsel to Visa in a multimillion-dollar class action involving conspiracy claims with respect to the setting of merchant fees for transactions for the supply of goods and services by way of Visa credit cards. Along with **Francis Rouleau**, Torralbo is counsel to Union Tank Car Company in the defense of a proposed class action brought against more than 40 defendants following the train derailment in June 2013 that killed 47 people and destroyed most of downtown Lac-Mégantic, Québec. Torralbo is also active in a case led by **Claude Marseille** for Amway Canada in a class action brought on behalf of distributors, claiming that the client misrepresented the level of income distributors could achieve, and that the client operated a pyramid scheme. In August 2015, the Federal Court of Canada granted almost all of Amway's arguments and dismissed the motion to certify the class action in its entirety. Beyond class actions, Torralbo, along with **Sebastien Guy**, is counsel to Dow Chemical Canada

Provincial litigation firms

Highly recommended

Blake Cassels & Graydon

Borden Ladner Gervais

Davies Ward Phillips & Vineberg

Fasken Martineau

Irving Mitchell Kalichman

McCarthy Tétrault

Norton Rose Fulbright

Stikeman Elliott

Woods

Recommended

Belleau Lapointe

Dentons

Gowling WLG

Langlois

Osler Hoskin & Harcourt

Renno Vathilakis

Smart & Biggar/Fetherstonhaugh

Torys

issues dealing with compensation of one of the company's executives, the declaration of dividends and company expenses. Osler successfully defended against a motion for a safeguard order and provisional measures through which the minority shareholder hoped to act on behalf of the corporation against the majority shareholders and initiate a court-appointed investigation into the company's expenses. Along with revered senior partner **Sylvain Lussier**, he also acts for Manulife in a proposed class action commenced in the British Columbia Supreme Court relating to the distribution of mortgage insurance products by Manulife's wholly-owned subsidiary, which plaintiffs allege was not properly licensed and offered certain insurance products at grossly inflated prices.

Renno Vathilakis

Renno Vathilakis is a new boutique composed of two partners: **Karim Renno**, who decamped from the boutique of Irving Mitchell Kalichman in order to launch this firm, and **Michael Vathilakis**, who came from the in-house arena. Together, the pair have positioned their firm to take on high-stakes, fast-moving litigation. Renno is not wanting for recognition from peers; one notes, "He is very prominent and gets a lot of publicity;" another calls him "a very smart and talented guy, who publishes a lot and gets his name out there, and has the intelligence and dynamism to take big risks;" yet another insists, "You put him in a courtroom and you're going to have a hard time against him. I refer him files all the time, and they're often ones that are tailor-made for him. If you want someone who's always going to timidly dance around the file, dragging it out until they fold, Karim is not your guy. But if you need the 'rough and tumble' in a big case, he's perfect." Clients also are very vocal in their appreciation: "He is world-class, aggressive but always well prepared. His approach to litigation strategy and his knowledge of business law make him a very dangerous lawyer." Another client insists, "In litigation, I require a chess master who is equally comfortable in a brawl, with an encyclopedic knowledge of case law, along with a willingness to dig in if the game gets nasty. That is Karim Renno. Lastly, and this is also where Karim excels, an ability to manage the emotions of the client, which is often a roller coaster ride given the stakes. I have used other, more traditional firms and while the partners at those firms are

technically sound, they are not Karim Renno." While a rather new name in private practice, Vathilakis is already earning peer commendations, one of which comes from a lawyer in the US: "Michael was formerly a GC at Future Electronics, one of Canada's largest companies and one of the largest electronics distributors in the world, who also happened to get sued all the time. As GC, he co-counselled a case with external counsel in one of the largest arbitrations in the world a few years ago against a Chinese telecom company. Michael is an outstanding lawyer and is a go-to lawyer for high-stakes litigation." The firm represents 37 Entertainment in an international arbitration against an international online gaming conglomerate, in which the client alleges that the parties had concluded a joint venture agreement for the Canadian market and actually started operations before the latter reneged on the agreement. 37 Entertainment is seeking a declaration of partnership and a substantial amount in damages. Renno Vathilakis is also representing Ungava Mineral Exploration in a lawsuit against the Québec Government seeking damages in excess of \$1 billion as a result of the failure by the government body to properly recognize the rights of the client in mining leases.

Smart & Biggar/Fetherstonhaugh

A collaboration operating in union for a century on average, Smart & Biggar/Fetherstonhaugh is Canada's largest intellectual property firm and the only one to grow to national levels solely on the strength of this exclusive practice focus. Peers confirm, "Smart & Biggar is the biggest and the deepest IP shop in Canada." The firm estimates that it devotes 25% of its overall practice to contentious issues, and it has been observed that it "seems to be growing its litigation practice." The firm attends to all manner of IP disputes regarding trademarks, patents, copyrights, designs, licenses, and general media issues. The firm is still relatively new to Québec, having opened an office in Montréal in 1990, but has quickly ascended to a comfortable position amongst the province's premier players in IP. In Montréal, the firm's "leading light" is considered to be **François Guay**, who maintains a varied practice, roughly 65% of which finds him acting for plaintiffs who have had their intellectual property infringed. "I actually think of him as more of a litigator

and less as just an IP guy," endorses a peer. Guay, fresh off of a trademark infringement win on behalf of Imperial Tobacco last year, lays claim to one of the past year's biggest trademark files (along with Mark Evans in the Toronto office), on behalf of Harley Davidson in a case concerning the company's "Screaming Eagle" mark, originally applied to performance parts but eventually also to clothing and other biker-related goods, which was allegedly infringed upon by a the owner and operator of a Canadian clothier with the name Screaming Eagle, which was beginning to migrate towards motorcycle goods and attire, who not only denied infringing the mark but also then countersued, claiming that Harley Davidson had illegally used the mark in Canada. This matter proceeded to trial in September 2013. Guay also successfully intervened on behalf of the International Trademark Association and obtained a declaratory judgment confirming that the Quebec government's interpretation of the Charter of the French Language is in error. In particular, the government had confused trade name use with trademark use. By doing so, the government had wrongly been requiring that any trademark appearing on a public sign on a building must be translated into French or be accompanied by a French generic descriptor.

Torys

Long a firm whose only Canadian operations were in Ontario, Torys has, as of April 2013, penetrated the Quebec market as well, with a Montreal office established by class action authority **Sylvie Rodrigue**, who, along with five associates, remains the only personnel in this office. However, in just over a year, the Montreal office has managed to be involved in most, if not all, new high-profile class actions over and above the cases that followed Rodrigue from Norton Rose Fulbright, from which she decamped to join Torys in 2012. "Time will tell how that firm builds out here," speculates a peer, "but Sylvie is very strong and has a presence and a reputation that may very well prove to attract more top talent." Despite its small size in Montreal, the firm is currently involved in over 20 active class actions. The Montreal office is also involved in other type of litigation including employment matters, libel actions, regulatory disputes dealer/broker litigation and general commercial litigation.

Provincial litigation stars

- Blue indicates a CHANGED FIRM.
- Green indicates a NEW ADDITION TO THE STARS LIST.
- Purple indicates STARS that do exclusively plaintiff work.
- Orange indicates future stars that have been PROMOTED TO STARS.
- Bold** indicates an HONORABLE MENTION.

Name	Firm	Location													Other
				Biography	Aboriginal Arbitration	Class Actions	Commercial	Competition	Energy/Resources	Insolvency	Insurance	Intellectual Property	Product Liability	Securities	
■ Guy Poitras	Gowling WLG	Montréal				✓						✓		Professional liability	
George Pollack	Davies Ward Phillips & Vineberg	Montréal				✓		✓				✓			
Mason Poplaw	McCarthy Tétrault	Montréal				✓		✓				✓			
Simon Potter	McCarthy Tétrault	Montréal		✓	✓	✓								Public	
Bernard Quinn	Norton Rose Fulbright	Montréal		✓	✓							✓		Construction	
Madeleine Renaud	McCarthy Tétrault	Montréal				✓								Administrative	
■ Karim Renno	Renno Vathilakis	Montréal	181		✓	✓						✓			
Sébastien Richemont	Woods	Montréal			✓	✓							✓	Professional liability	
Christopher Richter	Woods	Montréal		✓	✓	✓							✓		
Alain Riendeau	Fasken Martineau	Montréal				✓		✓							
Judith Robinson	Norton Rose Fulbright	Montréal										✓			
Nick Rodrigo	Davies Ward Phillips & Vineberg	Montréal			✓	✓							✓		
Sylvie Rodrigue	Torys	Montréal			✓										
Karen Rogers	Langlois	Montréal	175			✓								Professional liability	
Francis Rouleau	Blake Cassels & Graydon	Montréal		✓				✓		✓		✓			
Martin Sheehan	Fasken Martineau	Montréal				✓						✓			
Eric Simard	Fasken Martineau	Montréal				✓								Construction	
■ David Stolor	KuglerKandestin	Montréal		✓	✓										
Michel Sylvestre	Norton Rose Fulbright	Montréal		✓	✓							✓			
Robert Torralbo	Blake Cassels & Graydon	Montréal			✓	✓	✓					✓		White-collar crime	
Chantal Tremblay	McCarthy Tétrault	Montréal				✓		✓							
■ Louis-Michel Tremblay	Miller Thomson	Montréal												Construction	
■ Tommy Tremblay	Borden Ladner Gervais	Montréal				✓	✓						✓	White-collar/ fraud	
■ Christian Trépanier	Fasken Martineau	Québec				✓									
Daniel Urbas	Borden Ladner Gervais	Montréal				✓				✓		✓			
■ Richard Vachon	Woods	Montréal				✓							✓		
■ Michael Vathilakis	Renno Vathilakis	Montreal				✓									

MARC-ANDRÉ SANSREGRET



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Marc-André Sansregret practices in the areas of civil and commercial litigation, and he specializes notably in mining litigation. He also has an interest in individual labour relations.

As an experienced strategic advisor, he has acquired a thorough knowledge of the operations of companies working in a variety of industrial sectors.

Marc-André defends his clients' interests before trial as well as appellate tribunals. He also appears before arbitration courts and is regularly involved in cases governed by the rules of the American Arbitration Association (AAA) and those of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).



KARIM RENNO



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Karim Renno is one of the founding partners of Renno Vathilakis Inc. Karim's practice focuses on class actions, franchise and distribution litigation, commercial arbitration, shareholder disputes, bankruptcy and insolvency, competition law, constitutional law, privacy law, employment law and securities law litigation. He has amassed a vast experience and enjoys an excellent reputation with regard to private international law matters and injunctions, having argued before the Supreme Court of Canada on multiple occasions in cases involving such issues. Moreover, Karim has represented some of the most important companies before all levels of Québec courts. Karim has acted as lead counsel in several high profile cases related to the credit card, pharmaceutical, construction, tobacco, software, real estate and transportation industries.

He is the founder and editor in chief of the "À bon droit" blog and contributes hundreds of case comments every year. In fact, his blog was named best practitioner legal blog in Canada for 2012 by the Canadian Law Blog Awards and was a finalist for Best Canadian Law Blog at the same awards in 2013 and 2014. In 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 he ranked as a Litigation Star in Benchmark Litigation and was cited as an Up and Coming litigator in the 2014 and 2015 editions of Chambers Global. He is also recognized by Best Lawyers Canada as a leading practitioner for corporate/commercial litigation in Québec since 2015. Karim regularly appears before parliamentary commissions entrusted with the tasks of studying various bills.

Before founding Renno Vathilakis Inc., Karim was a partner in the Montreal litigation department of renowned Canadian firm Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP. He also spent time as a partner in the highly regarded Montreal litigation boutique of Irving Mitchell Kalichman LLP.



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Firm profile

Founded in February 2015, Renno Vathilakis Inc. has quickly become one of Montreal's premier corporate and commercial litigation boutiques. Practising in the fields of corporate litigation and shareholder disputes, class actions, franchise and distribution litigation, commercial arbitration, bankruptcy and insolvency, competition law, constitutional law, privacy law, defamation and freedom of expression, employment law, construction law and securities law litigation, Renno Vathilakis Inc. provides its clients with top flight representation in corporate and commercial disputes.

Both of the firm's co-founders have a consistent and impressive track record litigating and resolving corporate and commercial disputes.

Karim Renno was previous a partner in the Montreal litigation department of renowned Canadian firm Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP, as well as a partner in the highly regarded Montreal litigation boutique of Irving Mitchell Kalichman LLP. Through his fifteen years of litigation experience, he has amassed a number of accolades. In 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 he ranked as a Litigation Star in Benchmark Litigation and was cited as an Up and Coming litigator in the 2014 and 2015 editions of Chambers Global. He is also recognized by Best Lawyers Canada as a leading practitioner for corporate/commercial litigation in Québec since 2015. In 2013, Karim was rewarded by the Client Choice awards as the top litigator in the province of Quebec for client service.

He is also the founder and editor in chief of the "*À bon droit*" blog and contributes hundreds of case comments every year. In fact, his blog was named best practitioner legal blog in Canada for 2012 by the Canadian Law Blog Awards and was a finalist for Best Canadian Law Blog at the same awards in 2013 and 2014. He is a regular contributor to well-known law blogs such as *Canlii Connects*, *Droit Inc.* and *Edilex*. Moreover, Karim has published a number of articles relating to corporate law, commercial law, evidence and civil procedure.

He has amassed a vast experience and enjoys an excellent reputation with regard to private international law matters and injunctions, having argued before the Supreme Court of Canada on multiple occasions in cases involving such issues. Moreover, Karim has represented some of the most important companies before all levels of Québec courts. Karim has acted as lead counsel in several high profile cases related to the telecommunications, credit card, pharmaceutical, construction, tobacco, software, real estate, airline and transportation industries.

Co-founder Michael Vathilakis has an equally impressive track record. After working for renowned Canadian firms Fasken, Martineau, Dumoulin and Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP, Michael was tabbed to lead the in-house team of Future Electronics Inc., one of the world's largest electronic components distributors. He soon rose to the position of General Counsel, Vice-president legal affairs of the company. From that position he spearheaded and oversaw a number of high profile commercial court cases and arbitrations, as well as a number of significant business transactions. He returned to private practice to found Renno Vathilakis Inc. His practice focuses on dispute prevention and commercial litigation. Indeed, Michael has acted before all levels of Quebec Courts as lead counsel in significant cases related to the construction, tech, electronic component distribution and real estate industries. He has also acted in a number of employment cases and is presently one of the lead counsel in a significant class action targeting the airline industry.

Michael holds a master's degree in law from Harvard University and has lectured at his alma mater.

The founding partners are supported by a highly skilled and growing team of associates. Among them are Molly Krishtalka, who recently completed a clerkship with Supreme Court of Canada Justice Andromache Karakatsanis, and Éva Richard, who served a two-year stint as the clerk of highly-respected Quebec Court of Appeal Justice Allan R. Hilton.

Renno Vathilakis Inc. is dedicated to providing its clients with top notch dispute resolution services and to finding creative solutions to complex problems.