Tess Layton

Partner

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rmrf.com

Tess's practice involves media and defamation law, privacy law, constitutional law, commercial litigation and administrative law.

Prior to commencing her articles with the firm, Tess clerked at the Court of King's Bench in Edmonton.

Tess has experience advising and defending journalists and media organizations of all sizes, ranging from local and regional news outlets to major national and international broadcasters. She also acts for media entities, individuals, and corporations in relation to defamation claims brought in Alberta and elsewhere in Canada. She frequently provides pre-publication advice to a wide variety of media outlets in relation to news stories and investigations.

Tess also assists public bodies, including municipalities, school boards, and health organizations, on access to information and protection of privacy matters under Alberta's *Access to Information Act* (ATIA), *Protection of Privacy Act* (POPA), and the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPP)* in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

In addition to her media and defamation work, Tess carries on a general commercial litigation practice and has been involved in complex litigation concerning large public and private companies. She also carries on a solicitor's practice involving commercial transactions.

Tess has appeared at all levels of Court in Alberta. At the Court of Appeal of Alberta, she has advocated for the right of the media to receive notice of applications to restrict publication and access, and to determine the meaning of publication as it relates to the internet.

In addition, Tess has appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada three times respecting media law issues. In one instance, Tess was a member of Reynolds Mirth's team relating to an injunction brought against a major national broadcaster respecting articles posted to its website containing information subject to a publication ban. In another instance, Tess acted for the Canadian Media Lawyers Association (CMLA) in relation to the right of the public to access transcripts of Court of Appeal proceedings. In the third instance, She advocated for the right of the media to have advance notice of applications to restrict public and media access to court documents. Tess currently serves as the President of the Canadian Media Lawyers Association.

Tess teaches Communications Law at MacEwan University and frequently presents to clients and the legal community on issues related to media law, defamation, and privacy law.

Tess has previously worked as a flight instructor and commercial pilot. She retains her private pilot's license.

practice areas

- Constitution & Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Media & Defamation Law
- Litigation and Dispute Resolution
- Municipal Law
- Professional Regulatory Law
- Business Advice and Transactions

education

British Columbia Institute of Technology, Dip
Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, BSc (Summa Cum Laude)
University of Alberta, JD

admissions

Alberta, 2016
Northwest Territories, 2019
Nunavut, 2021

Tess's Associations

- Edmonton Bar Association
- Law Society of Alberta
- Northwest Territories Bar Association
- Canadian Bar Association
- Canadian Media Lawyers Association (Ad Idem)

Tess's Awards & Recognitions

- Recognized as a Leading Practitioner in the area of Litigation - Defamation Law by the Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory (2025, 2026)
- The Best Lawyers™: Ones to Watch in Canada the area of Defamation and Media Law (2026, 2027)
- Recognized as a Leading Practitioner in the area of Litigation - Defamation & Media Law by the Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory (2024)
- Merv Leitch QC Leadership Award
- First prize factum, Wilson Moot (University of Alberta Team)