

Ad IDEM
CANADIAN MEDIA LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
2025 Annual Conference
November 7-8, 2025
Lord Nelson Hotel
Halifax, NS

Thursday, November 6, 2025

7:30pm Members are invited to meet at: The Arms Pub, in the Lord Nelson Hotel

Catch up with colleagues from across the country (at your own expense)

Friday, November 7, 2025

Cross Country Check-Up

A conference favourite! In this session, the CMLA's regional board representatives will take us through some of this country's important media law decisions from 2024/2025.

Moderator: Tess Layton (Reynolds, Mirth, Richards and Farmer)

Atlantic: David Hutt (Burchell Wickwire Bryson LLP)

Quebec: Veronique Belley (CBC/Radio-Canada)

Ontario: Justin Safayeni (Stockwoods)

Prairies: Sean Ward (Reynolds, Mirth, Richards and Farmer)

B.C.: Dan Coles (Owen Bird)

Federal: Kaley Pulfer (DMG Advocates)

Canadian Defamation Law in 2025: For Better or Worse?

In 2008 and 2009 the Supreme Court of Canada strengthened the law of defamation, emphasizing concerns about libel chill and the need for the common law to conform with free speech protections in the Charter. Where is defamation law today? Still strong or has the growth of social media and the decline of traditional media influence had a negative impact? What is the status of the most common defamation defences and what cases are shaping the law?

Moderator: Ryder Gilliland, (DMG Advocates)

Panelists: Geneviève Gagnon (Chenette Boutique de Litige Inc.)

Mark Donald (Mark Donald Law)

Dan Burnett (Owen Bird)

Keynote - Carol Off

Broadcast journalist and author Carol Off has recently published her latest book, At a Loss for Words: Conversation in an Age of Rage. She recently completed a sixteen year run as the co-host of the multi-award winning radio program, As It Happens.

Locked Files, Open Questions: Media Access 5 Years After Portapique

In the evening of April 18, 2020, a gunman assaulted his partner, set fire to their cottage, warehouse and other homes and went on a rampage, disguised as an RCMP officer, in his tiny community of Portapique. Within an hour, 13 people were dead. By the time the gunman was shot in a showdown with police the next morning, he had killed 22 people and traumatized countless more. The unfolding events received international media attention. But there were many questions about what happened, what the public knew, and how the media could cover subsequent proceedings. The panelists were directly involved in the work of the Commission Inquiry, as well as in court applications to unseal ITOs and search warrants. Hear how privacy considerations and a trauma-informed approach influenced decision-making and media coverage.

Moderator: Nancy Rubin, (Stewart McKelvey)

Panelists:

Hon. J. Michael MacDonald (former Chief Justice of Nova Scotia and Chair of the Mass Casualty Commission)

Mark Covan (Federal Crown)

David Coles (Boyne Clarke)

Elizabeth McMillan (CBC journalist)

Breaking News or Breaking Laws?

Investigative journalism occasionally calls for methods that involve deception, such as employing fictitious identities, establishing false online profiles or businesses, fabricating documents, or misrepresenting one's professional intent to gain access or information. Such practices frequently approach the threshold of criminal or penal offenses. This raises the critical question of the permissible extent of journalistic action in the pursuit of public interest. This panel aims to provide a framework for evaluating the legal risks inherent in these journalistic endeavors.

Moderator: Véronique Belley, (Senior Legal Counsel, CBC Radio-Canada)

Panelists:

Patrick Bourbeau, (Vice-President, Legal Services, La Presse)

Vincent R. Paquet, (Criminal Lawyer at Bolduc Paquet)
Nancy Waugh, (Former Senior Manager of Journalistic
Standards for CBC News & former Managing Editor for CBC in
the Atlantic provinces)

Saturday, November 8, 2025

The Media & and The Machine

This panel will discuss a diverse range of AI-related legal and policy issues top of mind for the media. Topics will include efforts to establish secure media provenance as an industry standard, recent challenges to the use of media content to train generative AI, and developing case law in multiple jurisdictions.

Moderator: Iris Fischer (Blakes, Cassels, Graydon LLP)

Panelists:

Bruce MacCormack (Neural Transform)
Andrew Bernstein (Torys)
Emma Carver (Torstar)

Pre-Pub Challenge

In this interactive panel, test your knowledge of pre-publication scenarios and issues.

Moderator: Dan Coles (Owen Bird)