

Arlene O'Neill

Partner, Co-Chair Corporate Law, Executive Committee

Get in touch

 <https://www.linkedin.com/in/arlene-o-neill-1a430714/>

 aoneill@grllp.com

 <https://grllp.com/aoneill>

 416.865.6640  416.865.6636



Executive summary

Arlene is a trusted business advisor with more than 20 years of experience helping clients navigate complex corporate and commercial matters. Her practice focuses on mergers and acquisitions, corporate governance, and corporate finance, with particular expertise in technology-driven businesses, including software, media, and green technology.

Arlene regularly advises clients on cross-border transactions, investments, partnerships, and restructurings, guiding both international and Canadian companies through every stage of growth and change. She works closely with multidisciplinary teams around the world to ensure her clients' business objectives are achieved efficiently and strategically.

Recognized as a specialist in corporate governance, Arlene has earned the ICD.D designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors after completing the Directors Education Program at the Rotman School of Management. She also brings hands-on governance experience as a member of the board of a TSX-listed company in the auto finance sector, where she contributes to strategic reviews and special committee work.

A frequent speaker and organizer for the Ontario Bar Association and Canadian Bar Association, Arlene is passionate about supporting innovative and technology-based businesses as they grow and evolve. From drafting letters of intent and negotiating mergers to conducting due diligence and closing transactions, Arlene combines technical skill with practical insight and draws on her background in tax and technology law to deliver well-rounded, strategic advice.

EDUCATION

Rotman School of Management, ICD.D

Western University, LLB/JD, 1993

Schulich School of Business – York University,
BBA (Hons), 1990

BAR ADMISSION

Ontario, 1995

Expertise

Corporate & Commercial

Mergers & Acquisitions

Private Equity & Venture Capital

Corporate Governance & Boards of Directors

Representative work

- Represents TSX listed technology company on corporate governance and M&A matters both within Canada and International.
- External legal counsel to largest real estate board in Canada on Corporate Governance matters and Regulatory Compliance and commercial matters.
- Represented multinational infrastructure company as lead of Canadian team on sale of various businesses and divisions over a series of transactions 2021 to present (transaction size – ranging from \$27 million USD to \$55 million USD).
- Represented client on acquisition of recycling products business \$20 million.
- Represented the buyers in a merger and acquisition transaction involving the purchase of a large carpet and tile supply and installation partnership with combined annual revenue of approximately \$100 million.
- Represented one party in structuring a joint venture arrangement in the mobile payments platform area in connection with a response to an RFP.
- Represented a rail services business in negotiating a complex infrastructure contract with Metrolinx.

Insights

Publications

IBA Daily Newspaper – Doing Business in Canada

4 November 2025

Ontario business law council ‘a unique beast within government’, Law Times – 6 January 2020

National Business Law Conference Panelist on the topic of: Earn Outs: a Tool to Bridge the Value Gap or a Trap for the Unwary hosted by the CBA – Nov 2017

Assets Acquisitions in Ontario: Buying Liability in Bulk

IBA Daily Newspaper - Doing Business in Canada, International Bar Association (IBA) - 4 November 2025

Blockchain: Background, Challenges and Legal Issues From a Corporate Viewpoint – 15 November 2018

Changes in the Law To Encourage Diversity In The Workplace – 17 May 2018



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Directors' Duties to the Corporation: Focus on Dual Loyalty - 12 November 2015

Asset Acquisitions in Ontario - 26 September 2011

Employment Contract Provisions - Protect Your Organization - 1 April 2010

Presentations

Speaker at the 5th Annual Professionalism Issues for Business Lawyers hosted by the OBA – October 2017

Subject Matter Expert for the Business Law Program at Ryerson LPP, 2014 2017

Chair, Business Law Summit 2015, Shaping the Agenda for Reform, OBA, October 2015

Chair of Various Programs for Ontario Bar Association relating to Business Law Matters

Speaker, Legal Strategies for Building Corporate Value and Protecting Innovation Canadian Innovation Exchange (CIX), November 2014

Blogs

Insurance and business interruption losses caused by COVID-19 shutdowns: Are you covered?

6 May 2020

Directors and officers need to stay focused and diligent during COVID-19 health emergency

16 April 2020

News

Arlene O'Neill Named Chair of CBA's Business Law Section

4 November 2022

Arlene O'Neill reappointed to the Business Law Advisory Council

15 September 2017



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Memberships and recognition

Board memberships

- Member of Board of Directors of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) – 2026
 - Axis Auto Finance Inc. – Board Member - December 2023 to December 2024
 - Strategic Advisory Committee – Axis Auto Finance Inc. – March 2024 to December 2024
 - Gardiner Roberts LLP – Executive Committee Member 2026
 - Gardiner Roberts LLP – Co-chair, Corporate Law – 2026
 - Chair, Business Law Section, Canadian Bar Association – Chair - September 2022 – 2023
 - Canada's National Ballet School Foundation – Board Member - November 2007 – 2020
 - Canada's National Ballet School Foundation – Chair and President - November 2018 – 2019
 - Canada's National Ballet School – Board Member – 2017 – 2019
 - Province of Ontario – Business Law Advisory Council – Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, 2019 – 2022 – Advisory Council Member
 - Ontario Bar Association – Past Chair – Business Law Section
 - Board member of Hot Docs (honourary)
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Professional memberships

- MSI Global Alliance, Primary Contact, Co-Chair, M&A and Taxation, North America Area Representative 2021 to present, Managing Partners Advisors.
 - Chair, Canadian Bar Association, Business Law Section – 2022-2023
 - A past Chair of the Corporate Law Subcommittee – OBA Business Law Section
 - A past Chair of the Ontario Bar Association – Business Law Section
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Recognition

- Best Lawyers in Canada for Private Funds Law – 2019-2026
- Best Lawyers in Canada for Venture Capital Law – 2021-2026
- Post City Magazine, Toronto's Top Lawyers in Corporate Finance and M&A – 2022-2024

Community engagement

- Toronto Metropolitan University Practice Program – Business Law – Subject Matter Expert – 2014 to present



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