

Isabela Bibulovic Aug 10 4 min read



The trio turning long-term problems into short-term bumps

Updated: Aug 16

"There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more." – Robert M. Hensen

As a society, we have become increasingly vocal about providing more protection and opportunity for the marginalized; a voice for the voiceless. Commendable strides have been made in addressing these concerns, however, a predominantly able-bodied world risks having a sole focus on able-bodied problems.

Long-term disability may be a term you hear floating around in the insurance-sphere or have seen it accompanied by astronomical figures. It often seems to be a parallel universe that those in "good health" rarely think of. It's time we did.

According to Statistics Canada, in 2017 [1.6 million](#) Canadians with disabilities (short-term and long-term) were unable to afford required aids, devices, services, and even prescription medications, due to their costs.

Something is wrong. It is clear that our systems reflect a lack of perspective and understanding of the reality millions of Canadians call "life".

The justice system is no exception.

(Open curtain, enter MK Disability Lawyers)

Meet [Leanne Goldstein](#), [Rupa Karyampudi](#) and [Courtney Mulqueen](#), Partners at MK Disability Lawyers– or as we'll call them: *The Trailblazing Trio*

These three legal practitioners, with over 50 years of cumulative experience working as long term disability lawyers, have witnessed the shortcomings of the legal practice. They recall,

["Many of the clients that we have encountered over the years approached us when they were at their most vulnerable. They](#)



(left to right) Leanne Goldstein, Courtney Mulqueen, Rupa Karyampudi

when they have lost all hope. Many are terrified of the legal process and have no idea what they are signing themselves up for.”

Spearheaded by Leanne, Rupa, and Courtney, MK Disability Lawyers is the only women-owned, women-led long-term disability practice in the Greater Toronto Area, providing a safe space for both men and women who seek long-term disability legal services.

They explain,

“Working within the usual law firm environment, we always felt constrained by the need to metre out time and close as many files as possible. Starting our firm has given us the freedom to determine how we spend our time and how we prioritize what we feel is important in the client experience. A satisfied client is more important to us than a closed file. We wanted to create an environment where clients (men and women) feel free to share their experiences without worrying about how they will be perceived.”

Leanne Goldstein's legal career was eternally shaped when as a student she was gathering witness statements as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process in South Africa. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was a government body set up to address violence and Human Rights abuses that had been perpetrated during the Apartheid era. Leanne reflects,

“The experience was educational but also overwhelming and heart-wrenching. The process of documenting and cataloging the multitudinous horrors that were experienced etched itself deeply into my psyche.”



Leanne Goldstein, Partner

Rupa Karyampudi grew up in Calgary in the 1980s and 1990s as a child of immigrants from India at a time where there was not much diversity in Alberta. She elaborates,

“I learned early on what it feels like to be treated 'different' from others which led me to form a very strong sense of justice and fairness. As a result, I was attracted to the practice of law in order to champion the rights of the 'underdog.'”

She obtained a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry, which has contributed to the way she approaches the legal practice but has also given her the ability to comprehend complex medical evidence used in disability cases.



Rupa Karyampudi, Partner

Courtney Mulqueen recalls how from an early age she was able to identify injustices, but also be motivated to apply her persuasion and communication aptitudes towards fighting for those she recognized needed her help. She adds,



suffering physically, emotionally and financially, as a result of various “invisible” conditions and as a result of not being believed or supported by others including their own treatment providers and their disability insurance companies, drove me to dedicate my legal career to the practice of disability insurance litigation.”



Courtney Mulqueen, Partner

Aside from the unique expertise our Trailblazing Trio brings to the practice of long-term disability law, they also offer an alternative approach,

“Utilizing and leveraging emotional intelligence (or “EQ”) is the cornerstone of our practice model. Being attuned to our clients’ emotions and our own emotions is essential to ensure that the experience is a positive one for the client.”

This may not be the predominant theory on legal practice, but Leanne, Rupa, and Courtney implement it into every facet of their work.

For example, how committed is the lawyer to the client? Is there a healthy level of collaboration with the client so they’re kept aware of the progress of their case? Is there an understanding of the client’s emotions? Is there adequate accommodation for the client, especially if they have a disability?

They keenly point out, “Injecting humanity into lawyer-client interactions does not detract from professionalism.”

Don’t worry, according to our Trailblazing Trio there’s plenty of room for legal innovation as well, “Right from the time we established our practice, our goal was to utilize technology and innovation to build a better experience for clients. Our office is completely paperless and we use various tools for practice management purposes. Due to our use of technology throughout our practice, we are able to serve clients in all geographic locations, including those in remote areas that may not have access to a disability lawyer in their area.”

In terms of the greatest needs that still persist in the practice of long-term disability law, “The practice of long term disability law needs to become more client-focused. Determining what is truly of benefit to the client not just financially, but emotionally and practically what is the best decision for the client at the end of the day.”

Our Trailblazing Trio must be off to put out the next fire, but you can always get a glimpse of the needs facing the legal practice of long-term disability law at their [blog](#).

“Experience. Compassion. Determination.”

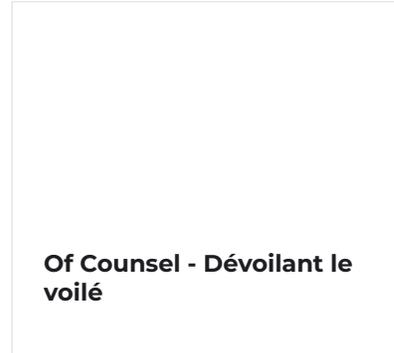
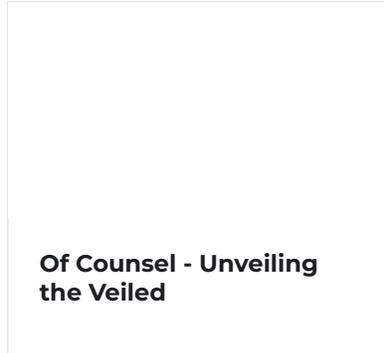
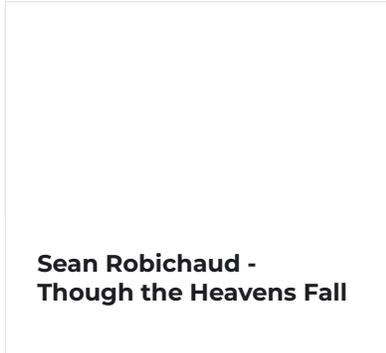
You can find out more about MK Disability Lawyers here: [MK Disability Lawyers](#)

Source cited: [Statistics Canada](#)



Recent Posts

[See All](#)



 Commenting is disabled on this post.