



## Nikki Gershbain

Chief Inclusion Officer

Toronto

[ngershbain@mccarthy.ca](mailto:ngershbain@mccarthy.ca)

t. +1 416-601-8983

### **Nikki has a track record of achieving superior results in the non-profit justice sector.**

As Chief Inclusion Officer, Nikki's role is to integrate and formalize McCarthy Tétrault's national policies, programs, and initiatives related to diversity, inclusion, pro bono and community impact. She has been an advocate for social change for 25 years, and is a recognized leader in diversity and inclusion initiatives and pro bono programming. Her reputation for excellence includes 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019 nominations as a top legal "Changemaker" by Canadian Lawyer.

Nikki's role, combining equity and social responsibility into one portfolio, is a first of its kind for the Canadian legal industry. Knitting together these values, Nikki focuses on ensuring that the firm's diversity and social impact goals are aligned and met. In executing these initiatives, Nikki effectively engages with our people, connects with clients and the community, and expertly drives overall innovation and growth at the firm.

Prior to joining McCarthy Tétrault, Nikki was the National Director of Pro Bono Students Canada. Under her leadership, PBSC earned numerous awards and accolades and became a Canadian leader in experiential learning in legal education, and the delivery of pro bono services to low-income individuals and non-profit organizations. Nikki's expertise in designing programs that serve marginalized Canadians includes experience working on issues affecting women, people living in poverty, at-risk youth, Indigenous peoples, and members of the LGBTQ community.

Nikki is a former member of the Advisory Board of the Lexpert Zenith Awards and the Law Society of Ontario's Equity Advisory Group, which provides advice to Benchers on equity and diversity issues affecting diverse communities in the legal profession.

A sought-after expert on topics related to social justice and diversity, Nikki has written for the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star, the Ottawa Citizen, the Huffington Post, and Law Times. She also regularly speaks at professional conferences and has delivered dozens of presentations, workshops and keynote speeches nationally and internationally.

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During a one-year research leave from PBSC, Nikki studied and wrote about limited scope retainers as a tool for enhancing access to justice for lower- and middle-income Canadians. Working with the University of Windsor Faculty of Law and senior leaders of the family bar and bench, Nikki developed a new model of limited scope services called “legal coaching”, built support within the legal profession for this practice model, and created a five-day curriculum for lawyers interested in learning how to deliver coaching services safely, effectively and profitably.

Nikki is a member of the Law Society of Ontario. She earned her B.A. (Hons.) (summa cum laude) from York University, an M.A. from New School University in New York City (where she was a Fulbright Fellow), and her LL.B. from the University of Toronto. After graduating law school with multiple awards and honours, Nikki clerked at the Ontario Court of Appeal, practiced family law at Epstein Cole LLP, and served as Executive Director of the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto.

## Awards & Rankings

### Canadian Lawyer - Nominated in 2013, 2015, 2017 & 2019

Top 25 legal “Changemakers”

### University of Toronto – Stepping Up Award - 2009

Excellence in equity and diversity

### Law Foundation of Ontario - 2017

Community Leaders in Justice Fellowship

## Events

### ■ Inclusion Now: From Awareness to Action

December 06, 2018