

The Honourable Clifton D. O'Brien, Calgary Energy & Commercial Arbitrators

Cliff O'Brien served as a member of the Courts of Appeal of Alberta, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut from 2005-2014. He previously carried on a litigation practice in the courts and in commercial arbitration. He was the senior litigation partner in Bennett Jones, a national law firm, and was chairman of the law firm for seven years. Cliff obtained his law degree (LL.B. with distinction) from the University of Alberta in 1962. He was awarded the Chief Justice Horace Harvey Gold Medal in Law. Cliff articulated with the firm of Bennett Jones in Calgary, then known as Chambers, Might, Saucier, Peacock, Jones, Black & Gain. He was admitted to the partnership in 1971, and subsequently served as head of the litigation department and chair of the firm's executive committee. For more than 40 years he practised in the area of civil litigation, appearing regularly before all the courts of Alberta, the Supreme Court of Canada, the federal courts, and the courts of Ontario, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories. As well, he frequently appeared before regulatory tribunals, such as the Competition Bureau and the National Energy Board. In the latter years of his practice, he was extensively involved in commercial arbitrations, sometimes as counsel and other times as an arbitrator. Cliff was designated a Queen's Counsel in 1980, and in 1987 was elected a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. In 2002, Lexpert named him as one of Canada's top 25 corporate litigators. Cliff served as a bencher of the Law Society of Alberta from 1980 – 1984, and was a representative of the Law Society on the Rules of Court Committee, and a member of the Practice Advisory Committee. He has been a panellist and lecturer at professional seminars conducted by the Legal Education Society of Alberta and by the Alberta Branch of the Canadian Bar Association. He was a founding member and Trustee of the Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership, and has served as a member of a number of community and charitable organizations. Since his retirement from the Court, Cliff practices as an independent commercial Arbitrator and Mediator. He is a member of the Calgary Energy and Commercial Arbitrators ("CECA"), an association of independent arbitrators and mediators. CECA provides parties with access to leading arbitrators and mediators based in Calgary, each of whom has long expertise in arbitration and other forms of dispute resolution. CECA arbitrators focus particularly on issues involving the energy industry but more generally involving commercial disputes of all types. Members of the CECA are available to accept appointments to either arbitrate or mediate disputes, (www.calarbs.com).