

2025 Benchers Election – County of Kootenay

Candidate biographies and statements

The candidates were invited to submit biographical information and an election statement. The views expressed are those of the candidates and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Law Society.

Candidates are listed in order of their appearance on the ballot, as determined by drawing of lots, pursuant to [Rule 1-28](#).

Candidate information for District 5 – County of Kootenay

- VOGEL, Roland John
- TSE, Karen, KC

VOGEL, Roland John (he/him)

Called to the Bar: 2000

Vogel & Co.

Email: VogelLaw@telus.net

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Roland is 54 years of age and a lifelong resident of British Columbia. He has lived in the Kootenay since 1998.

He has a black belt in karate and kobudo, and was a karate instructor prior to law school. He is a Rescue Diver and Master Scuba Diver, as well as a former ocean lifeguard, Ironman triathlete, and varsity swimmer. Roland has an undergraduate degree in criminology and graduated from law school in 1997. He resides with his lovely wife in Trail, B.C., where they raised two children who are now attending university.

Roland has a history of community involvement and is a current member of the Trail Community Safety Task Force where board members look at strategies to reduce crime and increase public safety. Roland previously sat on the executive of the Kootenay Bar Association for several years and is a prior President of the KBA.

Roland previously worked as federal crown for ten years, but his current and long term primary area of practice has been family law. He is a family law lawyer, mediator, arbitrator, and parenting coordinator. He was member of the CBABC Practice Advisory Panel for family law for close to a decade.

ELECTION STATEMENT

I have had the privilege of practising law in the Kootenay for over 25 years, appearing in virtually every registry in the region, initially as federal crown counsel and later in the primary field of family law.

Those who know me are aware of my efforts during and since my time as KBA President to push back against efforts to undermine the independence of the bar and the ability of the legal profession to self-regulate. Both professional and regulatory independence are critical so that lawyers can act in the best interests of clients, even when those interests conflict with government or other powerful actors. Our standards of admission, conduct, and discipline, must be overseen by the legal profession itself and not the executive branch of

whatever government is in power at the time. We have seen in other jurisdictions, the threats to the rule of law, to institutional checks and balances, to the protection of minority rights, and an overall weakening of public confidence in the justice system, when government oversteps.

I am fully aware that depending on the outcome of upcoming litigation between the LSBC and BC Government, this may be the last elected Benchers position for Kootenay. There are no guarantees that the upcoming Benchers would be able to complete their full term. If we effectively end up with a state-controlled law society, the Kootenay may or may not end up with a long term elected Benchers or representative at all. All I can promise is that as a Benchers for the Kootenay I would continue to advocate for professional and regulatory independence for the Bar in every way possible and for as long as possible, as this is essential for the protection of the public and the clients who we serve in the Kootenay.

I also intend to continue to argue that access to justice needs to involve access to properly trained lawyers and properly funded court services, not the replacement of lawyers or further cuts to those services.

Thank you to so many for your encouragement and support.

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TSE, Karen, KC (she/her)

Called to the Bar: 2012

Rockies Law LLP

Email: ktse@rockieslaw.com

Website: www.rockieslaw.com/lawyers

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Karen Tse, K.C. is a rural family lawyer, family law mediator, Legal Aid BC duty counsel and civil litigator. Karen is a partner at Rockies Law LLP and practices from Fernie. Karen represents the Kootenay region as the president of the Kootenay Bar Association (KBA) and she serves as the Kootenay representative on the Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia Board. She is dedicated to promoting access to justice in rural communities and providing mentorship to the Kootenay bar. For many years, she served on the board of the CBABC Rural Education and Access to Lawyer Initiative. Karen became one of the youngest lawyers to be appointed Kings Counsel in British Columbia this past year. She was also named volunteer of the year by the Fernie Chamber of Commerce. As president of the KBA, she has launched a peer-mentorship network and liaised with the Penticton Bar to bring regional workshops to the Kootenays. Outside of the office, her work with the Fernie Women's Resource Centre continues to support rural families accessing child care and women and children in crisis.

ELECTION STATEMENT

Karen hopes to bring her energy and passion to the role of Benchers. As president of the Kootenay Bar Association, Karen has been a strong advocate for the lawyers of the Kootenays. She has worked diligently to liaise with the Law Society of British Columbia and the Canadian Bar Association of British Columbia to build strong relationships with Kootenay lawyers. She also works to foster a welcoming and collegial bar that one would be proud to be a part of.

For many years, Karen served on the CBABC Rural Education and Access to Lawyer Initiative advocating for access to justice in rural high needs communities. Through that program and during Karen's tenure, many students have been placed throughout the Kootenays.

Karen is passionate about supporting articling students and new lawyers, having served as a mentor to many lawyers entering the legal profession in the Kootenays. She also began a mentorship network initiative in the Kootenays and has served as a liaison to bring regional workshops hosted by the Judiciary to the Kootenay bar. Karen is passionate about access to legal education and currently serves as the representative of the Kootenays on the board of the Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia.

Karen will advocate for the profession and the public interest with the keen enthusiasm she brings to all of her work. Her public service, experience and judgment was acknowledged when she became one of the youngest lawyers to be appointed Kings Counsel in 2024. She is a strong decision maker and leader, and she will continue the tradition of Kootenay lawyers bringing a rural perspective on the challenging issues faced by the legal profession today. She will work tirelessly to ensure that our legal institutions continue to protect the bar's independence to self-regulate and to ensure that rural lawyers continue to have a strong voice within our profession.

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