

## Member Spotlight: Michael Badejo

Michael Badejo is an Articling Student-at-Law at Fillmore Riley LLP and is expected to be Called to the Manitoba Bar in June 2023. He has been an MBA member since 2019, and has served the MBA and CBA in many roles, including the Manitoba Law Students' Association Representative, Manitoba Representative, and his current role as the MBA Council's Articling Student Representative. Michael received the MBA President's Award of Excellence in 2020 for extraordinary contributions to the MBA and its goals, in recognition of his work reforming and rebuilding connections between law students, lawyer mentors, and the MBA during the height of the pandemic.

Michael currently assists lawyers at Fillmore Riley LLP in a variety of civil litigation and corporate law matters. He is particularly interested in intellectual property law, but has a wide range of legal interests.

### How did you become interested in law as a career?

I'd always intended to become a lawyer, especially closer to the end of high school. I had a previous career in public relations, but I started there because I felt my legal career would be best served by having hands-on experience in a corporate job and translating that into the legal world.

I've always wanted to use critical thinking, strategic messaging and a pragmatic approach to help communities of which I am a part. Given my professional background, a legal career is a natural evolution and also gives me the ability to make a positive impact on an individual scale and a collective one as well.

### What do you find most valuable about your MBA membership?

Though the multitude of Sections and fantastic presentations bring a lot of value to an MBA membership, for me, the most valuable element is the connection to the community. Everyone says it, and that's probably because it's true: Manitoba has an exceptionally collegial Bar. It's a boon for all of us because that sense of community leads to better professional and personal connections. A rising tide lifts all boats in this scenario, and we're all the better for it. It also gives us another chance to do what we do best, which is helping and advocating for those around us.

### What experiences have led you to where you are today?

I've talked a bit about my past work in public relations, both in the corporate communications department of organizations like the Winnipeg Airports Authority and the Chartered Professional Accountants of Manitoba. They've been instrumental in becoming well-rounded and developing a practical approach to problem-solving.

Educationally, I've done a joint degree/diploma from the University of Winnipeg and Red River College, followed by a law degree at Robson Hall. While at law school, I made an effort



to get involved and be active in an extra-curricular way. Though the education was great, the most memorable element was outside of the classroom. I was honoured to serve as President of the Manitoba Law Students' Association from 2021-2022, as my Executive team and I laid a foundation for success after the height of the pandemic and for years to come. Though most of our law school experience was online, it was rewarding to hear that our work helped enhance the experience for our peers and colleagues alike. It was also enriching to see the students come after us, take that baton and build on the successes we had.

All of that to say: my experience in pushing the needle forward to help people around me have led me to where I am today. It was vital to me that there was an ability to give back professionally as well, and I'm thrilled that the team at Fillmore Riley LLP feel the same way as well. There's a palpable joy and concerted effort to give back in several ways around the office, and I was drawn to that during the summer student/articling recruitment process as well.

Growing up, I've always enjoyed honing a skill; whether it's appreciating art, making art, learning a sport, or getting better at an exercise (yoga is \*way\* harder than it looks), it's kind of addicting to get better at something. As an articling student, there's still a sense of not knowing exactly what to do in every situation (imagine that).

However, I've taken the approach that it's an opportunity to learn and to get better; treating it like being at the beginning of learning an instrument or a new activity has made it a lot of fun to see improvements over time.

### What advice do you live by and who gave it to you?

The piece of advice that reverberates through my day-to-day is one instilled by my parents (and it's fairly common): don't forget where you came from. It's more of a metaphorical thing to remember that no one does anything truly on their own.

A slightly more individualized quote from former President Barack Obama helps as well: change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.

Lastly, a succinct one from Conan O'Brien – my favourite comedian – is a banner one: work hard, be kind, and amazing things will happen.

### What is a fun fact that our readers might not know about you?

A fun fact: I've written spec script sitcoms (that means original, unpurchased scripts), that I thought were hilarious (and at least a few other people did); after entering them in contests, I have a couple Finalist finishes under my belt. I'll get one over the line and sell a script one day, but first, I'm going to try to get my legal eagle wings.

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