

## DETROIT

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## Services

Bankruptcy, Restructuring and  
Insolvency

Bankruptcy Litigation and  
Appeals

Creditor and Creditors'  
Committee

Debtor Representation

Distressed Automotive Supplier

Distressed Transactions and  
Bankruptcy Sales

International and Cross-Border  
Insolvency

Loan Enforcement and  
Restructuring

Corporate and Transactions

Financial Services

C&I and Asset-Based Finance

Commercial Lending  
Enforcement, Insolvency and  
Litigation

International

Canada

Public Finance

## Industries

Automotive



## Stephen S. LaPlante

Principal  
Bankruptcy and Insolvency Deputy  
Group Leader

Stephen LaPlante has been extensively involved in virtually every auto industry-related bankruptcy case in the United States and Canada in the past two decades, representing the interests of one of the Detroit Three auto makers and several Tier 1 automotive parts suppliers.

He is also a member of the restructuring team for the City of Detroit – the largest chapter 9 bankruptcy case in U.S. history – as Michigan bankruptcy counsel.

Stephen recently acted as lead bankruptcy counsel on behalf of two telecommunication companies, working to close a sale of the companies' assets for \$32 million and confirm a joint chapter 11 plan of liquidation, co-sponsored with the unsecured creditors committee, to provide a significant recovery to the creditors of the estates.

Working in Detroit, the heart of the American automotive industry, Stephen continues to hone his expertise in supply chain protection and automotive parts supplier workouts. The goal in every case is to keep the automobile assembly lines running in an environment where contracts are exclusive with each supplier, usually the sole source of component parts under a just-in-time inventory management model.

Coping with the issues arising in a customer relationship with a financially troubled auto parts supplier has become increasingly challenging in this rapidly changing industry, calling for new, innovative solutions. The automobile business is unlike any other and experience is essential to avoid potentially catastrophic consequences. Stephen brings the experience acquired in hundreds of cases to bear on each new case.

## Stephen S. LaPlante

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Financial Institutions  
Government and Public Sector  
Next Generation Vehicles and  
Mobility

### Education

Osgoode Hall Law School at  
York University, LL.M., 2019

Wayne State University Law  
School, J.D., 1993

University of Michigan, B.B.A.,  
1987

Great Lakes Maritime Academy  
at Northwestern Michigan  
College, A.A.S.

### Bar Admissions

Michigan

Canada/Province of Ontario

### Court Admissions

U.S. Court of Appeals

- Sixth Circuit

U.S. District Courts

- Eastern District of Michigan
- Western District of Michigan

Ontario Courts, including:

- Court of Appeal for Ontario
- Superior Court of Justice

### Representative Matters

#### Great Lakes Comnet, Inc. and Comlink, L.L.C. (W.D. Mich.)

Stephen served as lead counsel to two telecommunication debtors in mid-Michigan, settling major litigation with AT&T, Sprint and CenturyLink; closing a sale of the debtors' assets for \$32 million; and confirming a plan with the unsecured creditors committee to wind up the estates after the sale.

#### City of Detroit Chapter 9 Bankruptcy Restructuring (E.D. Mich.)

Miller Canfield served as local counsel to the City of Detroit in connection with its Chapter 9 bankruptcy case filed in July 2013 and its ongoing restructuring efforts. Since the City's plan confirmation in December 2014, Miller Canfield has continued to represent the City in connection with many aspects of the implementation of its Plan of Adjustment, appeals of Plan confirmation and a variety of financings.

Stephen continues as local counsel for the City of Detroit and has acted as restructuring counsel in litigation for the City of Flint, Michigan.

### Automotive Parts Supplier Bankruptcies

In the automotive sector, Stephen guided one client through bankruptcy litigation, recovering over two-thirds of a \$75 million dollar claim while eliminating litigation claims brought against his client of over \$200 million. But usually, his successes are measured not in dollars recovered but rather in avoiding untold millions of dollars of damages that an automobile manufacturer faces if the assembly lines stop because of the failure of one of its parts suppliers.

Most cases require Stephen to address the challenges in funding ongoing operations, fostering cooperation with labor and management, managing vendor and creditor relationships, addressing the concerns of ownership and lenders, dealing with property and tooling issues and the rehabilitation, sale or winding up of the supplier. In all cases, he must rely on his industry experience to find workable solutions and negotiate a reasonable, cost-effective solution.

In the past two decades, he has represented one of the Detroit Three auto makers in nearly every major automotive industry bankruptcy and even more out-of-court workouts with automotive parts suppliers. The bankruptcy cases include:

- A.G. Simpson Automotive Technologies (ON)
- Allied Automotive Group (Del.)
- Allied Holdings, Inc. (Del.)

## Stephen S. LaPlante

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- Allied Products Corporation (N.D. Ill.)
- Breed Technologies, Inc. (Del.)
- Burlington Technologies, Inc. (ON)
- Chasix Holdings, Inc. (S.D.N.Y.)
- Collins & Aikman, Inc. (E.D. Mich.)
- Contech US, L.L.C. (E.D. Mich.)
- Dana Corporation (S.D.N.Y.)
- Delphi Corporation (S.D.N.Y.)
- Dura Automotive Systems, Inc. (Del.)
- Essar Steel Algoma Inc. (ON)
- Exide Technologies (Del.)
- Formtech Industries, L.L.C. (Del.)
- General Motors Corporation (S.D.N.Y.)
- Hematite Holdings, Inc. (ON/Del.)
- Jack Cooper Ventures, Inc. (N.D.Ga.)
- Key Plastics, L.L.C. (E.D. Mich.)
- Meridian Automotive Systems, Inc. (Del.)
- Metaldyne Corporation (S.D.N.Y.)
- Oxford Automotive Systems (E.D. Mich.)
- Plastech Engineered Products, Inc. (E.D. Mich.)
- Revstone Industries, L.L.C. (Del.)
- Rouge Steel Company (Del.)
- SKD Company (ON)
- Spectra Premium Industries (QC/Del.)
- Techniplas, LLC (Del.)
- Transtar Holding Company (S.D.N.Y.)
- Venture Industries Corp. (E.D. Mich.)
- Visteon Corporation (Del.)

Stephen S. LaPlante

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## Teaching

Adjunct Professor of Law, Wayne State University Law School

Instructor, "Trial Advocacy Program: Enhancing Your Skills with Expert and Lay Testimony," The Federal Bar Association-Eastern District Chapter of Michigan and the Debtor Creditor Law Section of the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association, 1998

## Honors

State Bar of Michigan Pro Bono Honor Roll, 2021-present

Best Lawyers in America, Bankruptcy and Creditor-Debtor Rights Law/Insolvency and Reorganization Law, 2009-present; Bankruptcy Litigation, 2013-present

Michigan Super Lawyers, Bankruptcy & Creditor/Debtor Rights/Insolvency and Reorganization Law, 2006-present

*DBusiness Magazine*, Top Lawyers, 2020-present:  
Bankruptcy and Creditor/Debtor Rights Law

*Leading Lawyers*, Banking & Financial Institutions Law; Bankruptcy & Workout Law: Commercial; Creditor's Rights/ Commercial Collections Law, 2014-present

## Professional Activities

American Bar Association

State Bar of Michigan

Federal Bar Association

American Bankruptcy Institute

Turnaround Management Association

Member of the Advisory Board for the American Bankruptcy Institute's Central States Bankruptcy Workshop, 2008

## Civic, Cultural & Social Activities

Detroit Bar Association, Volunteer

Wayne County Circuit Court Legal Clinic, Volunteer

We the Action, Volunteer

Stephen S. LaPlante

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## Speeches

"Auto Cases: Where Is This Road Going?", American Bankruptcy Institute's 13th Annual Central States Bankruptcy Workshop, June 16-18, 2006

Instructor, "Trial Advocacy Program: Enhancing Your Skills with Expert and Lay Testimony," The Federal Bar Association-Eastern District Chapter of Michigan and the Debtor Creditor Law Section of the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association, 1998

"Successful Judgment Collections in Michigan," seminar materials prepared for the National Business Institute, co-authored with Linda C. Scheuerman, 1994

## Publications

"Enforcing Judgments and Debts," West Group Michigan Practice Guide, co-author with Judge James D. Gregg and Linda C. Scheuerman (2000)

"Enforceability of Prepayment Penalty Provisions in Michigan," in Bankruptcy and Out, the Michigan Business Law Journal, Volume XVI, Issue No. 4, Page 7 (1995)