

John R. Axe

Senior Counsel

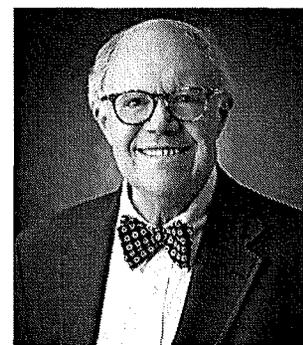
John R. Axe is a member of Clark Hill's Education and Municipal Law Practice Group.

John is often hired for his experience in preparing statutory solutions to problems which cannot be solved under current law. Examples of this type of successful law change include:

- a. In 1972 the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that an existing statute (which had authorized bond projects through building authorities for more than 25 years) was unconstitutional. He wrote creative legislation which he successfully lobbied through the Michigan legislature in four months so this type of financing could proceed again.
- b. In 1978 the Michigan Constitution was amended to prohibit non-voted unlimited tax bonds. In the period between the adoption of the new constitutional provision and the effective date of the constitutional change, he wrote and successfully lobbied through the legislature a statute which permitted borrowings secured by a "Limited Tax" and the issuer's general funds. Thereafter these bonds were known and successfully marketed as "General Obligation Limited Tax Bonds". Because of this prompt action, municipal projects which would have been stalled by the new constitutional provision were not delayed.

John has prepared either as lead draftsman, or as co-draftsman, the following statutes which authorize the issuance of municipal bonds in Michigan:

- The amendment to Public Act 206 of 1893 in 1975, which permitted counties to issue general obligation delinquent tax notes secured by the collection of delinquent taxes.
- The amendment to the Municipal Finance Act in 1982, which permitted municipalities to issue bonds and notes without the prior approval of the Municipal Finance Commission.
- The amendment to Act 34 of the Public Acts of 2001, which permitted municipalities to issue pension and retirees health care obligation bonds.
- The amendment to Act 206 of the Public Acts of 1893, and the amendment to Act 94 of the Public Acts of 1933, adopted in April of 2016, which permitted counties to issue delinquent tax revenue notes.



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Practice Areas

Municipal Law
Public Finance

Industries

Education

Education

LL.B., Harvard Law
School, Cambridge,
Massachusetts, 1963

B.A., University of
Michigan, Ann Arbor,
Michigan, 1960

State Bar Licenses

Michigan

Membership

John has also successfully argued a case in the Michigan Supreme Court which permitted the Michigan State Highway Commission to issue transportation bonds for mass transit and railroad purposes. Also, in 2008, in order to permit the creation of a new non-profit corporation which would permit the construction of a light rail system in downtown Detroit (and perhaps beyond), John drafted and successfully lobbied through legislature the law under which M-1 Rail is currently being constructed without any local and state support.

In addition to his experience as a practicing bond attorney and financial consultant in municipal issues, John is a co-author of Michigan Municipal Law, a two-volume work published in 1981 by the Institute of Continuing Legal Education for the University of Michigan. In 1992, he was appointed as a member of the Permanent Adjunct Faculty of the Wayne State University Law School where he teaches public finance. John also served a three year term on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Bond Lawyers (NABL), the first Michigan lawyer ever to serve in this capacity. He has served on the Steering Committees for NABL's Bond Attorney's Workshop in the years 1980, 1981, 1983, 1986, 1989 and 1990. He continues to serve on the Workshop faculty.

National Association of Bond Lawyers

Grosse Pointe Library Foundation, Active on Board

Clements Library at the University of Michigan, Active on Board

Michigan History Foundation, Active on Board

Covenant House, Active on Board

Newsletter Alerts

Will Tax Reform's Elimination of Advance Refundings Usher in a New Era of Municipal Derivatives?

News

Clark Hill PLC Partners With Plante Moran to Present School Law and Finance Seminar on January 21, 2017

Axe & Ecklund Joins Clark Hill

Presentations

January 21, 2017 Clark Hill & Plante Moran School Law & Finance Seminar Presentation



Carrie Rathbun Hawks, APR

Carrie is president of Carrie Public Relations. She has practiced public relations for 28 years and is an accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America. She is also an Athenian, having received the distinguished ATHENA International Award in 2018.

Carrie is responsible for creating and managing strategic public relations and marketing programs for her clients, which have ranged from health care to economic development, and nonprofits to manufacturing. She practices the four-step process of PR: research, planning, communication and evaluation. As a result, she has received numerous awards for outstanding community relations, event planning and marketing communication projects.

With a BA in communication from Michigan State University, Carrie has served as an instructor for the MSU Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Retailing's elite Specialization in Public Relations Program. Her accreditation, or APR, is one of the highest designations a public relations practitioner can earn.

In 2014, Carrie received the Mission Award from the Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce for her dedication to the mission and vision of the chamber. In 2012, she was chosen by her peers as the PACE Maker of the Year from PRSA's Central Michigan Chapter.

Carrie is the immediate past-chair of the board of directors for the Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce and past-president of the Laingsburg Business & Community Association, including being a recipient of its Businessperson of the Year honor in 2009 and nominated again for 2011. Carrie is also part of the board for ePIFany Now™, a regional organization dedicated to passing kindness forward through random acts of kindness. She is past-president of the Laingsburg Educational Advancement Foundation and is past chair of the former WKAR Community Advisory Board. She is also a past director for Ele's Place, a healing center for grieving children in Lansing. Her most recent appointment was to the board of directors for the Shiawassee Arts Council.

Bob Robinson, Eaton County Treasurer

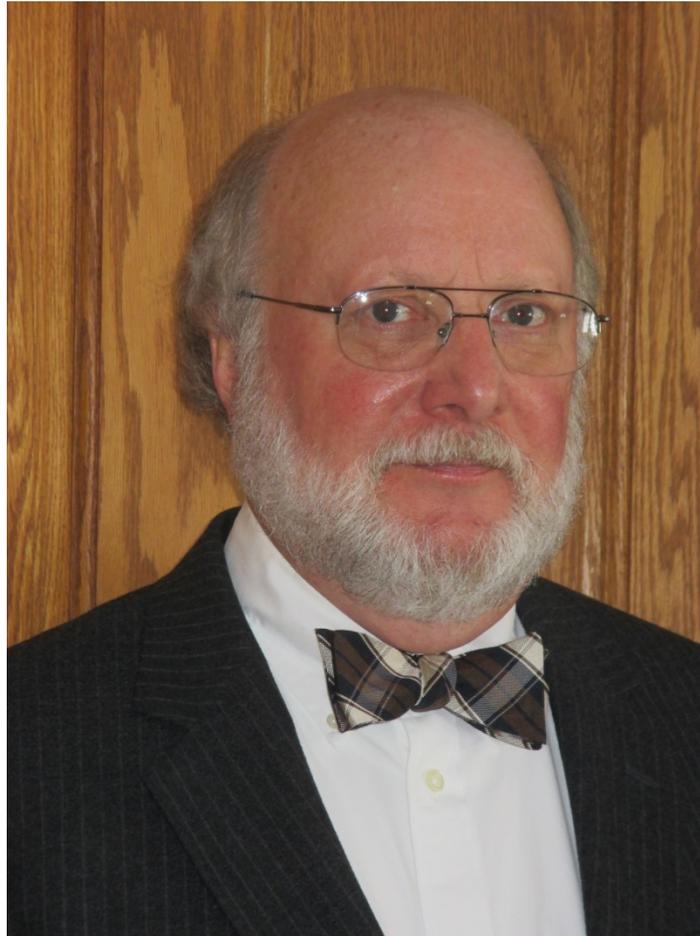
Bob has been involved in the public relations industry for 20 years, serving many statewide and nationwide association clients. He is a past winner of the Public Relations Society of America's Central Michigan Chapter Pinnacle Award for integrated marketing and communication, a Crystal Award for his launch of Michigan Recreation and Park Association Magazine, and regional Diamond Award for the launch of Sforless.com.

Bob is a published author and has written books for Random House Publishing, The Princeton Review, and Phoenix Publishing. From 2000 to 2002 he was the web writing columnist for *Writer's Journal Magazine*. He is also an Illiad Press award winner for poetry.

Bob was elected treasurer of Eaton County in 2013 and currently serves as secretary on the board of MACT.

Kevin T. Smith

Retired



Kevin T. Smith is a graduate of Northern Michigan University (BS, 1977) and the University of Michigan (JD, 1980) (MS, Natural Resources, 1982).

Kevin retired in 2014 after 30 years of service as an Assistant Michigan Attorney General, starting with the Michigan Department of Attorney General in 1984. From 1993 until his retirement he worked in the Revenue and Collections Division, where his primary focus was foreclosure of delinquent real property taxes. He also spent a great deal of time on property and water law issues. Kevin appeared in the circuit courts of at least 78 of Michigan's 83 counties and had a significant appellate practice.

Kevin has authored several articles and is a frequent speaker and panelist on the topic of property tax foreclosures. His most recent publication is Chapter 5, "Property Tax Liens, Forfeitures, and Foreclosures" in *Real Property Taxes in Michigan* (G. Torielli, ed., Institute of Continuing Legal Education, 2010, republished as Chapter 6 in Oct 2011, Dec 2015, and Oct 2018 Updates). Kevin also serves the State Bar of Michigan Real Property Section on its Title Standards Committee.

Kevin is enjoying retirement immensely.

Luke Middleton Bio
MACT Summer Conference 2017

Luke Middleton is a licensed attorney and currently acts as General Counsel to Title Check, LLC. Title Check serves more than sixty County Treasurers throughout the State of Michigan as well as the Michigan Department of Treasury, offering a range of property tax foreclosure services. In addition to his role as General Counsel, Luke oversees quality control, software development, risk management, and many day-to-day tasks at Title Check. Luke also maintains a private law practice where he litigates matters related to property tax foreclosure, provides services to county land banks including expedited quiet title actions, and handles other real estate matters. Luke currently lives in Kalamazoo with his beautiful wife, Erin.