

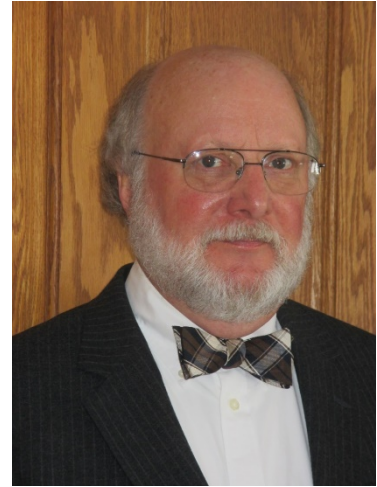
## Kevin T. Smith

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 his time on property/water law. 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). Kevin also serves the Real Property Section of the State Bar of Michigan on its Title Standards Committee.

Kevin is enjoying retirement immensely.

## Luke Middleton

---

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.

## Thomas M. Keranen, P.E.

---



**Thomas M. Keranen, P.E.**, is a member in Clark Hill's Construction Law Practice Group. Tom's practice is concentrated on all legal aspects of the design and construction industries, representing the parties to the process, including owners, designers, contractors, program and construction managers, design-builders, sub and trade contractors, suppliers and vendors, sureties and insurers on a wide variety of public and private projects, including federal construction. Tom, a licensed Professional Engineer, principally resides out of the Firm's Detroit, Michigan office. Prior to commencing his law practice, Tom served in engineering functions for a state highway department, a major Midwestern city, facilities planning and construction at a major university, and as a project manager for a general contractor.

## John R. Axe

---

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:



1. 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.
2. 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.

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.