

AIMA CANADA FOUNDER INTERVIEWS

AIMA

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1 What was the market backdrop and alternative landscape in Canada at the time of your AIMA leadership position?

McMillan LLP was one of the original members of AIMA Canada. In fact, AIMA Canada was “born” in a McMillan boardroom at our previous offices located in the Royal Bank Plaza in Toronto! At the time, the alternative investment industry in Canada was still relatively nascent. McMillan was proud to leverage our leadership position in the space to help organize the alternative investment management industry, to encourage the adoption of “best practices”, and broader investor and regulatory knowledge and acceptance of the industry.

In the early years, I served as Legal Counsel on the Executive Committee of AIMA Canada and then ultimately served as AIMA Canada Chair for two years. Throughout this time, I have also been happy to serve on the Legal, Finance and Compliance Committee and the Sales Practices Committee.

2 What motivated you to take on a leadership position with AIMA Canada, at that time?

McMillan’s primary motivation in working with AIMA Canada was to help grow the alternative investment industry in Canada. At the time, we felt that the best ways in which we could contribute to this objective was to: (i) contribute to the development of best practices and industry standards; (ii) actively engage with securities regulators and governments in connection with the development and application of legislative requirements impacting the industry; and (iii) help educate investors and allocators on how alternative investment funds are structured and the role that they can serve in helping achieve their investment goals. We also saw an opportunity to access AIMA’s global knowledge base and platform relating to alternative investment strategies and apply this knowledge in Canada.

3 What key successes did you achieve during your leadership? (What are you most proud of?)

From McMillan’s perspective, I am most proud of the Committee structure that we developed from the initial days of AIMA Canada. Each Committee was provided with a specific mandate and was asked to develop Canadian-specific content and events/programs for members and investors. The volume of educational content produced by these Committees in the first few years of AIMA Canada was simply astounding!

I am also incredibly proud of the way that AIMA Canada came together during the period in which the alternative mutual fund amendments were being made to National Instrument 81-102. The working group that was formed by AIMA Canada played a vital role in consulting with Canadian securities regulatory authorities from the proposal stage of the new rules and ultimately had a significant influence on the final amendments that were made to NI 81-102 which now permit alternative investment strategies to be offered to retail investors in Canada.

4 How has AIMA Canada benefitted the local ecosystem? The global industry?

I feel that AIMA Canada has played a vital role in the development of the Canadian alternative management industry through the development and encouragement of best practices and its ongoing engagement with Canadian securities regulatory authorities. AIMA Canada has also provided an invaluable forum for members to share experiences and jointly develop solutions to the challenges facing the industry. AIMA Canada has also provided a uniquely Canadian perspective on regulatory and industry developments happening on the global stage.

5 What key challenges did you face during your leadership? (How did you overcome?)

AIMA Canada has always been blessed by an enthusiastic membership who are willing to volunteer their incredibly valuable time to help advance the goals of the industry. The biggest challenge during the period in which I was involved in the leadership of AIMA Canada was in providing equal opportunity for everyone who wanted to contribute to have an opportunity to do so. The way we addressed this challenge was to adopt a series of guidelines which kept track of member's contributions and to actively solicit contributions from members that had not been recently active. It was vitally important to me that we hear from all AIMA Canada members so that the organization could be reflective of the Canadian industry as a whole.

6 What were AIMA Canada's primary goals, at that time?

In the beginning, AIMA Canada's goals were focussed on attracting a sufficient number of members to ensure that it could accurately reflect the make-up of the Canadian alternative investment industry at the time. This meant having both small and large managers, as well as service providers joining in to promote AIMA's three core principals (Education, Engagement and Communication).

7 How has AIMA Canada and the Canadian alternative industry evolved since then, in your opinion?

At the time that AIMA Canada was formed, I used to say that the Canadian alternative investment industry was in the "toddler" phase of development. That is no longer the case. I know think that the industry has reached the confident young adult phase of its development! Both AIMA Canada and the Canadian alternative investment industry are barely recognizable today from when AIMA Canada was originally formed in that McMillan Boardroom! In addition to the impressive growth that has been experienced in the size of the industry, there is a new level of professionalism and sophistication that permeates both AIMA Canada and the Canadian alternative management industry as a whole. This has been evidence by the growing acceptance of alternative investment strategies by institutional and retail investors alike.

8 Looking ahead, what opportunities and challenges do alternatives in Canada still face?

The primary opportunity/challenge that I see which lies ahead is to promote greater acceptance of Canadian alternative investment strategies and managers by retail investors in Canada as well as investors around the world. The retail sector in Canada is the key to obtaining meaningful scale domestically and providing opportunities for Canadian managers to attract investments from investors outside of Canada is vital if Canadian managers wish to achieve global recognition and acceptance. In order to help Canadian managers take maximum advantage of these opportunities, AIMA Canada will be challenged to provide the necessary educational and other resources. I believe that AIMA Canada's global alliances make it the ideal organization to successfully meet these challenges.

9 Any advice or closing thoughts on the current or future state of alternatives in Canada and the important role that AIMA plays.

I think that, the future of the Canadian alternative investment industry is incredibly bright. Canada is blessed with an unprecedented wealth of talented managers who have demonstrated the ability to provide impressive results for Canadian investors in all types of market environments. As we move into the future, I would encourage AIMA to continue to stay on top of emerging issues and technologies impacting the industry and being a fierce advocate for rules which will enable managers to help investors meet and exceed their goals.