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Entertainment, Sports + Multimedia

Miller Canfield lawyers provide the kind of 360° legal representation that the entertainment, sports and media industries demand.

Like any business, multimedia entities and industry professionals require legal guidance that goes beyond a specific niche. We understand your big picture needs. To move further, faster, you need expertise in financing, corporate and securities, intellectual property, tax, economic development incentives, litigation, labor, real estate and other specialized areas.

In all these areas, our skills range from technical, to analytical, to creative. Members of our team have working backgrounds and advanced degrees in music, film, sports, publishing and other media as well as years of experience in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. Our experience makes us especially effective counselors because we have first-hand knowledge of the entertainment and sports industries.

Entertainment, sports and media industries are growing globally and locally. As production and distribution outlets multiply, so do business opportunities for artists, producers, distributors, entrepreneurs, investors, associations and other entertainment and sports professionals.

In Michigan – a creative, industrial and commercial entertainment hub for decades – new tax incentives and credits produced 32 projects in 2008 including narrative fictional films, documentaries, television pilots, short films and a taped musical concert. Clint Eastwood was one of the first to take advantage with *Gran Torino*. So, too have independent filmmakers like our client Dr. Sarabjit Neelam, gastroenterologist by day, independent filmmaker of *Ocean of Pearls* by night.

Private investors are playing key supporting roles. We work closely with angels, private equity funds, venture capital sources and individuals seeking investments with the returns that film, music and the new digital distribution media offer. Investment funds exist – and new ones are being assembled – to finance these creative and potentially lucrative products.

Miller Canfield played a premier role in connection with the 2004 Academy Awards. We achieved a major victory for the Coalition of Independent Filmmakers by reversing a ban on pre-Award

distribution of Academy Award “screeners” and allowing studios and their subsidiaries to send out promotional copies of movies as a marketing tool during the Awards season. The ban would have put independent filmmakers at a distinct disadvantage, with damaging long-term impact on future revenue streams.

Miller Canfield has also scored victories for sports organizations, including athletic equipment manufacturers, sports associations and academic athletics programs. We have successfully represented the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), in precedent-setting cases. For example, when the Metropolitan Intercollegiate Basketball Association, operator of the pre- and post-season National Invitational Tournaments (NITs), accused the NCAA of maintaining an unlawful monopoly in men's Division I post-season college basketball tournaments, Miller Canfield was called on to represent the NCAA in the antitrust action. With our help, the parties agreed to resolve their differences, and we assisted the NCAA in its \$40 million purchase of the assets and rights to the NITs.

Our services include:

- Project financing
- Government incentives
- Tax credits and planning
- Deal structuring
- Entity organization
- Joint ventures
- Intellectual property protection
- Licensing and distribution
- Recording and production agreements
- Management agreements
- Promotions and endorsements
- Product placement
- Commercial and anti-trust litigation
- Labor, employment and union issues
- Real estate
- Venture and Technology

Why Miller Canfield?



With a 160-year, leading role history and a global reach for over two decades, we have lawyers in offices in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Poland and China. We offer a broad array of integrated services for sports, entertainment and media professionals. Your starring role deserves nothing short of award-winning support.

Our global connections is a value we extend to clients. We are the designated Michigan firm in the Employment Law Alliance (ELA), a powerful legal resource for clients facing national and international employment issues. The Alliance is a network of the best labor and employment attorneys in the world. We wrote the Michigan and Poland chapters of the ELA's *Global Employer Handbook*, a resource for obtaining practical labor and employment law information worldwide.

Resources

[Michigan Film Office FAQs](#)

