



● **BRENDAN VAN NIEJENHUIS**  
The Litigator

Partner, Stockwoods LLP  
Called to the bar in 2002

Adjunct professor, administrative law,  
Osgoode Hall Law School

Pro bono work representing Parkdale  
residents in their case for rent reductions  
against the City of Toronto

Rocks guitar, mandolin and vocals in his  
band, Sport of the Future

Clerked for Justice Iacobucci,  
Supreme Court of Canada

# BRENDAN VAN NIEJENHUIS

**THINGS WERE NOT LOOKING GOOD FOR BRENDAN VAN NIEJENHUIS** and his team on the morning of March 25th. Van Niejenhuis was in court representing his client, the Ontario Racing Commission, and the judges were slamming his arguments.

But when he stepped outside for lunch, he was confident: “I think we’ll get them on our side, in the end.” And he was right — they won the application.

Unbeatable confidence is what separates van Niejenhuis, 36, from the pack. “It’s not an accident that Brendan’s already had so much courtroom experience. He’s really very good at what he does,” says Luisa Ritacca, a fellow litigator at Stockwoods.

Van Niejenhuis has amassed over 40 reported decisions as lead

or co-lead counsel in just nine years. “I like arguing cases a lot, more than I ever thought I would,” he says. “I like mastering a subject area, and then going and fighting it out with words.” He was assigned challenging cases out of the gate, including the much-publicized *Chippewas of Rama v. Ontario* trial. He says taking a job with a small firm allowed him to hone his competitive courtroom skills.

Those skills shine through elsewhere, like in van Niejenhuis’s love of board games (Risk and Settlers of Catan are his favourites). “I’m fairly viciously competitive, though not in an aggressive way.”

His courtroom reputation could have something to do with his board game tactics: “These games hinge on keeping relations good in order to influence other people’s decision-making.”