



Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner

[Marty Schultz-Akerson]

When top corporations need intellectual property work done, Finnegan Henderson is generally on the short list of firms considered. As a result, the firm is also on the short list of every top IP lawyer looking for work.

The old adage, "Do one thing and do it well," might apply particularly well to Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, a 300-attorney law firm known for its world-class intellectual property practice. However, the numerous subdivisions of intellectual property law, which encompass such highly technical fields as nanotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and computer software, add a rich complexity to the firm's narrow focus.

Founded in 1965 in Washington, DC, the firm's headquarters reside in convenient approximation to the Patent Trademark Office and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, two of its frequent battlegrounds. The firm has now expanded to include seven other offices in such hubs of technology and medicine as the Silicon Valley, Atlanta, and Tokyo.

Finnegan consistently earns top rankings for intellectual property law, including the #1 spot in the "Intellectual Property" rankings of the 2004 *Vault Guide to the Top 100 Law Firms*. Fortune 500 companies frequently cite Finnegan as the go-to firm for intellectual property counsel. Although the technical jargon of Finnegan's cases may sound quite foreign to the layperson, many of the firm's clients are such recognizable household names as Boeing, Sony, Toshiba, Yahoo!, and the British Broadcasting Company, to name just a few.

Also reputed for its appellate practice, Finnegan has appeared before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit more times than any other law firm. In fact, Finnegan's

relationship with the court dates back to the 1980s, when Finnegan lawyers participated in the drafting of the court's rules and sat on its advisory board for its first 10 years of existence.

As one would expect from a firm dedicated to advocating for clients on highly technical issues, Finnegan provides state-of-the-art equipment for its lawyers and clients. A comprehensive extranet system allows clients to check patent information, pertinent files, or pleadings and memos, all with a standard Internet connection. The firm also boasts video-conferencing facilities and online docketing.

Getting hired at Finnegan requires a unique blend of skills and experience. While a judicial clerkship is not necessary, a strong technical background or trademark/copyright experience is standard criteria for Finnegan candidates. A high percentage of Finnegan lawyers back their J.D.s with Ph.D.s or other graduate degrees in the biological sciences, computer sciences, or engineering. In fact, the firm actively recruits non-J.D.s with technical degrees, who then pursue their law degree through night school. These "student associates" receive tuition reimbursement and reduced hours to accommodate exams.

Associates at Finnegan can expect not only a diverse and stimulating caseload, but also a diverse cultural environment, considerable training, and exciting *pro bono* opportunities. In the 2004 edition of the *Vault Guide to the Top 100 Law Firms*, Finnegan ranked in the top five for diversity for women and minori-

ties and in the top 20 for gays and lesbians. The firm's commitment to training and community service is perhaps best exemplified in the Litigation Mentor Program, which allows young attorneys to broaden their trial-advocacy skills while defending underrepresented clients under the direction of a full-time litigation mentor.

In short, Finnegan's unique focus sets it apart from the vast majority of top U.S. law firms. While many lawyers may not have the desire or capability to represent clients in cases that demand an expert knowledge of organic chemistry or quantum physics, those talented few who thrive in the burgeoning field of intellectual property might find the perfect match in Finnegan.