

Seasoned Intellectual Property Partner, Neil Smith, Joins Sheppard Mullin in San Francisco Office

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Neil A. Smith has joined the San Francisco office of Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP as a partner in the Intellectual Property Practice Group. Smith, most recently a litigation director at Howard Rice in San Francisco, is a leading intellectual property litigator, specializing in patent, trademark, trade secret, unfair competition and copyright matters.

"Neil has been litigation counsel in many of California's leading cases in the development of intellectual property law over the last 30 years and will significantly enhance our firm's IP practice," said Guy Halgren, firm chair. "We enjoy substantial strength in patent litigation and the addition of Neil adds depth firmwide and in San Francisco."

Gary Clark, chair of the IP Practice Group, said, "We're excited to have an accomplished attorney such as Neil join the practice group, as we continue to grow throughout the state. Neil's strong ties to the region are considerable and will complement our capabilities nationwide."

Commented Smith, "Sheppard Mullin has an excellent platform and burgeoning intellectual property, patent, trademark and copyright practice. I look forward to working with the talented group in San Francisco." Smith continues, "Partner Ed Komen, who recently joined the firm's D.C. office, and I represented the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science, in protecting the 'OSCAR' trademark and copyright. I look forward to working with him again."

After graduation from law school, Smith worked as a patent attorney in the headquarters office of the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington, D.C. and then clerked for Judge Giles S. Rich, on the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals (which later became the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals). His next career move was to the intellectual property boutique of Limbach and Limbach, based in San Francisco and Silicon Valley, where he represented companies, such as Levi Strauss and Visa, protecting their trademarks and intellectual property throughout the world.

Additionally, Smith was involved in anti-counterfeiting, developing the Ninth Circuit law allowing *ex parte* temporary restraining and seizure orders in trademark counterfeiting cases, representing companies such as Louis Vuitton, Rolex, Adidas, and the Recording Industry Association of America. He was counsel in several leading patent cases, changing the law regarding patent venue and patent infringement, and led the development of Internet law, helping clients protect their trademarks and copyrights in cyberspace. Smith was counsel in the first case to deal with the issue whether the use of trademarks in hidden text and code, including "metatags," was trademark infringement. Smith was counsel in the first case to deal with the issue whether the Internet technique of "framing," that is bringing up a web page through a window or a frame of another web page, was copyright infringement. He victoriously litigated the issues of contributory copyright infringement for the downloading of digital content, for clients such as Sega in leading video game cases, and now protects the Pacman video games.

Smith has held many offices in professional organizations and is a frequent speaker on IP law. He served on the Board of Directors of The American Intellectual Property Law Association, on the Executive Committee of the Intellectual Property Section of the State Bar of California, and in the Fall will serve as an Advisor on the Executive Committee of the International Law Section of the State Bar.

Smith earned a Masters in Law in Patent and Trade Regulation law from George Washington Law School in 1973, a J.D. from Columbia Law School in 1969, as a Stone Scholar, a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering in 1966, and B.A. in Physical Sciences in 1965 (from Columbia).

About Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP

Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP is a full service AmLaw 100 firm with 430 attorneys in nine offices located throughout California and in New York and Washington, D.C. The firm's California offices are located in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Century City, Orange County, Del Mar Heights and San Diego. Sheppard Mullin provides legal expertise and counsel to U.S. and international clients in a wide range of practice areas, including Antitrust, Corporate and Securities; Entertainment and Media; Finance and Bankruptcy; Government Contracts; Intellectual Property; Labor and Employment; Litigation; Real Estate/Land Use; Tax, Employee Benefits, Trusts and Estate Planning; and White Collar Defense. The firm was founded in 1927.