

Intellectual Property Section Educates Lawyers, Encourages Lawyers-to-Be

by Cynthia C. Lynch

The Intellectual Property Section of the Virginia State Bar was formed in 1970 in recognition of Virginia's significance to the field of intellectual property law. The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) had recently relocated from Washington, D.C., to Arlington, and many intellectual property attorneys followed.

Since that time, the economic impact of intellectual property has grown, the public has become more aware of intellectual property, and intellectual property law has gained increased importance and celebrity. The USPTO is located on a campus in Alexandria, and the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia is a prominent venue for intellectual property cases. Today our section strives to achieve many of the same goals set by its founders, and the past year presented exciting opportunities, in addition to the section's traditional annual continuing legal education programs.

In October 2006, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, which has exclusive jurisdiction over patent appeals and which reviews both trademark and patent decisions by the USPTO, for the first time held special sittings of the court at the University of Virginia and the University of Richmond. The sittings offered Virginia law students and citizens the chance to see this specialized intellectual property court in action. Our section, in conjunction with the Federal Circuit Bar Association, sponsored events surrounding the special sittings, including two programs in Charlottesville and one in Richmond. The programs afforded section members, Virginia law students and faculty, and the federal circuit judges an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas about intellectual property law and practice.

The Intellectual Property Section also continued its annual Intellectual Property Law Student Writing Competition, now in its third year. The winning article appears in this issue. The brainchild of former section chair Lee N. Kump, the writing competition seeks to promote academic debate and the dissemination of ideas and scholarly writing in the field of intellectual property. Open to students at any Virginia law school or residents of Virginia who are students at a law school outside the state, the competition awards a cash prize and publication to the top article on an issue concerning intellectual property law or practice. The Honorable Richard Linn of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit has generously honored our section with his support for the writing competition by serving as the final judge each year since the contest's inception. Judge Linn was a founding member and past chair of the section board of governors, and the section has appreciated his continued involvement.

This issue of *Virginia Lawyer* reflects the diversity in intellectual property law and highlights intellectual property issues that may spark the interest of lawyers, law students and the public at large.



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