

Law Firm Highlights

VAULT

Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner L.L.P.

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LOCATIONS

Washington, DC (HQ)

Atlanta, GA • Cambridge, MA • Palo Alto, CA • Reston, VA • Brussels • Shanghai • Taipei • Tokyo

MAJOR PRACTICE

Intellectual Property

THE STATS

No. of attorneys firmwide: 390

No. of offices: 9

Summer associate offers (2006): 27 out of 29

Managing Partner: Richard Racine

Hiring Partner: Kara Stoll, Mark Sweet

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

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2008-2009 Vault Rankings

Best in Practice

#1 - Intellectual Property

Partner Prestige Rankings

#2 - Intellectual Property

Quality of Life

#4 - Best to Work for

#3 - Satisfaction

#10 - Associate/Partner Relations

#16 - Formal Training

#6 - Offices

#15 - Selectivity

Diversity

#14 - Best in Diversity

#14 - With Respect to Women

#8 - With Respect to Minorities

The following is independent Vault research

THE SCOOP

Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner raises one of the great existential questions of law: When does a boutique firm officially outgrow its boutique status? Founded in 1965, the D.C. firm has almost certainly crossed that line. Still considered one of the nation's top IP practices, the firm now employs more than 1,000 people, including almost 400 attorneys. Though the firm handles only IP, its expertise extends to virtually every sub-practice, including patents, trademarks, copyrights and trade secret law. The firm offers impressive statistics in support of both its prominence and its ability to retain talent. It has argued more cases before federal appeals courts than any other firm (both The American Lawyer and IP Law & Business named Finnegan the top IP litigation firm of 2006). Perhaps most impressive, however, is the firm's remarkable retention rate: Since its founding 42 years ago, only six partners—six—have left the firm. Finnegan recently scored two sizable victories for U.S. Philips Corporation in its ongoing infringement battles against KXD Technology and International Norcent Technology. In both cases, a federal judge found a willful infringement of Philips' DVD technology patents, and awarded Philips

monetary damages. The two awards totaled more than \$100 million.



GETTING HIRED

Finnegan's associates say the firm's hiring partners look for the traditional indicia of academic achievement, in addition to a technical background. As one insider puts it, "Our firm basically looks for top 10 percent, law review, engineering undergrad, from a top law school." A Washington attorney advises, "If you have the right background (engineering, biology, etc.), then it is not very difficult. If you do not, it's then impossible (except for the trademark group). If you have a callback, it's yours to lose." Another East Coaster adds, "The firm is always looking for top-notch engineers who excel in law school and plan to become patent attorneys. That's a small pool of candidates. Federal clerkship experience is a big plus." However, a science background is only part of the equation,

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according to this Silicon Valley dweller: “Essentially you need three things: a strong technical background, strong legal background and, likely most important, an ability to hold a conversation. The firm puts a lot of weight into whether there is a proper personality fit.”

OUR SURVEY SAYS

Finnegan’s associates fall largely into two camps: those who believe it is a great place to work, and a small minority who believe that that greatness is about to become a historical relic. One true believer says, “The firm has been extraordinarily accommodating of my



desires, making my work environment as comfortable as possible and supplying me with interesting projects.” Another firm booster advises, “I work hard, but the work is interesting and challenging. Even more importantly, the partners I work for give excellent feedback and are appreciative of the work I do.” On the other hand, a member of the skeptic camp reports, “The work/life balance is worsening. As each year passes, the firm is expecting more and more hours from everyone.” Yet many associates call the firm’s culture “congenial,” “laid-back,” “supportive” and “humane.” One young Atlantan reports, “The firm encourages a healthy working environment and provides opportunities for lawyers to socialize and get to know each other.” A senior Silicon Valley associate raves, “Everyone gets along spectacularly well here. There is a lot of both in-office and firm-sponsored event socializing, while there is not a lot of informal small-scale socializing. There is also surprisingly little prying into private lives.” As for salary: “We’re close to the top of the market for our market segment, but just a hair short,” reports a senior associate. “Nothing to really to complain about, especially when factoring in non-salary compensation.” Those who do mind, however,



mind a lot. One naysayer gripes, “Obtaining market-rate compensation is like pulling teeth. The partners do not realize that they are a large firm and must compensate accordingly. This will become increasingly important in the future, because the number of partner openings is dwindling.” The firm’s hours requirements are fairly typical for BigLaw, though “flexible and easily met,” associates largely agree. As one source says, “Like any serious firm, it’s not a vacation to make 2,000 hours. But at least the firm is busy and can provide interesting work to do.” A colleague adds, “There is more work when you’re involved on a case (depending on the case), otherwise nobody cares when you come and go as long as you get your work done and get your total hours in.”

