

Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP

2021 TOP 100 LAW FIRM HIGHLIGHTS



#2 BEST FOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

QUALITY OF LIFE

- #12 Career Outlook
- #13 Formal Training
- #17 Informal Training, Mentoring, & Sponsorship
- #22 Satisfaction
- #25 Overall Best to Work For
- #25 Firm Culture

- #26 Quality of Work
- #26 Associate/Partner Relations
- #28 Pro Bono

DIVERSITY

- #9 Diversity for Individuals with Disabilities
- #11 Best Overall Diversity
- #11 Diversity for Women

- #12 Diversity for LGBTQ+ Individuals
- #13 Racial & Ethnic Diversity

SUMMER ASSOCIATE

- #22 Social Experiences
- #30 Overall Best Program

THE SCOOP

Finnegan is synonymous with intellectual property—a true full-service IP firm with experts in every area of IP and every technology. Considered one of the world's top intellectual property law firms, Finnegan employs more than 700 people, including nearly 350 IP professionals, of which more than 60 professionals have Ph.D.s, befitting its role as an IP giant.

IP Vision

Marc Finnegan and Douglas Henderson teamed up in 1965 to open a shop in Washington, DC, that practiced only intellectual property law. The firm's focus has not changed, although its scope has expanded to cover virtually every aspect of patent, trademark, and copyright law, including counseling, prosecution, licensing, portfolio management, and litigation. Finnegan also represents clients in IP issues relating to advertising, trade secrets, European patents and trademarks, international trade, portfolio management, the internet, e-commerce, government contracts, antitrust, and unfair competition. The firm now boasts five U.S. offices and five international offices. Since opening its Tokyo office in 1988, when it became one of the first U.S. patent firms to have a lawyer actively practicing in Japan, the firm has staked a position in some of the world's leading technology and innovation centers, including Atlanta, Boston, London, Palo Alto, Reston, Seoul, Shanghai, and Taipei.

As one would imagine, a firm like Finnegan has an A-list roster of regular clients, including Asetek Danmark A/S, AstraZeneca, Caterpillar, Eli Lilly and Company, FedEx, Ferring BV, Grünenthal GmbH, LG Electronics, Otsuka Pharmaceuticals, Philips, Takeda Pharmaceutical Co., Toshiba Corp., Toyota Motor Corp., Vertex Pharmaceuticals, and Under Armour.

Patents Rule

While it's true that the firm's professionals handle the full array of IP legal issues, there is no question that patent law is where the firm reigns supreme: more than 90 percent of Finnegan attorneys work primarily on patent matters. The firm has filed thousands of patent applications, is widely recognized as a go-to firm for representing both defendants and plaintiffs in district court patent disputes, has been counsel of record in approximately 15 percent of the cases in the International Trade Commission and well over 900 cases at the Patent Trial Appeal Board (PTAB), and has briefed and argued hundreds of cases before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Adding to the firm's bench strength, more than 230 of Finnegan's professionals are registered to practice before the USPTO, over 60 professionals have a Ph.D., and the firm boasts more than 40 former USPTO examiners. The firm is also home to more than 40 former clerks at the Federal Circuit or U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals.

Finnegan's trademark practice is renowned in its own right, involved in more than 25,000 trademark applications and registrations around the world. The trademark team litigates high-profile cases involving a range of iconic brands and is at the forefront of the domain-name business, having handled more than

FIRM INFO

CONTACT INFO

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LOCATIONS

Washington, DC (HQ) • Atlanta, GA • Boston, MA • Palo Alto, CA • Reston, VA • London • Seoul • Shanghai • Taipei • Tokyo

MAJOR DEPARTMENTS

Intellectual Property

** See firm website for complete list of practice areas and industries.*

THE STATS

No. of attorneys: 302
No. of offices: 10

Managing Partner:
Anand K. Sharma

Recruiting Chairs:
David K. Mroz (Reston, VA; Washington DC), Jason E. Stach (Atlanta, GA), Alissa K. Lipton (Boston, MA), Jacob A. Schroeder (Palo Alto, CA)

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

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500 Uniform Domain-Name Dispute-Resolution Policy arbitrations and litigating nearly 100 civil domain name matters. Annually, the firm files or defends as many as 200 new U.S. oppositions and cancellations at the USPTO's Trademark Trial and Appeal Board, and at any given time, has approximately 300 to 400 active U.S. oppositions and cancellations.

Assisting Veterans

Finnegan works on a wide variety of pro bono matters, including civil, criminal, and asylum representation. In addition, through its Veteran's Assistance Program, the firm handles appeals in the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). Finnegan's attorneys have handled approximately 900 such appeals.

VAULT'S VERDICT

Finnegan may not be a pedigree snob when it comes to law school attended, but a hard science/tech background is a must-have for this patent-focused firm. Interviews tend to focus on one's science background, interest in IP law, and how one would fit in with the firm's culture. Finnegan is described by some associates as a "work-hard/play-hard" firm, where associates frequently socialize and get along well. The partners are respectful and engaged in associates' growth—some associates attribute positive partner relations to most partners being home grown. Hours can be long and unpredictable, but associates are well compensated for their time, with market salaries and bonuses. The quality of work is top notch in the IP sphere, and associates are given responsibility early in their careers. Training and mentoring are both strong at Finnegan, with frequent CLEs and a formal mentorship program. There are some wellness programs available at the firm, though associates note that attorney buy-in could be beefed up. Pro bono is a huge priority at the firm, with attorneys of all levels taking part. Diversity seems to be a big priority at Finnegan, and the firm has various affinity groups. Associates seem confident that partnership is attainable, given that the firm doesn't rely heavily on laterals to bolster its senior ranks—and exit opportunities abound, given the attorneys' specialized knowledge of their areas.

THE FIRM'S PERSPECTIVE

Finnegan values individuals who are smart, hardworking, self-motivated, mature, intellectually curious, and committed to excelling in intellectual property law. Our firm is committed to promoting and strengthening a diverse workplace. We promote a working environment of teamwork, congeniality, and mutual trust, where all employees are treated with fairness, consideration, and respect. Through a range of initiatives, Finnegan works creatively and aggressively to recruit, as well as support, extraordinary and diverse professionals. The firm's success and growth are proof of the benefits of a collaborative culture that supports a range of initiatives to attract outstanding talent.

Finnegan believes that training and ongoing education are essential to developing the best lawyers and advocates for our clients. Our firm offers a robust training curriculum (L.E.A.P. - *Learn, Enrich, Achieve, Progress*) that is designed to enhance the firm's existing training and mentoring activities, and to support the continued growth and development of attorney-types at all levels. We provide numerous opportunities for professional growth and advancement. Lawyers are entrusted with significant responsibilities under the best possible mentorship with the goal of developing the future leaders of the firm.

Bottom line, Finnegan is about people. We cultivate respect for the contributions of every team member, and treat every person with genuine care, regardless of title or function. We are a tightly knit organization with a common history, shared values, and a consistent commitment to each other.

OUR SURVEY SAYS

GETTING HIRED

Hiring Process

- "We're a patent law firm primarily, so our hiring is a bit different than most. We look for strong academic backgrounds in STEM. There's more leeway with grades than most big firms, so long as you have the scientific background our clients look for. That said, all associates in my class were academically hardworking and successful in law school (read: law review, moot court, etc.) in addition to having the right academic background."
- "I think the firm looks for someone at the top of their class. They don't really care where you go to school, they want to know you succeeded in law school. Once you have the interview, the firm really is only looking to make sure you fit in. The culture at this firm is what makes it so great, so it makes sense that the interview is so dedicated to finding out if the candidate fits in personally."
- "A technical background is a must. Good law school grades are important, but not the deciding factor. Personality is the most important factor in hiring decisions. You can have the best grades from the best law school, but you aren't going to get hired if you can't hold a conversation or you act like a jerk."

- “I don’t think there are any feeder schools. Finnegan likes to also hire to have a diversity of law schools. As long as the candidate is involved at school, has good grades, and [has] any experience with journal or moot court, these are the things that get you an interview. After that, the personality fit and prior work experience become the biggest factors in the interview.”

Interview Questions

- “Why are you interested in Finnegan/patent law? Tell us about some of your relevant background experience that could add value to your work at the firm.”
- “Besides the traditional ‘Why IP?’ questions, most interview questions focus on you as an individual. Most of my interviews were very laid back and focused on who I was as a person, such as ‘What do you like to do for fun?’ and ‘Why did you move to DC?’”
- “Behavioral questions [and] questions about prior work experience. There’s an informal policy that we look for people we’d like to have ... dinner with.”
- “The firm asks questions to ensure that a candidate is committed to staying at the firm long term.”

ASSOCIATE LIFE

Firm Culture

- “The culture is very collegial; the firm hosts regular social events, but attorneys also socialize on their own.”
- “This is a work-hard/play-hard firm. Recruiting does a great job of finding qualified candidates that fit this culture. We love our work, but we also love the people around us.”
- “Lawyers regularly [socialize] together. The firm is always open to hosting events that encourage the attorneys to spend time together outside the office. We have parties for Oktoberfest, conference rooms showing major sporting events, and dinners for each class.”
- “Lawyers in our firm socialize regularly, both at firm-sponsored events and on their own time. Many lawyers here are friends, not just work colleagues.”

Associate/Partner Relations

- “Partners are very respectful of associates and genuinely value their input and work. The firm is transparent as to performance and finances and promotions. We receive performance reviews twice a year for our first few years as associates, and then after that, performance reviews are once a year. We receive feedback from partners/senior associates on a rolling basis as needed.”
- “Every partner at the firm has been great to me. I’ve gotten great mentorship, both on my work product and navigating office politics. The firm has also taken big steps forward with respect to performance reviews.”
- “The partnership as a whole is great. I feel welcome and respected and feel like I can approach any of them. There are a couple of personalities here and there, but that does not detract from the general associate-to-partner relations. ...”
- “You receive [substantive] work immediately, and the partners rely on you [and] seek out your opinion. Every partner I’ve worked with has been very fair, collegial, and very open to allowing young associates take on big responsibilities in a case.”

Hours

- “The firm recognizes work-life balance and also give decent amount of work. But sometimes, work is not evenly distributed.”
- “I choose to work in litigation. My hours are unpredictable and sometimes insane; it comes with the practice area. Luckily, most of the partners I work with are flexible about where and when I work.”
- “Work distribution varies by project and time of year. It can be a slow start for new associates to be fully staffed on billable work.”
- “2,000 [minimum billable] hours, of which 100 can be pro bono and 50 can be ‘shadowing.’ If you don’t meet your target, you are not bonus eligible.”

Compensation

- “Compensation is set at the elite market tier; bonuses are tied to billable hours.”
- “I am very satisfied with my compensation. We pay on the Cravath scale, and bonuses are in line with the top firms.”
- “Salary is at market; bonuses are a black box and harder to predict, but [I] have been satisfied the last few years.”
- “If you work hard and get above the 2,100 mark, you can get a pretty nice bonus.”

Quality of Work

- “I work on a wide variety of intellectual property matters, including patent prosecution, client counseling, and post grant proceedings at the USPTO. The work is substantive, complex, and appropriate for my level.”
- “The work I do is substantive, valued by the team, and contributing to my growth as an attorney. I perform work at all levels, from document review and legal research to writing the first drafts of motions and appellate briefs.”

- “I have gotten a lot of opportunities to do substantive work, and those who assign work are typically very eager to help me learn from new projects.”
- “Almost all the projects I get are substantive legal work; I’ve received increased responsibility over the course of my career at the firm, including some unique opportunities to learn about our work in some of the firm’s foreign offices and take larger roles in case strategy decisions.”

Wellness Efforts

- “We have exercise and nutrition education programs. We also had a meditation program, which was helpful. Otherwise, wellness really comes from every attorney and partner looking out for each other and understanding each other’s needs.”
- “Nutrition education; wellness meetings; a wellness room; good insurance coverage.”
- “The firm provides many opportunities and outlets for attorney health, and it has signed on to the ABA’s wellness pledge. But the buy-in from attorneys remains low.”

Training & Mentoring

- “There are many types of trainings available during normal business hours. They range from legal research to office systems to practitioner-oriented training to brown bags about the state of the law with respect to a particular issue.”
- “The firm just implemented a very comprehensive patent prosecution training for all young associates extending over months. CLEs and lunch-and-learn opportunities abound.”
- “Our firm excels at mentorship. I feel comfortable asking almost any attorney for assistance. The firm allows us to charge the firm card for coffee and lunches to facilitate mentoring. The firm also assigns mentors to associates and regularly checks in to see if your mentors fit your needs.”
- “Associates are assigned associate and partner mentors. Non-organized mentoring occurs often as well. Training opportunities are frequently offered.”

Career Outlook

- “Promotion to partnership is realistic for those who would like to make partner. Senior associates can also transition into contract partner or of counsel roles. Many attorneys choose to work in-house.”
- “Promotion to partnership is realistic. The partnership is almost exclusively made up of attorneys who have only worked at Finnegan since being summer/student associates. If senior associates do not wish to seek partnership, there are fantastic exit opportunities with many clients as well as alternative of counsel arrangements.”
- “Partnership definitely seems like a possibility, as are non-partner roles (rarer). Exit opportunities mostly involve going in-house to a client, although I don’t think lateraling or going into government would be difficult.”
- “I think partnership is very, very realistic here. Finnegan commits to its associates. If you want to be here, they want to groom you to be a partner.”

PRO BONO & DIVERSITY

Pro Bono Commitment

- “I have recently represented a pro bono client with a partner in a Federal Circuit appeal. The firm is so committed to providing substantive pro bono opportunities that there is an entire team of pro bono coordinating attorneys who only work on pro bono projects and can mentor associates.”
- “[The] firm offers a comprehensive pro bono program, including in-house training and mentoring. [A] wide variety of pro bono matters are available depending on interest, including criminal, landlord-tenant, social security disability, veterans law, asylum, and family law. [One hundred] hours of pro bono work count towards the annual billable target.”
- “Firmwide, there is a focus on veterans and asylum cases. Individual offices have additional pro bono partnerships. So there are lots of different options. I’ve worked on several veterans cases already, which has been strongly encouraged by partners and associates alike.”
- “The firm is very committed to pro bono. As a first year, I have already appeared in court in a juvenile resentencing case, and I have been involved in asylum cases, too.”

Diversity Efforts

- “We have affinity groups, special programs, and strategic outreach efforts to cultivate and grow talent in attorneys who [are] women, racial minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and individuals with disabilities.”
- “The firm values hiring and promoting women from within the firm. They are very accommodating of maternity leave to promote retention [with] women associates and partners.”

- “I think Finnegan does a good job of hiring for diversity. There are a lot of female associates and partners, and while the number is not 50%, it is certainly improving. As a racial minority, I feel like Finnegan is the most diverse firm I've been to. While there are certain racial minorities that are not well represented, I do believe Finnegan tries hard to recruit and retain these groups. Finally, we have associates who are LGBTQ+ individuals and individuals with disabilities, which is encouraging to see as well.”
- “I was in a litigation strategy meeting last week for an electrical engineering case where the room contained only women, of various ethnicities, ages, and sexualities. That experience is not unusual at Finnegan. It's not just lip service, and I really do appreciate their genuine and continuing efforts to recruit and keep minorities of all types.”

SUMMER PROGRAM

Training & Assignments

- “I was given real, junior-level work assignments and even got to write a motion for a stay. I also wrote an appellate brief for a pro bono case, which was [a] great experience with sustained, lengthy legal writing.”
- “Training was extensive. At the time, it felt like overkill, but in the end, I appreciated the firm's commitment to preparing us for real work. Real work is exactly what I did as a summer associate. On a much smaller scale, the work I did as a summer associate nearly mirrors what I am doing as a first year. The firm did an incredible job of making sure we had opportunities to do real work while balancing extremely fun social events.”
- “I was able to assist on a wide variety of matters, including patent litigation, patent prosecution, and several pro bono opportunities, such as writing appeals briefs to the Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims.”
- “The work is substantial; several partners even make sure the summers working with them have client interactions. The firm values and encourages summer associates to work on a diverse range of assignments with many people at the firm.”

Social Opportunities

- “The social events at the firm are incredible. There are many events and opportunities to meet people at the firm and to build relationships among the summer class. The summer associates from my cohort are now some of my closest friends, and now as associates, we still regularly spend much time together socially.”
- “Social events were a lot of fun at my firm. We attended baseball games, played in a summer kickball league, and had many other fun scheduled events that were well attended by the attorneys.”
- “The social aspect of my firm helped reinforce the culture of the firm. It also established a bond between people of the same class year. The firm fostered a collaborative environment for the summer associates that [has had] a lasting impression as junior associates.”
- “The social aspects of Finnegan's summer associate program were phenomenal. There were many opportunities to connect with attorneys throughout the firm. The planned events varied so that different attorneys attended different events, which increased the opportunity to meet people.”

Associate Experience vs. Summer Expectations

- “I have been pleasantly surprised at there being no difference between my high expectations and what work is like. Along with the typical junior doc reviews, I have been given real, substantive work early on. I'm very satisfied.”
- “My experience practicing has pretty much matched my expectations, which were quite high. I have been able to work on a variety of matters and have been able to choose my practice area.”
- “The only real difference is that the workload is much heavier. Everything I was told about this firm was the truth. It is a work-hard/play-hard firm. I was pleasantly surprised about how similar life is as an associate to the summer.”
- “I think the associates did a good job of telling us what it would be like to transition from a summer associate into a first-year associate. I was able to maintain my connections from the summer to give me work as a first-year associate. The senior associate and partner mentors I had as a summer continue to give me work today. Further, I was connected to new senior associate and partner mentors, which has increased my contact points at the firm.”

Favorite Summer Events

- “Top of the Gate social, where we go to the rooftop of the Watergate Hotel and get the chance to meet everyone with a beautiful rooftop view.”
- “High tea with the female partners and senior associates.”
- “Poker tournament.”