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They've Got Next: the 40 under 40

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Alyssa Caridis of Orrick

By Lisa Helem and Kibkabe Araya | July 28, 2022

Please describe two of your most substantial, recent wins in practice.

Since 2019 I've represented Sonos in patent disputes against Google. At the International Trade Commission, Sonos secured a finding of infringement and validity of all five asserted patents, and an order banning the importation of violating products. While several other cases are ongoing, we've so far successfully invalidated one of Google's patents asserted against Sonos.

I recently led a team defending DISH Network against allegations of patent infringement in the Western District of Texas. In addition to defending the merits of the case in the ordinary course, we created leverage by getting inter partes reviews, or IPRs, instituted early and filing multiple mandamus petitions relating to venue. These resulted in plaintiff dropping an asserted patent and (on the eve of trial) the Federal Circuit granting mandamus, transferring the case to Colorado. The case then quickly settled.

What is the most important lesson you learned as a first-year attorney and how does it inform your practice today?

Love what you do and don't be afraid to show it. Growing up my family had a small business that made big, complicated food processing machines. I was surrounded, all the time, by tangible inventions that would, for example, peel a thousand potatoes in a couple of minutes. I came to learn that the protection of these inventions were part of what drove the success of the business. I was hooked.

When I started working as an IP lawyer, I was, of course, exposed to the less-glamorous aspects of the practice: long hours, fire drills, setbacks, stress, and self-doubt. But I didn't mind them as much as I might have because I genuinely loved the work. And I learned both that I did better work when I focused on that fact and that other people had more fun working alongside me when I let my enthusiasm for the work show through. I have been doing this job for 13 years now, I still love it, and I'm not at all shy about showing it. I know the clients can see it, and that it makes the teams I work with more collaborative and effective.

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Alyssa Caridis serves as the head of Orrick's Los Angeles office and was recently named deputy leader of her firm's global intellectual property litigation practice. She also mentors a dozen associates and acts as the partner in charge of women's initiatives for Orrick's Southern California offices.

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How do you define success in your practice?

I think success has three elements: (a) achieving the client's goals (b) making the client feel well served and (c) helping the team perform to its potential. Fortunately, I think that the way to achieve all three goals is the same: to pay ferocious attention to detail, communicate clearly with the client, and make the (enormous) investment of time required to ensure that my teams are running smoothly—i.e. that all team members know what's expected of them, feel supported, and get the opportunities they want to further their skills. So while the "W" at the end of the case is a critical component of the objective, it's only "success" when the client feels that it was well represented and when that victory is achieved by teammates who enjoyed the experience, and look forward to getting after the next case with each other.

What are you most proud of as a lawyer?

The first case that I led from start to end was defending a patent infringement case brought by a competitor and asserting seven patents. Working with a small team, we filed IPRs on most patents, and proceeded to attack the others in the district court. The plaintiff dismissed some patents as discovery (and the PTAB proceedings) progressed.

I first-chaired the claim construction and summary judgment hearings. A month before trial, the court granted our summary judgment motions and found most of the patents were not infringed. The plaintiff dismissed the remaining patent, rather than going to trial. While the appeal from the district court was pending, the Patent Trial and Appeal Board invalidated most of asserted patents as well, and the Federal Circuit then affirmed everything. This was the first major case I lead through completion, and it was a pretty special experience—all the more so because following the case, the client invited the firm to become part of their preferred provider program.

Who is your greatest mentor in the law and what have they taught you?

I've only known [firm partner] Clem Roberts for a little under four years, but in that time he has fundamentally changed how I approach the practice of law. It goes without saying that Clem is a superb lawyer, but he also brings a level of empathy and outside-the-box thinking to his practice that I think is unparalleled, but I certainly try to emulate. He has reinforced in me that you can never be too busy to ensure the well-being of your team (and yourself) and mentor the attorneys working under you. And he has taught me how to approach cases to identify unique leverage points through unconventional strategies, rather than dusting off the same playbook time and time again.

Just for fun, tell us your two favorite songs on your summer music playlist.

"Natural" by Imagine Dragons and "Woman" by Kesha. Whether at the gym, driving into work, or hanging around the house, I love rocking out to energetic songs with empowering messages.