

Litigation Upstart Opens in DC With ITC Leader From Finnegan

Less than six months after it was launched by a group of McKool Smith alums in Atlanta, New York and Silicon Valley, Reichman Jorgensen has landed in the nation's capital with the addition of IP litigator Christine Lehman.

By Scott Flaherty
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Reichman Jorgensen, a bicoastal boutique firm started in October by a group of former McKool Smith litigators, has expanded into Washington, D.C., hiring seasoned patent trial lawyer Christine Lehman as the new office's managing partner.

Lehman comes to Reichman Jorgensen after 20 years at Finnegan, Henderson, Farrabow, Garrett & Dunner, where she led that firm's International Trade Commission litigation group and chaired its pro bono committee. She's an experienced patent litigator with a specialty in cases at the ITC, where she served as an investigative attorney early in her career.



courtesy photo

Christine Lehman

In a statement on Tuesday announcing the new hire and office opening, Reichman Jorgensen's name partners—Courtland Reichman and Sarah Jorgensen—touted Lehman's experience as a boon for the early-stage boutique. Reich-



Photo: Diego M. Radzinski/ALM

The rotunda at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

man Jorgensen launched with a 13-lawyer group in Atlanta, New York and Silicon Valley that decamped from McKool Smith.

The boutique focuses on commercial and intellectual property litigation, and has also struck a strategic alliance with Kellogg, Hansen, Todd, Figel & Frederick to staff and pitch larger cases.

The firm's founders said Lehman's hire fits with Reichman Jorgensen's broader goal of attracting top talent and maintaining true diversity. With the

addition of Lehman, women lawyers comprise the majority of the boutique's ownership, according to Reichman Jorgensen.

"We believe that elite talent wins cases, and Christine, as a star lawyer with a sterling reputation, certainly fits the bill," said Reichman, who serves as the boutique's managing partner. "Christine's arrival expands our national footprint and bolsters our patent litigation practice, including our capabilities before the ITC, a venue in which our clients have increased needs."

While Lehman has an active ITC practice, she's also experienced in patent litigation that plays out in federal district courts and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, and she has served as global oversight counsel in patent disputes that spread to jurisdictions outside the U.S.

Her cases have spanned several industries, including disputes that involve medical devices, pharmaceuticals, lighting technology and even trampolines. Among other past work, she represented heavy machinery manufacturer Caterpillar Inc. in an ITC dispute against a competitor related to road construction technology, according to her new firm.

Lehman said in an interview on Wednesday that, while Finnegan made her the "the lawyer I am today," she was drawn to the economic model Reichman Jorgensen has adopted. When the firm launched, its leaders stressed that they would eschew hourly billing and instead use alternative fee structures.

"It was just a chance to do something totally different. We all know that the billable hour is a problem," said Lehman, later adding that more and more, clients are looking for their outside lawyers to take alternative billing approaches.

Reichman Jorgensen's founders also committed early on to paying associates above the top rates set by Big Law market leaders such as Cravath, Swaine & Moore. Lehman said on Wednesday that the firm's newly launched Washington office will likely expand in the near future with associate hires.

She also noted Reichman Jorgensen's focus on gender and racial diversity, a factor that held particular value to Lehman, who studied engineering in college and has spent her legal career focused on patent litigation, fields where men tend to dominate. She said the prevalence of women litigators at Finnegan was one of the factors that drew her to that firm 20 years ago, and she's excited to now move to Reichman Jorgensen, where she can continue working on patent cases within a firm that's majority owned by women.

"I really never dreamed I'd be in that kind of position," she said.

Scott Flaherty, based in New York, covers the business of law with a focus on legal ethics, lawyer misconduct, conflicts-of-interest and litigation involving law firms. He can be reached at sflaherty@alm.com. On Twitter: @sflaherty18

