McDermott Adds Former IP Boutique Leader in Boston

Kristina Bieker-Brady, a co-founder of Boston's Clark & Elbing, is joining McDermott Will & Emery as a partner in its intellectual property practice as the firm seeks news ways to advise its early-stage life sciences client base.

By Meghan Tribe | January 24, 2018

If the first weeks of 2018 are any indication, Boston is poised to become one of the hottest markets for law firm lateral hires in the coming year.

Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan

Kristina Bieker-Brady, courtesy of Asia Kepka


https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/sites/americanlawyer/2018/01/24/mcdermott-adds-f... 4/17/2018
McDermott Will & Emery, which late last year sought to expand its financial technology expertise by adding a three-lawyer team from Debevoise & Plimpton, is now poised to expand its intellectual property practice in Boston by bringing on partner Kristina “Kris” Bieker-Brady from Boston-based IP boutique Clark & Elbing.

Bieker-Brady, who holds a doctorate in molecular biology from Princeton University, began her legal career as a patent agent at noted IP-focused firm Fish & Richardson. Upon graduation from Boston College Law School in 1996, she co-founded Clark & Elbing, where since 2010 she has served on the firm’s three-partner managing committee.

For more than 20 years, Bieker-Brady has handled a variety of IP matters for life sciences companies, such as patent prosecution, life cycle management, licensing and collaboration strategies and patent strategy. But as Bieker-Brady’s client base grew, it began demanding more than what the 10-lawyer life sciences prosecution firm could handle, she said.

“My clients grew to the point they were doing [initial public offerings], M&A activity and a lot of financings,” said Bieker-Brady, who also works with many early-stage companies in the life sciences sector. “It was getting lonely over there being in a prosecution-only firm, because I didn’t have any securities counsel and what not.”
Part of what Bieker-Brady aims to accomplish in her move to McDermott, which was handled by Gary Cadogan of JR Search, a broker for many a notable Big Law move (http://amlawdaily.typepad.com/amlawdaily/2011/06/saulewindingonnegass.htm in Boston, is to create a team-based model that will combine lawyers from different practice areas to deliver legal services to emerging life science companies.

By tapping into the IP bench strength and global platform that McDermott already has and by linking up with a larger life sciences group, Bieker-Brady sees an opportunity to create a long-term strategy to capture and capitalize on such client work.

“My whole discussion with McDermott from day one was about doing [this] because it’s clear my clients needed it,” Bieker-Brady said. “Almost all of them, even the early-stage clients, almost always use a minimum of three firms and it’s the client that manages the interface. So there’s a huge amount of slippage both economically, but more importantly, informationally.”

McDermott’s Boston office opened in 1981 (http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20030609/NEWS01/20009101/mcder will-taps-freishtat) and now has more than 50 lawyers working on matters in the life sciences, private equity and technology space, areas that have driven many of the firm’s Am Law 100 competitors into the city over the past year.

“The life sciences sector is one of the fastest-growing industries in the nation, especially in Boston,” said a statement from Sarah Columbia, a member of McDermott’s management committee and a former head of its IP practice. “We look forward to having [Bieker-Brady] join our team and bring her IP prowess in the life sciences arena to bear for clients both here in Boston and across McDermott’s global platform.”