

Judicial Panel: PTAB's LEAP Initiative for NextGen Lawyers

MAY 29, 2020

On May 29, the Federal Circuit Bar Association, Berkeley Center for Law & Technology, and ChIPs sponsored a discussion on the USPTO's Legal Experience and Advancement Program (LEAP). Launched earlier this month, LEAP facilitates the professional development of patent attorneys and agents who appear before the Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB) by providing them with opportunities for oral advocacy.

PANELISTS

Deputy Chief Judge Jackie Bonilla

Jackie Bonilla serves as the Deputy Chief Judge at the PTAB at the USPTO. Since her appointment as an Administrative Patent Judge in January 2012, she has conducted numerous post-grant patent trials under the America Invents Act, heard appeals from adverse examiner decisions in patent applications and reexamination proceedings, and rendered decisions in interferences.

Prior to her current position, Judge Bonilla worked in private practice for twelve years; she spent part of that time as a partner with Foley & Lardner, LLP. She also served as a judicial law clerk to the now-retired Chief Judge Randall Rader in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Judge Bonilla graduated from the University of Virginia School of Law, holds a Ph.D. in Pharmacology from the University of Virginia, and a B.A. in Biochemistry from the University of California, Berkeley.

Vice Chief Judge Janet Gongola

Janet Gongola currently serves as a Vice Chief Judge and manages internal and external engagement on behalf of the PTAB, including development of educational programs and PTAB procedures and rules. She was appointed to the PTAB in October 2016. Before joining the Board, Judge Gongola was the Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary and Director of the USPTO. While there, she advised on all matters of law and policy.

Prior to joining the USPTO, Judge Gongola served as a law clerk for the Honorable Paul R. Michel in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, and for the Honorable Judge Sue L. Robinson in the U.S. District Court for the District of Delaware. She also worked as a patent attorney, patent agent, and research chemist at Eli Lilly and

Company in Indianapolis, Indiana. Judge Gongola graduated from Indiana University School of Law, and received B.S. degrees in both Chemistry and Mathematics from Muskingum University.

Judge Christa Zado

Christa Zado serves as an Administrative Patent Judge at the USPTO. Before joining the PTAB, Judge Zado was Senior Counsel at Cisco for five years and prior to that she was a Senior Associate at Ropes & Gray. Judge Zado graduated from Boalt Hall UC Berkeley School of Law and has a Masters and Bachelors in Electrical Engineering from Stanford University and UC Irvine, respectively.

Prefatory and closing comments provided by:

Jamie Underwood

Jamie is a partner and global IP strategist in Latham & Watkins' Intellectual Property Litigation and International Trade Commission (ITC) Practices. Jamie uses her first chair experience to help complainants, respondents, and third parties to resolve investigations before the ITC and related matters before US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Jamie is the current President of the Federal Circuit Bar Association and is a member of ChIPs.

MODERATORS

The Panel was moderated by Winston & Strawn Associates, members of the ChIPs Network, and PTAB advocates who qualify for the LEAP program:

Claire Fundakowski

Claire is a former Federal Circuit clerk for Judge Kimberly Moore and registered pharmacist with a Pharm.D. She represents clients in patent litigation with a focus on Hatch-Waxman litigation and appeals.

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