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Top Boutique/s/ INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY



Courtesy of Intellectual Property Law Group LLP

From left: IPLG managing partner Otto Lee, associate Brian Hahn, associate Bonnie Wolf, partner Juneko Jackson and associate Kevin Viau.

After September 11th, the phones at Intellectual Property Law Group LLP's San Jose headquarters didn't ring for two weeks. "We were that physically affected," said Otto Lee, who co-founded IPLG in 1998. "It was a tough time for us."

But due to its flexibility, Lee said the 10-lawyer firm has been able to weather rough economic times more easily than some larger firms. Though IPLG's "bread and butter" is patent prosecution, the firm leans toward litigation when "times are bad" and there are fewer patents being filed and more license fees not being paid.

These days, the firm's business is booming, and the phone rings regularly. To be fair, some callers are confused: They say they've been in a car accident, and Lee has to explain "No, that's P.I.—we're IP" or they ask about and landlord-tenant issues, and Lee says "No, no, no. We're not real property. We're fake property—intellectual property."

But other callers are a major source of pride for Lee. "The ones I get the biggest kick out of are when opposing counsel gives you a good referral," Lee said. "That to me is like a badge of honor."

As a commander in the U.S. Navy reserve, Lee is familiar with badges. In 2010, he was awarded the Bronze Star for his year-long role as chief of draw-down material disposition policy in Iraq.

Lee joined the Navy the day after his final nu-

clear engineering exam at UC Berkeley, and was on active duty for nearly two years before attending UC Hastings College of the Law in 1991. Just four years after law school—including three years as a patent agent and attorney at Sheldon & Mak and another as a senior intellectual property attorney at Intel Corp.—Lee co-founded IPLG.

Lee said his 2009 call to active duty in Iraq was a test for the firm. "When you have the managing attorney go away for a year, how's the firm going to survive? Well, it turns out they survive better without me around, so what does that tell you? I should go again," he said.

"But not to Baghdad, that is."

When Lee is busy—whether working for the Navy or for the city of Sunnyvale (of which he was appointed mayor in 2006)—the only partner left with his team of eight lawyers is Juneko Jackson.

Jackson started as an IPLG intern during law school, and was instantly attracted to the firm's strong international presence. Roughly half of IPLG's clients are based outside the United States, and its diverse staff speaks many languages, including Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Korean and Spanish.

In one of two trials it had—and won—this year, Lee's team flew to Hong Kong to take a deposition, and he said their understanding of Chinese language and culture was "a very big

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW GROUP LLP

*Fresno, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose (headquarters)
Los Angeles*

Intellectual Property

Managing Partner: Otto Lee

Other Key Partners: Juneko Jackson

- Obtained permanent injunction, exemplary damages and attorney fees against infringers of large screen multi-touch technology trademarks and trade secrets
- Won unanimous jury verdict and obtained permanent injunction and seizure order against infringers of trademarks and copyright on a renowned tea product
- Advised Prince and NPG Music Publishing LLC on intellectual property related to their new albums
- Successfully negotiated favorable international patent licensing agreement between Bulbrite Industries Inc. and Philips NV

plus for the client."

For the other trial—a counterfeit suit brought by IPLG client ATHI.—it was the firm's "hands-on, strategy-focused approach" that impressed the client.

"[Lee] suggested using an undercover person to make a purchase as evidence," said ATHI manager Eddy Lee. "It sounded really out there but it actually worked."

Other hallmarks of IPLG include their fixed fee pricing and emphasis on work-life balance.

"My second-year associate Bonnie just got her sailing license," Lee said. "If you work for some of those [bigger] firms—sailing? Are you kidding me? Why are you not billing? Why are you not working?"

"We might not make as much as lawyers in bigger firms, but this place is a ghost town on weekends," Lee said. "We want people to be healthy."

Looking back on his decision to start an intellectual property firm so early in his career, Lee said he was "just in the right place at the right time."

"It's one of those things that you look back on and say, 'Boy, do I not regret that.'"