

Health Hires: Greenberg, Covington Add IP, Deals Pros

By **Dani Kass**

Law360, New York (July 1, 2016, 8:12 PM ET) -- Greenberg Traurig LLP and Covington & Burling LLP have recently expanded their offerings for life sciences clients through the respective additions of an intellectual property shareholder from Saul Ewing LLP and a transactions attorney from Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Greenberg Adds Neuroscientist To IP Team

Melissa Hunter-Ensor has joined Greenberg as a shareholder in its intellectual property group in Boston. She will be working with clients largely in the life sciences industry on a variety of issues, including patent portfolio management, litigation, investments and licensing.

Hunter-Ensor, a scientist by training, earned a doctorate in neuroscience from the University of Pennsylvania and then had a four-year fellowship with Nobel laureate H. Robert Horvitz at his lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

She told Law360 that she was driven to law as she got to spend less and less time in the lab, and had to spend more time on administrative work, such as chasing grants.

"I felt I could take those same skills — analytical thinking and critical thinking — and apply them," Hunter-Ensor said. "I'm still working with scientists and companies who are doing amazing and innovative things, but I'm sort of using some of those other skills that I wasn't really taking advantage of."

She went to law school at Suffolk University Law School and started at the intellectual property boutique Clark & Elbing LLP. She then spent nearly 10 years at Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP, which is now Locke Lord LLP, before moving to Saul Ewing.

She made the jump to Greenberg to support her growing practice, praising the firm's technical expertise. Hunter-Ensor said that she's especially excited to work with the strong inter partes review practice and to work on corporate transactions.

Greenberg also added Elbert C. Chiang from Saul Ewing as a registered patent agent. He focuses on patent preparation and prosecution, largely in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. He has doctorate and undergraduate degrees in molecular biology, from Princeton University and Vanderbilt



Melissa Hunter-Ensor

University, respectively.

“Dr. Hunter-Ensor is a well-known and accomplished IP lawyer, and we are delighted that she is joining our firm,” Terence P. McCourt, managing shareholder of the Boston office, said in a statement. “We look forward to the depth and sophistication of skill and experience that she will bring to our Boston office and the GT practice worldwide. We welcome her and Dr. Chiang to the team.”

Life Sciences Transactions Attorney Joins Covington As Partner

Val Ellis has joined Covington as a partner in its life sciences transactions practice in Washington, D.C., following four years as a partner at Morrison & Foerster.

He works with a large variety of life sciences clients, a significant amount of which are Asia- and Europe-based, on services including technology-based transactions, corporate matters, initial public offerings, mergers and acquisitions and global licensing and collaborations. The firm said that much of his work is with Japanese pharmaceutical companies or helping companies enter the Japanese life sciences market.

Ellis said that he’s drawn to how Covington deals with some of the largest and most complex transactions in the industry. That complexity, he said, is what makes him like working in life sciences.

“Every deal is different than the other deals,” Ellis told Law360. “There are innovative aspects of each transaction and there’s a high premium that the industry places on a deep understanding of the regulatory and commercial ground of the industry and how that gets applied to a particular set of transactional objectives.”

Ellis earned his law and undergraduate degrees from Duke University. He then worked for 14 years at WilmerHale, making partner halfway through, before moving to serve as associate general counsel at Howard Hughes Medical Institute in 2009.

Ellis said that his work there included developing and implementing clinical trial policies for its investigators and creating and launching a joint venture in South Africa to research the coinfection of HIV and tuberculosis. In 2012, he moved to Morrison & Foerster as a partner in its life sciences technology transactions group.

“Welcoming Van to the life sciences transactions practice further enhances our ability to keep pace with the increased deal activity in life sciences,” John Hurvitz, co-chair of the life sciences industry group, said in a statement. “Van has focused on global and cross-border life sciences transactions for more than 15 years, and his experience advising clients in complex collaborations, M&A and commercial agreements will help us continue to grow our practice in the United States and Asia.”

--Editing by Stephen Berg.



Van Ellis