

Law Firm Profile: Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi LLP

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Friday, November 10, 2006 --- Having racked up dozens of multimillion-dollar jury verdicts, Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi LLP's intellectual property group has so many cases coming its way, it has the luxury of taking the top picks.

Over the past decade, the firm has racked up an impressive list of million-dollar awards in IP cases, topped by the Eolas Technologies Inc. v. Microsoft Corp. suit two years ago. In that case, the firm scored one of the largest IP jury verdicts ever, a \$520 million award, on behalf of its client Eolas.

"We win big cases, and we've won a lot of them," said Ronald Schutz, head of the firm's IP practice. "If you stack up our large jury verdicts against any other firms, I suspect that no one else could match us with as many big verdicts as we've got."

The group's first big verdict came in 1995 in *Fonar Corp. v. General Electric Co.* Robins Kaplan won a \$110.5 million verdict on behalf of Fonar, which at the time was the seventh-largest jury award ever and the largest patent jury verdict.

The firm represented Pitney Bowes Inc. in patent infringement litigation against Hewlett-Packard Co. over laser-jet printer technology, which settled for \$400 million.

In a case involving patents for microprocessor system designs, the firm recovered \$440 million in settlements on behalf of its client Intergraph Corp. from companies including Hewlett-Packard, Dell Corp., Intel Corp., Gateway Inc., Advanced Micro Devices Inc., IBM Corp., Fujitsu Ltd., Sony Corp. and Acer Inc.

Other victories include a jury verdict for \$96.3 million in *Honeywell v. Minolta Co. Ltd.*, which ended up settling for \$127.5 million, a jury verdict for \$69 million in *Unocal Corp. v. Arco*, *Chevron Corp.*, *ExxonMobil Corp.*, *Shell Oil Co.* and *Texaco Inc.*, and \$49.5 million settlement in *Tulip Computers International v. Dell Computers Inc.*

"If you start listing our patent infringement cases, it's enormous," Schutz said. "We have the pick of what we do these days. I'm turning down work. We can be selective in the cases we take."

The top partners in the practice area include Schutz, name partner Michael

Ciresi, Jan Conlin, David Beehler and Martin Lueck.

Around 90% of the group handles patent work, with the remaining 10% consisting of a mix of trade secrets and copyright cases, according to the group's chair, Ronald J. Schutz.

The firm's IP group formed in the late 1980's with just a handful of attorneys, and has since grown to over 80 attorneys. It was originally comprised of lawyers who had experience in general commercial litigation who had migrated to IP litigation, Schutz said.

In 1996, an official IP department was created at the firm.

Schutz has been working on ongoing litigation for St. Clair Intellectual Property Consultants Inc.

"They have some fundamental patents relating to digital camera technology," Schutz said. "So far they have sued basically the whole industry and the cell phone industry. We've tried three cases to verdict."

A suit against Sony Corp. garnered a \$25 million jury verdict in 2003. Another suit, against Canon Inc., won \$34.7 million in 2004. The third, against Fuji Xerox Co. Ltd., resulted in a \$3 million verdict, also in 2004.

Schutz is representing St. Clair in litigation against around 20 other companies in three separate cases as well, he said.

As for growth, the IP group at Robins Kaplan continues to hire attorneys, but generally not at the partner level, Schutz said. The group is not opposed to doing so; rather, the firm tends to grow organically.

"We've never had a policy of expansion for expansion's sake," Schutz said.

With all of the big wins, the group has racked up an impressive client list, including Medtronic Inc., Fair Isaac Corp., General Electric Co., General Mills Inc., Honeywell Inc., Pitney Bowes Inc., Ecolab Inc. and Best Buy Co. Inc.

As high-stakes as Robins Kaplan likes its IP litigation, the IP attorneys at the firm are just as fond of taking risks outside of the firm as in a courtroom, Schutz said.

IP Partner Martin Lueck recently went big-game hunting in Africa.

"He shot a lion, a water buffalo, an alligator," Schutz said. "He's brought home lots of trophies."

Schutz has been skydiving four times so far.

"We're a bunch of thrill seekers," he said. "It's such an interesting group; there are people who run marathons and triathlons, too."