

Ex-Baker Botts IP Team Joins McDermott's New Austin Office

By **Jack Rodgers**

Law360 (June 30, 2022, 3:57 PM EDT) -- McDermott Will & Emery LLP has launched an office in Austin, Texas, the firm's 22nd location in total, with a group of eight intellectual property partners from Baker Botts LLP, the firm announced Thursday.

The team will include partners Kevin Meek, Syed Fareed, Stephen Hash, Paula Heyman, Brian Oaks, Margaret Sampson, Nick Schuneman and Brett Thompsen. Meek will become the Austin office's managing partner, while Amanda K. Jester, formerly a partner with McDermott's Dallas office, has moved her health law practice to Austin, according to a firm news release.

In a statement Thursday, Meek said joining McDermott "just made sense."

"This is an incredible opportunity for this team to lay the foundation of a new office in a booming IP market, and the firm has given us the platform and support to make this both a near-term and long-term success," he said. "Our group was initially attracted to McDermott's global reach and the sophisticated legal talent of our new colleagues, and once we began conversations with the firm, there were simply too many current and prospective client and cross-practice synergies to count."

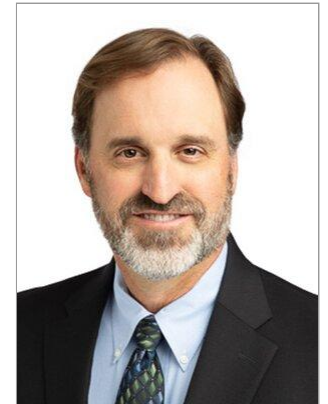
William Gaede, who leads McDermott's global intellectual property practice, said in a statement Thursday that the new office will allow the firm to focus on some of the patent litigation in the Western District of Texas. He noted "the largest percentage of all district court patent litigation cases" are now filed in the state.

"This team of elite practitioners boosts our practice's strength both in IP litigation and IP transactions and is a bold move advancing our remarkable IP practice into an industry powerhouse," he said. "We are excited to see what the coming months bring as we welcome the team to our global IP platform."

The firm notes the Austin office will handle a range of litigation, including digital health, life sciences, venture capital real estate and private client issues. The city's "Silicon Hills" area rivals its twin in California, the firm wrote, making Austin one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the U.S.

Several of McDermott's new additions have spent decades with their former firm, including Meek, who spent over 30 years as a partner and head of Baker Botts' intellectual property department in Austin, according to his LinkedIn profile. Oaks spent over 20 years with Baker Botts, and Schuneman spent over a decade with the firm before the team transitioned, according to his LinkedIn profile.

Ira Coleman, McDermott's chairman, said in a statement that the firm was attracted to Austin's growth and felt the space was a natural



Kevin Meek

fit. Michael S. Poulos, the firm's head of strategy, also lauded the new additions in a statement.

"We're focused on growth across McDermott's IP, transactions and litigation practices, with parallel concentration across the technology, health and life sciences industries," he said. "We're excited that this tailor-made IP group is launching McDermott in Austin and have no doubt that we will have more expansion developments to announce in the very near term."

--Editing by Ellen Johnson.