

Lawyer's Outstanding Performance Secures Her Place as Partner



THE BUSINESS OF LAW

Randy Frisch

Tyson & Mendes made **Kristi Blackwell** the firm's first partner. Blackwell is a member of the general liability, professional liability and business litigation team. She was second chair

in a jury trial involving professional negligence and fraud against an insurance broker. The case resulted in \$1.3 million verdict, including punitive damages, after a \$47,000,998 settlement offer from the defendants. Blackwell assisted in preparing the petition and opening brief to the California Supreme Court on whether personal injury plaintiffs can recover as economic damages an amount exceeding what their health insurance carrier paid and was accepted as payment in full by the health care provider. That's partner-level performance. Blackwell graduated cum laude from **California Western School of Law**, where she was a senior editor for the **California Western Law Review** and was a recipient of an academic merit scholarship.

Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glosky and Popeo PC's member **Jennifer Rubin** has moved to San Diego. She will join the firm's employment, labor and benefits group, which will give the local office a stronger presence. Rubin also practices in Mintz Levin's New York and Stamford, Connecticut, offices. "Jen is an important addition to

our growing West Coast employment practice, ... and her wealth of experience complements Mintz Levin's exceptional team of employment attorneys," said **Eddie Wang Rodriguez**, local managing member. Rubin focuses on the increasingly complex employment needs of public and private corporation executives. She also negotiates employment, equity and severance arrangements, and has worked on employment litigation involving wage-and-hour class actions, privacy, noncompete agreements and trade secrets.

Intellectual property law firm **EIP** recently hired two experienced patent lawyers. Partner **Mallory de Merlier** is a registered U.S. patent lawyer with almost 15 years of experience in IP for the biotechnology and medical device industries. She joins EIP from the San Diego office of **Knobbe Martens**, where she was a partner. De Merlier, a biotech specialist, is the second partner added to the local office since it opened in May 2013. It now has seven lawyers here and 52 across the country and in the United Kingdom and Germany. Senior associate **Ankur Garg** joined the firm from **Qualcomm Inc.**, where he was associate patent counsel responsible for managing the company's IP strategy and prosecuting patent applications. Ankur is a registered U.S. Patent lawyer who also spent four years working at **Knobbe Martens**.

The **San Diego County Board of Supervisors** recently adopted an amendment to the county code to prohibit the use of electronic smoking devices in places where tobacco

smoking is banned, including public buildings in unincorporated areas and parks. **Danielle Moore**, partner at **Fisher & Phillips** in San Diego, pointed out that no state law in California exists to prohibit e-cigarettes. Dealing with cigarette smoking is one of the greatest challenges employers face. But what laws exist regarding e-cigarettes in the workplace? Moore notes that since their introduction in 2002, the battery-powered e-cigarettes are exploding in popularity and may soon shake up many employers who need to decide whether to allow them in the workplace. That's where employment lawyers, like Moore, can be useful. Moore said part of the problem for employers is that e-cigarettes suffer from an identity crisis. They have not yet been officially classified by regulatory bodies as traditional cigarettes, nor is their use currently considered "smoking." Unlike traditional cigarettes, which contain harmful levels of carcinogens that emit a lingering cloud of fumes, e-cigarettes are odorless. So what's your e-cigarette policy in your workplace?

Christopher Scott has been hired as **Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch LLP's** Native American summer intern. Scott just completed his second year at the **University of Oklahoma Law School**. He is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, and his interest in the field of Native American law comes from his experiences within his tribal government and his upbringing, having been raised in Tahlquah, Oklahoma, which is the capital of the Cherokee Nation. Scott served as a legal intern

at the **Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma** and was a legal assistant at **The Wall Law Office**. Procopio partner **Ted Griswold**, who has done a great job establishing the internship program and the Native American practice group, said Scott will gain "experience working with us and our extensive Native American clientele."

William Shaffer, a San Diego partner at **Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton**, is an "IP Star." He is one of seven California KTS lawyers — and 28 nationwide — named to the Managing Intellectual Property's 2014 IP Stars in the recently published 2014 IP Handbook. KTS, for the second consecutive year, was ranked among the top five in the nation for the most number of IP Stars of any law firm.

Here is some more good being done by San Diego lawyers. The **Allen Matkins** firm came in first place in the 2014 Feeding America San Diego Food from the Bar "Pineapple League," competing against other local law firms in the same size category. Lawyers and staff at **Allen Matkins** raised \$2,906, contributed 42 volunteer hours and donated 365 pounds of food. The total campaign, which included 16 San Diego County law firms divided among three leagues based on size, collected enough food and donations to amount to 249,000 meals for children facing hunger in San Diego this summer.

Randy Frisch is vice chancellor of business and administration at National University and former publisher of the San Diego Business Journal. He is licensed to practice law in California, Nevada and Idaho.