

## McKool Smith Snags NY-Based IP Pair From King & Spalding

By **Adrian Cruz**

*Law360 (May 26, 2021, 4:59 PM EDT)* -- Trial firm McKool Smith PC continued the expansion of its intellectual property coverage by adding a pair of former King & Spalding LLP attorneys with decades of experience working high-stakes patent litigation, the firm announced Wednesday.

Principals Steven J. Rizzi and Ramy Emad Hanna joined McKool Smith on Tuesday, having spent the past eight years working together on a variety of patent suits involving software, semiconductors, life sciences and other technologies. Rizzi told Law360 they chose to join McKool Smith because of the firm's prowess in IP litigation and its strength in the patent hotbed state of Texas.

"It has a very strong trial practice, especially in patent litigation and other IP litigation," he said. "That, coupled with the strong presence in Texas, which continues to be a leading venue for patent litigation, was the main draw for what we were looking for. Our practice has developed in ways that we frankly didn't anticipate when we started working together. It became apparent that McKool had great synergy and it meshed well with the mixture of work we do for both patent holders and defendants."

Rizzi also said that the number of high-profile IP attorneys at McKool Smith, including former acting general counsel of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Nicholas Matich, was a major factor in their decision to join the firm.

"It was certainly part of the draw, the quality of the talent here, the colleagues who are already jumping in and helping to support us on active matters and the confidence we have in their ability to take cases to trial here with first-rate teams, especially in Texas but also across the country, both in district court and the [International Trade Commission]," he said.

Since they started working together in 2012, the duo have been involved in a number of major disputes, including an abbreviated new drug application suit in New Jersey federal court on behalf of pharmaceutical company Sebela Ireland Ltd., challenging a bid by generics producers Actavis Inc. and Prinston Pharmaceutical Inc. to produce their own versions of a method of administering antidepressants in certain dosages to ameliorate hot flashes in menopausal women.



Steven J. Rizzi



Ramy Emad Hanna

New Jersey federal Judge Claire C. Cecchi ended up ruling in favor of the generics companies in 2017, determining that one patent wasn't infringed and the others in question were invalid. That dispute, albeit with different counsel, ended up being taken to the Federal Circuit, and related proceedings are ongoing in district court.

"This reflects the versatility of our practices," Rizzi said. "Ramy actually has a degree in biomedical engineering so he's extremely versatile in being able to handle life sciences-related work along with any type of technology."

Both Rizzi and Hanna said they initially came from engineering backgrounds and when deciding they wanted to practice law, they were drawn to IP and patent litigation because it worked so well with their previous expertise and experience.

"It was kind of a natural fit, I actually worked as an engineer for three and a half years before becoming an attorney, and I always was interested in patent work," Rizzi said. "I didn't know at the time that I was going to focus on patent litigation, but I was drawn to IP specifically from the beginning."

Rizzi and Hanna's additions are the latest in what's been a busy year for McKool Smith's IP group. Along with Matich joining the firm's Washington, D.C., office at the start of 2021, telecommunications IP attorney Alan Whitehurst also joined the D.C. office in February. The firm currently features 135 attorneys in seven offices across the U.S.

--Editing by Stephen Berg.