

Joint Intellectual Property Law Firm of the Year

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Gary Ropski

Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lionone – on top of the world

Founded in 1917, *Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lionone* employs about 150 attorneys who are supported by a full complement of scientific advisors, patent agents and paralegals specialising in intellectual property rights (IPR) litigation and all aspects of patent, trademark and copyright law. The firm won the *Intellectual Property Law Firm of the Year USA* awarded by *Finance Monthly Magazine Law Awards for Achievement 2010*.

Headquartered atop Chicago's preeminent NBC Tower, Brinks is considered among the largest of its kind in its specialty, which is intellectual property law. The firm advises on issues relating to patent, trademark and copyright protection and litigation, intellectual asset management, trade secret, unfair competition, and technology and licensing agreements. Brinks routinely handles assignments for companies in the electrical, chemical, and mechanical engineering sectors; the biotechnology, pharmaceutical and nanotechnology industries; and for companies whose work relates to Internet and computer technology law. The firm's trademark practice works on behalf of clients who deal in a wide variety of products and services.

The firm employs people who specialise in technological fields such as electrical, chemical, biotech, nanotech, pharmaceutical, Internet, computer

technology, trademarks and brand names. Brinks' employees have stayed with the company for years and have led distinguished careers in their area of work as well as contributed to the firm's overall development and top status. One such individual is Jerome Gilson, best known nationally and internationally as the original author of leading treatise *Gilson on Trademarks* (LexisNexis) (formerly *Trademark Protection and Practice*). Gilson has been inducted into the IP Hall of Fame, and under his legacy, the firm has built a renowned trademark group.

Finance Monthly caught up with another distinguished Brinks personality, firm president and litigator Gary Ropski. Ropski has practiced intellectual property law for nearly 35 years at Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lionone and has been president of the firm since January 2006. During his tenure as president, in 2009 Brinks became the first intellectual property law firm in

the Midwest and the second in the country to receive the Thomas L. Sager Diversity Award from the Minority Corporate Counsel Association.

"I joined the firm in 1976, when I graduated from law school," says Ropski. "Many of the firm's shareholders have been with Brinks for 25 years or so. I started out doing bits of everything. At that time, there were 24 lawyers and I was the sixth associate. With so few associates, I worked on a variety of matters involving patents and trademarks on both the litigation and prosecution sides."

"Over the years, I decided to focus on litigation and that is what I do now. I have participated in more than 100 IP cases and have litigated in every federal judicial circuit in the US. I do a fair amount of work internationally for my clients in Japan and Germany."

What makes his firm unique? Ropski replies: "We are lawyers focusing on intellectual property law. It's all we do and we do it exceptionally well."

"Many of us have real world experience in science, technology and engineering, so our people have technical talent. We are also very capable of dealing with judges, juries and patent attorneys. We see ourselves as translators, taking complex technical subjects that may not be fully understood by our audience and translating them in a manner which is easy to understand."

"Brinks is also a firm that believes in congeniality. Our clients feel they are a part of the team. Working together helps us achieve successful results for our clients."

The financial crisis has not had a significant effect on Brinks says Ropski. "Brinks serves a broad base of clients in a variety of industries, and we were fortunate that our

clients generally made it through the recent economic downturn. We have strength and confidence in the future. We are sensitive to our clients' needs. Our objective is to provide expertise and efficiency, carefully staffing matters with the right number of people to complete the project while maximising value and achieving successful results."

Regarding IPR, Ropski says his firm has benefitted from an area which has been one of growth for companies for many years. He says: "Our country's President has insisted on IP protection and various legislation and procedures being in place to accommodate that. Even business methods are getting patented. The scope of IP will continue to grow."

"Our goal is to deliver unparalleled service to our clients. Each client has unique needs and we are always finding cost-effective, innovative ways to meet those needs. We protect their IP at a reasonable and predictable cost. We have a shared docketing system, a new accounting system to provide customised billing and state-of-the-art network capabilities. Our new website provides ongoing education, practice-related information and other resources. We seek to not only meet, but exceed, our clients' expectations in a timely, cost-effective and professional manner." fi

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As one of the largest firms in the United States dedicated exclusively to intellectual property, Brinks has grown and evolved with the companies and technologies that shape the way we live and work. With 170 attorneys, most with technical or scientific degrees, Brinks has the insight and skill to partner with your company on its next generation of intellectual property challenges.

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