

Sterne Kessler Elects Four New Directors and Promotes Four Associates to Counsel

Washington, D.C. (January 5, 2022) – Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox is proud to announce the election of four new directors: Tyler J. Dutton, Ivy Clarice Estoesta, Michael “Mick” F. Gross, Ph.D., and Kristina Caggiano Kelly, effective January 1, 2022. Additionally, the firm congratulates four associates on their promotion to counsel: Joshua G. McCoy*, Stephen A. Merrill, Harish Ruchandani, and Tyler Tassone.

“On behalf of Sterne Kessler, I am excited to congratulate our newest directors and counsels. Each is an excellent lawyer, and each provides excellent service to our clients. We enthusiastically welcome Tyler, Ivy, Mick, and Kristina into our directorship and are excited to have Josh, Steve, Harish, and Tyler among our group of talented counsel. I am appreciative, not just for their work on behalf of our clients, but also for their ongoing contributions to the culture and camaraderie of Sterne Kessler,” declared Managing Director [Michael B. Ray](#).

The firm’s new directors are:

- [Tyler J. Dutton](#) is a director in Sterne Kessler’s Electronics Practice Group. His practice emphasizes *inter partes* review proceedings at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. He has litigation experience developing invalidity and non-infringement positions at district court and the U.S. International Trade Commission as well as arguing appeals before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Tyler also has tackled multiple antedating cases, including one of the first cases to successfully antedate a prior-art reference in an *inter partes* review. His technical expertise is in anything that sends, receives, or processes data, especially vehicle control signaling, data management systems, data encoding, data engineering, and graphics processing. He holds a J.D. from Emory University School of Law and a B.S. in Electronics Engineering Technology from South Dakota State University.
- [Ivy Clarice Estoesta](#) is a director in Sterne Kessler’s Mechanical & Design Practice Group and Trademark & Brand Protection Practice. She counsels a wide variety of clients on the strategic procurement and enforcement of IP rights in the U.S. and globally, with a focus on design patents, trademarks, and copyrights. Ivy has niche expertise in U.S. and foreign design rights related to graphical user interface (GUI), augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) designs, and is the firm’s go-to resource for copyright matters, particularly for visual works, including digital art/NFTs. Joining the firm more than ten years ago, Ivy began her firm career as a legal assistant in the Biotechnology and Chemical Practice Group and later transitioned to the Mechanical Group and Trademark Practice, progressing to student associate, associate, then counsel, before being named a director. Ivy holds a J.D. from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law and a B.A. in Art History *with honors* and a minor in Chemistry from Wake Forest University.
- [Michael “Mick” Gross, Ph.D.](#), is a director in Sterne Kessler’s Biotechnology & Chemical Practice Group. Specializing in organic, organometallic, and medicinal chemistry; and drug discovery, his practice includes preparing and prosecuting U.S. and foreign patent applications; conducting patentability, validity, infringement, and freedom-to-operate analyses; advising on transactional matters including joint research agreements, nondisclosure agreements, and material transfer agreements; and strategic IP counseling. Prior to joining the firm, Mick was employed by a biopharmaceutical

company as a senior research investigator focused on small molecule drug discovery in cardiovascular and pain therapeutic areas. He conducted post-doctoral research in asymmetric catalytic hydrogenation reactions to devise a practical synthesis of beta-branched alpha-amino acids, at Duke University, and demonstrated asymmetric reductions could be achieved in supercritical fluids, at Los Alamos National Laboratories. Mick earned a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Virginia, investigating synthetic utility of heterobimetallic Fischer carbene complexes. He also holds a J.D. from the University of Baltimore School of Law and a B.S. in Chemistry from Franklin and Marshall College.

- [Kristina Caggiano Kelly](#) is a director in Sterne Kessler's Trial & Appellate Practice Group, representing clients in all stages of litigation before the Patent Trial and Appeal Board, International Trade Commission, district courts, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, and U.S. Supreme Court. She has experience in both *inter partes* disputes and patent prosecution in a wide variety of technological areas and venues, including Hatch-Waxman filings, interference practice, and opinion work. She clerked for the Hon. Sharon Prost of the Federal Circuit. Kristina received her J.D., Wharton Certificate in Business and Public Policy, from the University of Pennsylvania School of Law, her B.A. in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry from Rutgers University, Henry Rutgers honors, and her B.A. in Philosophy from Rutgers University, with the highest departmental honors.

The firm's new counsel are:

- [Joshua G. McCoy](#) is counsel in Sterne Kessler's Biotechnology & Chemical Practice Group. Using his technical experience in organic synthesis, medicinal chemistry, and drug discovery and development, he assists in the preparation and prosecution of U.S. and foreign patent applications as well as opinion analyses and *inter partes* review proceedings. Prior to earning his J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law, Josh obtained his M.S. in Chemistry from the University of Virginia researching organic natural product synthesis and then worked as a medical chemist for the National Institutes of Health and a large pharmaceutical company. He also holds a B.S. in Chemistry from Wittenberg University.
- [Stephen A. Merrill](#) is counsel in Sterne Kessler's Mechanical & Design Practice Group, focusing on U.S. and foreign preparation and prosecution of utility patent applications. Steve has experience preparing and prosecuting applications in a variety of mechanical arts, including footwear, athletic apparel, physiological sensor systems, electronic devices, light fixtures, packaging, display systems and architecture, engines, vehicle system technologies, beverage dispensing systems, and other consumer products. Steve also has extensive experience in post-grant proceedings at the USPTO, including defending patents in *inter partes* review proceedings and challenging patents in both *inter partes* review and reexamination proceedings. He also performs patent landscape, patentability, freedom-to-operate, and infringement analyses to counsel clients on offensive and defensive patent strategies. Steve holds a J.D. from The George Washington School of Law and a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Brigham Young University.

- [Harish Ruchandani](#) is counsel in Sterne Kessler's Electronics Practice Group where he prepares and prosecutes U.S. and foreign patent applications. Harish's technical expertise spans many areas of computer science and technology including computer networking, data and memory management, multiprocessing technologies, image processing, geospatial data analysis, virtual machine execution and processing, HTML, CSS, Javascript, web analytics, touch screen and tablet computing, search technologies, network security, interface design, Java applications, packet routing, financial products and CRM. Prior to joining the firm, Harish was a patent examiner at the United States Patent & Trademark Office where he examined patent applications focused on multiprocessing technologies, such as virtual machines, task and process management, resource sharing and multitasking, object-oriented programming, load balancing, semaphores and priority scheduling. He earned a B.S. in Computer Science from George Mason University.
- [Tyler Tassone](#) is counsel in Sterne Kessler's Mechanical & Design Practice Group. His practice focuses on the preparation and prosecution of U.S. and foreign patent applications as well as strategic counseling and portfolio management for clients in a variety of consumer products sectors, including sports equipment, footwear, apparel, fitness monitors, product packaging, and beverage dispensing systems. Tyler's practice also encompasses handling matters involving medical devices, such as analyte monitors, state-of-the-art drug delivery devices, and blood testing systems. He has broad experience working with a wide variety of technologies from high performance seal assemblies for semiconductor processing and downhole applications, to thermoplastic composite materials and molding methods, renewable energy systems, firearm accessories, and valve assemblies. His client base ranges from Fortune 500 companies and global medical device manufacturers to start-ups and individual innovators. Tyler holds a J.D., *cum laude*, from the Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law and a B.S., with honors, in Chemical Engineering from the University of Virginia.

*Effective March 1, 2021

About Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox

Based in Washington, D.C. and renowned for more than four decades for dedication to the protection, transfer, and enforcement of intellectual property rights, Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox is one of the most highly regarded intellectual property specialty law firms in the world. Its team of attorneys, registered patent agents, students, and technical specialists include some of the country's most respected practitioners of IP law tackling innovations across a broad spectrum of industries. The firm's practitioners hold over 50 masters and over 50 doctorate degrees in science or engineering and represent Fortune 500 companies, entrepreneurs, start-ups, inventors, venture capital firms, and universities in a client service driven environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and intellectually stimulating. Visit the firm online at sternekessler.com.

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