

THE **RECORDER**

Wilmer Hires Latham Partner as Co-Chair of Growing Life Sciences Practice

By Samson Amore

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What You Need to Know

- Wilmer is expanding its life sciences practice and capitalizing on growing demand for representation.
- Judith Hasko's experience spans 30 years, with a focus on intellectual property and technology commercial transactions.
- Numerous Big Law firms have made moves to bolster their life sciences practices in recent months.

Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr has hired Latham & Watkins partner Judith Hasko as a partner and co-chair of its life sciences practice in Palo Alto, the firm announced Tuesday.

The move comes as law firms face rising demand from companies in the biotechnology, health care, medical device and pharmaceutical industries in California's Bay Area.

"[Life sciences] is a really critical part of the practice because a lot of the capital markets deals we do are with our life sciences companies," Mick Bain, Wilmer transactional department chair, said in an interview.



Courtesy photo

Judith Hasko of WilmerHale

Hasko brings nearly 30 years of legal experience to Wilmer's practice, joining the firm after 18 years at Latham, where she served as vice chair of the firm's health care and life sciences global practice, with a focus on intellectual property and technology commercial transactions. Before joining Latham, she was a partner at Cooley.

"You really can't find somebody who's better known in the industry here on the West Coast than Judith," Bain said.

Wilmer is the latest of several Big Law firms to take steps to build out its life sciences practice amid growing demand.

At the beginning of May, Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo added Proskauer Rose's life science patent practice chair in Los Angeles as part of a two-partner, 10-attorney move that helps Mintz bolster its life sciences presence in Los Angeles, Boston and New York. Latham picked up two Cooley partners in California earlier this year and two more partners from Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom in Washington, D.C., last month. Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer also announced the addition of a Paul Hastings life sciences partner in Washington late last month.

Bain noted that, while Boston has long been a biotech and life sciences hub, "California is just as critical from a market perspective," he said. "In terms of growth opportunity for us, there couldn't be a bigger market; it's the biggest market for tech and life sciences combined."

"There's plenty of room to grow and take advantage of the biggest growth opportunity we see," Bain added.

Wilmer's life sciences clientele includes Gilead Sciences, which it represented in a rare \$1 billion case of patent infringement brought by the U.S. government, which centered around its HIV-prevention drugs. A federal jury sided with Gilead in the dispute last May.

Hasko said she looks forward to advising companies on their product and business development strategy. Gene and cell therapies, particularly for cancer patients, are areas on which the life sciences industry is increasingly focused, she said.

Drug devices and digital health also are becoming increasingly sophisticated, requiring companies developing them to seek airtight legal counsel, Hasko said. Artificial intelligence applications also are hot right now, she said.

"I'm excited to start the next stage of my practice with WilmerHale, I think it's going to be a great platform to help them build out an extensive practice they already have," Hasko said.

Latham & Watkins did not respond to a request for comment on Hasko's departure.