Top 50 Under 45

From appellate guru to anti-counterfeiting strategist—all through the varied spectrum of IP—these winners are distinguished by their sheer brainpower, legal smarts, creativity and hard work.

—Pamela Sherrid, Editor, IP Law & Business

May 2008

Editor’s Note

I have never sat on an admissions committee for Harvard or Princeton, but I now have much more empathy for their difficult task. How do you make the cut among so many qualified applicants? We began soliciting nominations for our Top IP People Under 45 feature last winter—230 impressive individuals were proposed, some multiple times. To anyone who didn’t make our 50-person list, here are some of the reasons.

Like any Ivy League admissions committee, we were looking for a certain amount of diversity. That meant we wanted to include representatives from the many facets of IP: trademark, copyright, patent, and trade secrets, and different kinds of practices, such as litigation, transaction, and policy work. Likewise, we wanted to include a wide range of geography and top-notch law firms, and for the most part included only one person from each firm. And we limited the attorneys to those who practice U.S. law.

But enough of who is not on the list: Those who made it offer a unique

and dynamic portrait of today’s IP world. They combine raw brain power with hard work, canny legal skills, and a talent for being in the right place at the right time. Perhaps my favorite tale in the collection is the one told by writer Susan Hansen of the meeting a few years ago at Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr, where former U.S. Army captain and biology Ph.D. Jane Love was up for partner. According to managing partner William Lee, as the assembled partners listened to Love’s accomplishments, one of the other partners leaned forward and asked, “Are they telling me all this to try to make me feel bad about myself?” In response, I say, no, we aren’t trying to make you feel bad, but rather proud of the IP community that can nurture such talent.

Pamela Sherrid
Editor
F. Scott Kieff, 38
Law professor
Washington University

In the precedent-loving field of law, F. Scott Kieff has made his mark by being a contrarian. Instead of taking the view popular in academia that IP protection is “too strong, too prone to abuse,” Kieff argues that robust IP rights are critical to increased competition, economic growth, and job creation. As a professor, as well as a fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution directing the Project on Commercializing Innovation, Kieff has churned out articles and op-eds and organized academic conferences. A longtime Federalist Society member, Kieff was recently named by the Bush administration to the PTO’s Patent-Public Advisory Committee. A graduate of MIT (molecular biology and microeconomics) and the University of Pennsylvania Law School, he practiced IP law before becoming a professor.