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Phone: +1 646 783 7100 | Fax: +1 646 783 7161 | customerservice@law360.com

Novak Druce, Perkins Coie Pick Up Howrey IP Attys

By **Allison Grande**

Law360, New York (March 8, 2011) -- Two Howrey LLP partners with extensive patent litigation experience are leaving for the Houston office of Novak Druce & Quigg LLP, while Perkins Coie LLP has snagged four Howrey intellectual property litigation partners for its Silicon Valley office, the firms announced Tuesday.

Partners Henry "Hank" A. Petri and Janelle D. Waack will be joining Novak Druce, while partners James F. Valentine, Daniel T. Shvodian, Christopher L. Kelley and James C. Pistorino will become the newest members of Perkins Coie's patent litigation practice, they said in separate statements.

"Perkins Coie is a wonderful fit for us, offering great synergy with our practices and providing us an excellent platform," Valentine said. "We were attracted by the firm's impressive commitment to client service and its formidable patent litigation roster."

Valentine brings experience representing corporate clients and universities in intellectual property litigation before federal district courts, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit and the International Trade Commission, while the three other Perkins Coie additions boast expertise in matters concerning patent infringement, copyright violations, unfair competition, breach of contract and trade secrets misappropriation.

"The firm is committed to enhancing our Bay Area patent litigation practice, and these additions, along with several other recent hires, give us a strong platform in the Bay Area from which to better serve our clients," said Ed Wes, managing partner of Perkins Coie's Bay Area offices, adding that the firm now has over 75 patent litigation lawyers in its more than 200-member intellectual property practice.

Novak Druce CEO Gregory V. Novak expressed similar sentiments Tuesday, saying that his firm expected the addition of Petri and Waack to play a significant role in strengthening the firm's patent interference, litigation and licensing practices.

Petri's practice focuses on complex patent litigation and appellate matters, including licensing issues, preparation of summary judgment motions and brief-writing. He also provides counsel to both plaintiffs and defendants with regard to intellectual property issues and appellate strategy, according to the firm.

Novak noted that both he and executive partner Tracy W. Druce had known and worked with Petri for over 20 years, litigating several patent cases together and "always achieving favorable results for our clients."

"We look forward to working together again as a team and achieving results that exceed

our past successes for clients," Novak said.

Petri added that this familiarity with Novak and Druce, along with the environment at the firm, inspired his decision to make the move, which he has been contemplating for several months.

"Novak Druce is a dynamic firm that works on interesting matters, and it's a great environment in which to further my career," Petri said.

Furthermore, the addition of Waack — who previously worked as a patent examiner in the biotechnology group at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and has extensive experience in patent litigation and reissue proceedings — garners the firm a nationally known specialist to lead its patent interference practice, according to Novak.

"With Janelle, we continue to build on that which our firm is particularly well-known — highly specialized, litigation-driven patent practices like you find in our re-examination group," he said.

Waack told Law360 on Tuesday that while Howrey was a great firm to practice with, its potential partnership in some form with Winston Strawn LLP created conflicts, and she chose to move to Novak Druce due to its unique ability to support her specialized work in interference proceedings.

The two attorneys join Novak Druce during a period of marked and continuing growth for the firm, which during 2010 added 20 partners, associates and IP specialists to its more than 60 members in Houston, Washington, San Francisco and West Palm Beach, Fla.

Howrey, meanwhile, has been hemorrhaging intellectual property, antitrust and other attorneys recently amid rumors of its imminent demise.

Perkins Coie also benefited from another recent defection, revealing Friday that Howrey partner Viola Jung, who has invented 21 patents and holds a doctorate in chemistry and biochemistry, was joining the firm.

--Additional reporting by Erin Fuchs. Editing by Chris Giganti.