

# Michael Best Names Eight Attorneys to Partnership

Michael Best & Friedrich LLP announced eight attorneys have been promoted to the firm's partnership. The new partners are Michael D. Bess, Benjamin E. Evans, Benjamin T. Johnson, Laura M. Konkel, Michelle E. Kouba, Paulette M. Mara, Justin M. Mertz, and David J. Trautschold.

Michael D. Bess (Chicago) is a member of the Litigation Practice Group serving as a strategic counselor in complex commercial and criminal cases. Bess has significant drafting expertise and has proved instrumental in securing case dismissals, defeating class certifications, and preserving or reversing judgments on appeal. Bess's experience spans a wide variety of fields, including securities and consumer fraud class actions, product liability, employment discrimination, white collar, criminal, civil rights, environmental, False Claims Act investigations, and state common law actions.

Benjamin E. Evans (Madison) is a member of the Intellectual Property Practice Group whose practice focuses on preparing, filing, and prosecuting U.S. and international patent applications in the mechanical arts field. Evans provides a broad array of IP legal advice, including reviewing patentability and clearance searches, conducting due diligence and infringement analyses, attacking competing patents and defending clients' patents through inter partes reviews and ex parte reexaminations, and responding to U.S. Patent and Trademark Office actions.

Benjamin T. Johnson (Chicago) practices in the Labor & Employment Relations Practice Group and defends employers against employment discrimination claims. Johnson has particular experience defending against Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) claims and counseling on ADA issues

such as reasonable accommodation and service animal requests. He also advises on wage and hour matters, including auditing employee classifications to minimize potential employer liability, and defends clients against class action litigation. An experienced litigator, Johnson handles claims under Title VII, the ADA, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, and related state and local laws.

Laura M. Konkel (Madison) is a member of the firm's Intellectual Property Practice Group and handles all aspects of trademark and copyright prosecution and enforcement. Konkel counsels clients on trademark selection and protection issues in the U.S. and internationally, including clearance, prosecution, maintenance, licensing, due diligence, and enforcement, including opposition, cancellation and infringement proceedings before the U.S. Trademark Trial and Appeal Board and global courts and trademark offices.

Michelle E. Kouba (Chicago) is a member of the Intellectual Property Practice Group handling all aspects of U.S. and international trademark law. Kouba helps clients build and protect their IP portfolios while providing actionable advice on brand management. She focuses her practice on clearance, prosecution, and enforcement matters and has experience handling proceedings before the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board and coordinating foreign trademark enforcement and litigation for clients based in the U.S. and around the world. Kouba also has assisted clients protect their proprietary rights on the Internet including matters involving domain-name disputes.

Paulette M. Mara (Washington, D.C.) is a member of the firm's Transactional Practice Group and Life Sciences Industry Group. She is experienced in representing pharmaceutical, medical device, biotech, and healthcare companies in regulatory, transactional, and litigation matters. Mara is known for bringing a strategic and practical approach to her work within

the life sciences, agribusiness, and financial services industries, with a focus on FDA regulatory matters, research and development, intellectual property licensing, co-development and co-promotion strategic alliances, privacy, compliance, litigation, and product protection.

Justin M. Mertz (Milwaukee) is a member of the Corporate & Transactional Practice Group providing strategic counseling to businesses on bankruptcy, commercial loan negotiation, and real estate. Mertz negotiates and drafts complex contracts, especially in the area of commercial and residential real estate, and performs the financial and cash flow analyses that inform successful business strategies and decisions. He also represents clients in general litigation matters, including non-compete agreements, real estate developments, condominium disputes, and tax liabilities for distressed companies. His extensive courtroom experience comprises cases on both federal and state levels.

David J. Trautschold (Milwaukee) practices in the Intellectual Property Practice Group and helps clients obtain patents and manage their intellectual property portfolios. Trautschold has a biomechanical engineering background and has deep experience with consumer products. He has experience drafting utility and design patent applications, prosecuting patent applications to allowance, conducting right-to-use and patentability searches, analyzing patents for validity, developing global patent filing strategies, enforcing IP rights against competitors, and defending clients from infringement allegations through non-infringement positions and post-grant proceedings.

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