

**L**awyers are a pretty tech-savvy bunch; it's hard to find one who isn't tied to the office via a handheld electronic umbilical cord. But three young, highly successful intellectual property attorneys have taken their passion for technology a step further: They've made it their business to understand how the stuff actually works.

This fascination has landed these local lawyers some very influential tech-related clients, the likes of T-mobile, Wizards of the Coast and Craigslist. It has also landed them on this year's *Rising Stars* list.

It's not surprising that, along with a love for cutting-edge technology, they share another passion: learning.

#### BROOKE TAYLOR *Speaks the language*



One of the things Brooke Taylor, partner at Susman Godfrey, enjoys most about her work with technology clients is the need to become both an expert and an educator. When she's defending a patent,

she has to distill complex technology into language comprehensible to a judge or jury.

Taylor has been called on several times to provide legal commentary for CNBC. She also filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of MercExchange, an online auction company that accused eBay of infringing on its patents with its "Buy It Now" option. The case ended with a 2008 settlement in which eBay paid an undisclosed sum for the rights to the patents.

In another recent patent-infringement case, the 32-year-old Taylor represented Paltalk Holdings Inc. in a suit against Microsoft that focused on the technology offered by the software giant to allow people to play *Halo 2* and *Halo 3* online, running on Xbox LIVE. The case ended with Microsoft agreeing to a settlement with Paltalk during a jury trial.

Other clients include T-mobile and Wizards of the Coast. In 2007 and 2008 she was lead counsel representing Wizards of the Coast in a patent-infringement suit in federal court in Seattle, with Wizards of the Coast alleging that WizKids Inc. infringed on its patent relating to a type of strategy game. The case settled.

Taylor has a demanding travel schedule—so it's a good thing she's a techie. She can thumb, at lightning speed, lengthy e-mails that most would save for the roomier keys of a laptop.

"I would say that I am hopelessly devoted to my BlackBerry," admits Taylor.

Another of Taylor's favorite pieces of personal technology is her Web cam. Litigation takes

her to fascinating places, but the cam lets Taylor stay in touch with her husband, Brian—and catch glimpses of her 2-year-old daughter, Samantha, and infant son, Benjamin—when she's on the road, fighting for her clients' digital rights.

#### GWENDOLYN C. PAYTON *Don't touch her BlackBerry*

It's the technology twist that keeps law interesting for Gwendolyn C. Payton, too.

"I love the fact that every case I handle, every day I come in, I have to learn something new," says Payton. "That's just a great way to live." She was the lawyer for VoiceStream Wireless—T-Mobile USA—in a complex contract dispute, which ended in a settlement over call-center technology, and has spoken internationally on e-commerce and other legal issues.

Technology has always been part of Payton's practice and her identity. It creeps into her work in myriad ways, including the health-care-related cases that fall under her purview as chair of Lane Powell's class action group.



She was recently a principal architect of one of the largest class action settlements in the nation. Payton's client, a group of health carriers, faced

allegations of attempting to underpay physicians through the use of automated claims-payment software. The case settled, with the health carriers paying about \$131 million, which Payton says was a good settlement for her clients and allowed them to move on.

Payton, 37, is also the pro bono partner for the Lane Powell's Seattle office. Currently she is spending a great amount of her time representing indigent death-row inmate Quincy Broaden in Louisiana. She also devotes a lot of time to working pro bono with the Boyer Children's Clinic, which serves children with neuromuscular disorders and developmental delays. In her off-hours, she and her husband, John Neeleman, can be found chasing around their 3-year-old daughter, Victoria, and 5-year-old son, Jack.

Like Taylor, Payton owns a "crackberry."

"I'm a complete BlackBerry addict," she chuckles. "It's terrible; it's an embarrassment."

# Learning Curve

## Three local lawyers take technology to the cutting edge

By Julie H. Case

#### GRACE HAN STANTON *Technology booster*

When Grace Stanton takes on a new client, she often sets out to learn its technology—and become its biggest booster. For Stanton, 36, a partner at Perkins Coie whose clients include mobile-device application developer DoApp, that meant abandoning her BlackBerry.

"Recognizing that many of my clients were focused on the iPhone platform, I switched carriers and got an iPhone," says Stanton, who focuses on trademark and intellectual property. "I try to get fully immersed in my client's industry in general, and also in my client's product in particular."

Being able to understand her clients' technology, she says, allows her to better represent them. Technology has always been a big part of the job for Stanton, whose clients range from start-ups to Fortune 500 companies.

It's the diversity of clients that makes her job exciting. She has to become a bit of an expert in a variety of industries, from software to social media to food and beverages.

Stanton represents Craigslist in trademark issues, including its domain name. Recently, in conjunction with a UK law firm, she filed a complaint on behalf of Craigslist against a UK company using the domain name "craigslist.co.uk" to offer pornography. Stanton helped negotiate Craigslist's acquisition of the UK domain name.

Even Stanton's pro bono work lies in the intellectual property realm: She handles trademark and branding work for nonprofit organizations that cannot afford legal bills. She is also an adjunct professor at Seattle University School of Law, where she teaches the arts legal clinic, which counsels artists on topics such as copyrights.

Stanton does manage to leave her desk and get behind a ski boat from time to time. She launched the Northwest Wakesurf Association.

And her interest in technology is not all business. She loves holding her iPhone up to the radio and using a music-recognition program to identify the songs and artists. And were it not for client DoApp's MyLite function, which turns her iPhone into a flashlight, her keys might be hopelessly lost at the bottom of her purse. **L&P**

