

Sheppard Mullin Nabs IP Pro Duo From Steptoe & Johnson

By **Daniel Siegal**

Law360, Los Angeles (June 1, 2016, 10:08 PM ET) -- Sheppard Mullin LLP has hired a pair of former Steptoe & Johnson LLP attorneys with expertise in trade secrets and patent litigation to join its Century City, California, office and bolster its growing intellectual property practice group, the firm announced Tuesday.

Seong Hwan Kim, the former head of Steptoe's Korea commercial litigation practice, and Rebecca Edelson, former leader of Steptoe's trade secrets practice, have joined Sheppard Mullin as partners, the firm said.

"We are thrilled to welcome Seong and Bec to the firm. In addition to the continued growth of our IP practice, they expand and deepen our litigation and trade secrets capabilities," Guy N. Halgren, chairman of Sheppard Mullin, said in a statement. "Their capabilities fit nicely with our already strong presence in Korea, and their cross-border experience further augments our Latin America practice."

Kim's practice encompasses all types of commercial litigation, but he focuses on intellectual property matters for a client roster primarily based in Asia, Latin America and the U.S., according to Sheppard Mullin. While at Steptoe, he was co-head of the firm's Korea practice as a whole, and a member of the firm's executive committee, according to Tuesday's announcement.

Edelson also focuses on intellectual property litigation, with most of her work involving trade secrets and unfair competition, according to Sheppard Mullin. She also has broad experience in all phases of state and federal litigation, including appeals, and is co-editor and author of the State Bar of California's treatise "Trade Secret Litigation and Protection," according to the firm.

Daniel N. Yannuzzi, co-chair of Sheppard Mullin's intellectual property practice group, said the group has seen "tremendous growth" and that the two new partners will further strengthen its capabilities.

"Seong is a highly respected trial lawyer. Some of the largest companies around the world turn to Seong to protect their intellectual property interests ... His knowledge and experience are synergistic with our capabilities in Korea and Mexico," Yannuzzi said in a statement. "Bec is especially expert in trade secrets work."

Kim said that he and Edelson were excited to join their strengths to their new firm and noted Sheppard Mullin's consistent year-over-year growth.

“I was especially attracted to the firm’s successful Korea office, burgeoning Mexico practice, robust IP practice group, and substantial California footprint, which are all key to growing my practice further,” he said. “I also greatly look forward to continuing to practice with Bec.”

Kim received his undergraduate degree from the University of California Berkeley and his law degree from the University of California Los Angeles.

Edelson also earned her law degree from UCLA, after earning her undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

Also making the move from Steptoe & Johnson to Sheppard Mullin are special counsel James Wald and Jason Zelin.

Kim and Edelson are just the latest attorneys to join Sheppard Mullin's growing intellectual property practice. The firm added partner Weiguo (Will) Chen to its Palo Alto, California, office from Finnegan Henderson Farabow Garrett & Dunner in March, and last year added a half-dozen more partners to the group, according to the firm.

Kim and Edelson are joining 240 attorneys in Sheppard Mullin's Los Angeles and Century City offices and 125 attorneys firmwide in its intellectual property practice. Sheppard Mullin is a full-service firm with 770 attorneys in 15 offices in the U.S., Europe and Asia, with a focus on corporate and technology matters, high-stakes litigation and complex financial transactions, the firm said.

--Editing by Jill Coffey.