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P. Stephen Fardy, 39, is a commercial litigator who learned how to do intellectual property law on his own time.

The Swanson, Martin & Bell equity partner first practiced law in 1994 in a small, Indiana boutique firm. He then joined Williams & Montgomery before moving on to Swanson Martin.

"What I have found most impressive about Steve is that he did not start out as an intellectual property lawyer, nor did he learn the subject at the side of an established IP lawyer," says Michael W. Drumke of HeplerBroom LLC.

LAW SCHOOL
Maurer School of Law:
Indiana University

After learning the litigation ropes by day, Fardy pursued an LL.M. in intellectual property by night at the Center for Intellectual Property Law at the John Marshall Law School. He worked full-time while studying, often billing more than 2,000 hours a year. Fardy now chairs the IP practice he built up.

SPECIALITY
Intellectual Property Law

Fardy's practice focuses primarily on transactions and litigation with trademarks, trade dress, unfair trade practices, trade secrets, copyrights, and issues involving the rights of publicity and privacy.

Drumke and Fardy have represented co-defendants in several cases. "He is consistently thorough in his preparation, unflappable in his demeanor and persistent in his arguments," he says.

Debrai G. Haile, who met Fardy in 1998 when they were associates, has since left the Swanson firm to join Laner Muchin. The two recently formed a business networking group that meets regularly to discuss business development opportunities. Haile says the initiative makes sense for Fardy partly because of the many administrative hats he wears at his firm. He is a development committee member who mentors associates on business development plans. He co-chairs the marketing committee, acting as a liaison between equity partners and the marketing staff. He was a founder of the recruiting committee, which he has served for a decade. He also chairs the summer associate program and sits on the diversity committee.

While working on the firm's internal well-being, Haile says Fardy has amassed an impressive record of successes for clients. His commercial litigation record includes trials and arbitrations on contractor licensing requirements, retroactive increases in workers compensation premiums, stock purchase agreements and commercial fraud.

In the intellectual property arena, Fardy obtained a summary judgment for the late Michael Jackson when plaintiffs claimed in a Northern District of Indiana case that Jackson and the Jackson Five infringed upon their songs. Fardy personally prepared Jackson for the deposition and defended him there.

Fardy has obtained a dismissal of trademark opposition at a Trademark Trial & Appeal Board proceeding. He secured a permanent injunction order against a defendant in a trademark infringement case. He also has reached favorable settlements in cases involving medical devices and dental seminar materials, as well as in trade secret matters in Cook County and in patent infringement cases in many jurisdictions.

Nominators praise Fardy's intellectual curiosity. He is a student of history and politics whose interests include the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and working on various political campaigns. Fardy is especially passionate about architectural preservation. He serves on Preservation Chicago and has served as a docent for downtown walking tours with the Chicago Architecture Foundation.

"This curiosity makes him not only a more interesting person," says Haile, "but it helps make him a much better listener than the average attorney, which in turn enhances the value of his counsel."

Swanson Martin & Bell, LLP
330 N. Wabash, Suite 3300
Chicago, IL 60611
T 312.321.9100