

Another IP Team Joins Barclay Damon From DC Boutique

By Jack Rodgers

Law360 (September 18, 2024, 3:45 PM EDT) -- Three intellectual property attorneys from the D.C.-based boutique firm Gardella Grace PA have moved their practices to Barclay Damon LLP, making them the second IP group to move to Barclay Damon from a boutique in the last five months, according to a Tuesday announcement.

Cook Alciati will lead the team as a partner and is returning to Barclay Damon, bringing with him Michael Dorfman, who also will be a partner, and Joseph Hodler, an of counsel. The group will work in a hybrid model, with physical desks in the firm's Washington, D.C., office, according to the firm's release.

The three are the latest IP team to join from a boutique shop since April, when Barclay Damon beefed up its practice with a five-attorney group from Murtha Cullina LLP.

The team from Gardella Grace focuses on intellectual property litigation and works on patent litigation for domestic manufacturers, as well as with cases involving telecommunications and medical device and commercial construction companies, the firm said.

Alciati's role with Barclay Damon is a homecoming, he told Law360 Pulse in an interview Wednesday; he worked with the firm as an associate after graduating from Villanova University's Charles Widger School of Law.

Alciati said he was inspired to focus on intellectual property and patent matters because of their constitutionally protected status.

"It's going to sound a little cheesy, but patents are provided for in the Constitution, and I think they're really key to the innovation economy," Alciati said. "The U.S. has been able to excel in a lot of areas, tech in particular, because of robust patent protection. And I think there's a lot of benefit to rewarding people for the hard work of their labor, with limited monopolies in the form of patents."

Additionally, the effects of those patents on the global economy has always interested Alciati, he said.

The team wanted to move to Barclay Damon because of the firm's larger platform. Alciati, Dorfman and



Cook Alciati



Michael Dorfman



Joseph Hodler

Hodler wanted a platform with a deeper litigation bench to help clients with more-complex litigation.

Since Gardella Grace was an IP-focused boutique, moving to Barclay Damon also gave Alciati and the team the ability to work with a broader range of diverse practice areas and to refer clients with needs outside the team's expertise to lawyers they trust, he said.

Alciati said he has worked with Hodler for about eight years, while Dorfman and he had been colleagues for three or four years. Hodler and Dorfman were critical to Alciati's work, he said, which made the trio want to "keep the band together" in the move to a new platform.

"We focus all on litigation, largely, and so in any large litigation you're going to need a team," Alciati said. "Michael brings a nice, deep, technical experience to it, Joe has a lot of experience on the ins and outs of discovery, litigation, and so it's a nice sort of trio that covers all aspects of litigation."

After Alciati's first job with Barclay Damon, he moved to Steuben Foods, where he was the manufacturer's chief intellectual property counsel, according to his LinkedIn profile. He joined Gardella Grace six years later.

Dorfman, a DePaul University College of Law graduate, has over 20 years of legal experience, close to 19 years with Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP, according to his LinkedIn profile. He joined Gardella Grace in 2022.

Hodler, a University of Minnesota Law School graduate, also has a wealth of legal experience in IP-related matters and spent almost 17 years at Hodler Law Group LLC, which focuses on ERISA and employee benefits, according to its website. He joined Gardella Grace in 2021, according to his LinkedIn profile.

Denis Sullivan, Barclay Damon's IP practice group leader, said in a statement that IP was a focus for the firm.

"The protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights continues to command the attention of our business partners and clients, and Barclay Damon has been focusing on strategically growing its footprint in the IP space in major market cities for several years," Sullivan said in a statement. "Cook's team adds IP bench strength, particularly in litigation, to our well-established IP Practice Group, benefiting our existing clients and allowing us to broaden our reach."

Lizz Acee, the managing director of Barclay Damon's major market offices, said in a statement that with Alciati, Dorfman and Hodler's additions, the firm has added 10 attorneys to the IP practice group since the start of the year.

"We are confident that the addition of Cook and his team will enhance our already strong national IP practice group," Acee said in a statement.

--Additional reporting by Emma Cueto. Editing by Peter Rozovsky.