

Maschoff Brennan Grows Calif. Footprint With 2 IP Hires

By **Suzanne Monyak**

Law360 (March 4, 2019, 1:43 PM EST) -- Maschoff Brennan has snagged two top-notch intellectual property attorneys — a patent litigator from Morrison & Foerster LLP and a corporate attorney with years of experience handling transactions and other legal affairs in-house at technology companies — bringing decades of experience in IP and corporate matters to the firm's West Coast offices.

The firm tapped Lee Cheng, who spent more than a decade as in-house counsel at Newegg.com, to co-chair Maschoff Brennan's Asia practice and to head the firm's newly created corporate transactions team. Cheng, who will be based in the firm's Orange County office as a shareholder, brings with him a wide range of experience in corporate matters, including transactional issues — such as mergers and acquisitions, financing and corporate governance — and IP litigation.

Charles Barquist also joined Maschoff Brennan as a shareholder, working out of the firm's new downtown Los Angeles office after more than three decades at Morrison & Foerster. He is a veteran IP attorney who represented Apple Inc. in the smartphone wars, and he focuses primarily on patent litigation, in the federal district courts and before the U.S. International Trade Commission.

"Chuck Barquist has over 30 years' experience litigating complex technical cases for Morrison & Foerster, and we were looking to strengthen our already accomplished litigation team in Southern California," Kirk Harris, the managing shareholder at the firm, told Law360. "He brings a strong resume and exceptional litigation skills to our team."

Harris added that Barquist's location in downtown LA, where the firm opened a new office in January north of its existing Orange County location, will allow the firm to expand its foothold into that market.

"It just made sense for our firm to start building that office more and start putting more resources in Southern California," Harris said, pointing to the number of technology companies based in that region and the high volume of litigation the firm handles in the Central District of California.



Charles Barquist



Lee Chen

Cheng's addition to the firm will help build Maschoff Brennan's corporate transactions work, Harris said, allowing the firm, which has traditionally focused on IP matters, to grow its presence in new practice areas.

"Lee brings to us an opportunity to help technology companies with transactional corporate work," Harris said. "He brings a lot of experience in dealing with tech companies, dealing with IP issues, but also expanding into corporate transactional practice. That's an area where we think we can expand the firm's practice and get more into the tech transactional corporate sector, and Lee's going to help us build that practice."

Barquist told Law360 that he decided to move to Maschoff Brennan to continue his IP practice after his previous employer suggested he "wind down" his practice when he turned 65.

"I'm still young and vigorous and didn't want to do that," he said. "I was looking for a place where I could still be active."

Barquist was part of the trial team for Apple in its high-profile patent litigation against Samsung in the so-called smartphone patent wars, a seven-year case that settled last year. He has also notched wins for satellite communications company EchoStar Corp. in the Eastern District of Texas and the ITC.

Other clients of his have included Capital One, defibrillator manufacturer Angeion Corp. and electronics company Veeco Instruments Inc., according to the firm, and Barquist said he will continue to work with Japanese electronics company Fujitsu Ltd. in his new role. His IP work spans multiple industries and products, including smartphones, semiconductors and medical devices, he said.

"What I enjoy about it, and what I have enjoyed about and has kept me enjoying it for a long time, is the opportunity to learn something new with every case. Learning the technology, becoming a near expert in it for every case is part of what keeps it fresh and keeps it exciting," Barquist said.

Cheng comes to Maschoff Brennan after several in-house roles. In 2017, he joined electronics company eForCity.com Corp. as chief legal officer, where he still serves as outside chief legal officer. Before that, he was chief operating officer at Gibson Brands Inc.. He also spent 11 years in-house at Newegg, the last four as chief legal officer and senior vice president. In that role, he handled legal affairs and oversaw litigation strategy for the global online retailer, gaining experience in IP and transactional matters. He has also worked as an attorney at Latham & Watkins LLP.

"I was trained as a corporate lawyer, and it wasn't until I went in-house that much to my surprise, the work at those companies, at Newegg, pulled me into the litigation world and IP world," he said.

Most recently, Cheng served as managing counsel for The Webb Law Firm, one of the oldest IP firms in the country. But as the sole West Coast attorney at the Pittsburgh-based firm, Cheng said, he started to miss the social aspect of working and needed a change from constant travel demands of in-house life.

Cheng described his new position at Maschoff Brennan as the "best of both worlds." He said Maschoff Brennan was the "type of outside counsel I hired when I was chief legal officer" and said he did not want move to "one of the really large behemoth firms" where attorneys can get "lost."

"I wanted to be part of an environment that felt like many of the startup companies, technology companies, the high-growth companies that I have worked at and represented in my former career in private practice. The Orange County office at Maschoff held a great appeal to me," Cheng said.

Cheng, now tasked with growing Maschoff's corporate transactions practice, added that his experience in-house has helped him develop a "pretty deep understanding of what clients want, what clients need and how to keep clients happy."

According to Harris, the firm is looking to make "strategic hires in the near future" both in the downtown LA office, where Barquist is stationed, and in Cheng's corporate practice area.

"The firm itself, it wants to grow. I wouldn't have joined otherwise," Cheng said.

--Editing by Stephen Berg.