

Director of United States Patent and Trademark Office Kathi Vidal to Rejoin Winston & Strawn

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Washington, D.C. & Silicon Valley, CA – November 18, 2024 – Winston & Strawn LLP announced today that Kathi Vidal will rejoin the firm’s Litigation Department as a partner in the firm’s Silicon Valley and Washington, D.C. offices and as a member of the Executive Committee after stepping down from her role as Undersecretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). Kathi will rejoin Winston on December 16, 2024.

As Director of the USPTO, America’s Innovation Agency, Kathi has been driving and protecting United States innovation and interests in the U.S. and abroad. While leading the \$4.2B operation with over 14,000 employees located across the 50 states and Puerto Rico, she made unprecedented progress in reshaping the USPTO for the benefit of all Americans. Serving as advisor to the President of the United States and administration on intellectual property and as a senior Commerce official, Kathi worked across government on key U.S. policy relating to AI, innovation, technological standards, and key international agreements and relationships, including China.

“It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve the American public by working alongside my incredible colleagues across government and leading the thousands of talented and dedicated employees at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office,” said Kathi. “I made the decision to rejoin Winston because of its incredible team and culture which is well-positioned to handle the issues of the future. I look forward to supporting the firm’s clients with the same passion and advocacy I brought to government service.”

One of the country’s leading patent litigators, Kathi is nationally recognized for leading and trying high-profile IP disputes. Upon her return to Winston, in addition to litigating high-stakes IP disputes, she will also focus her practice on assisting clients in maintaining a leading edge in critical innovations, such as artificial intelligence and next-generation semiconductors.

“There has never been a more pivotal time for leadership in protecting advances in innovation,” said Linda Coberly and Tom Melsheimer, Litigation Department co-chairs. “We are thrilled to welcome Kathi back to our world-class practice as we continue to guide our clients through the challenges and opportunities raised by generative AI, digital transformation, and the disruptions that accompany major advances in technology and geopolitical pressure.”

“We could not be happier to welcome Kathi home to Winston,” said Chairman Steve D’Amore. “Kathi’s leadership is evident not only in her outstanding tenure at the USPTO, but in the respected IP litigation capability she built at

Winston and her long-standing advocacy for inclusive innovation and opportunities for all. Her decision to rejoin Winston speaks to the high caliber of our people and a culture singularly focused on collaboration and extraordinary client service. We look forward to benefitting from Kathi's leadership experience."

During Kathi's tenure at the USPTO, she co-chaired the [National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship \(NACIE\)](#), creating the first-ever [National Entrepreneurship Strategy](#). She also served as the Vice Chair of the [Council for Inclusive Innovation \(CI2\)](#), releasing the first-ever [National Strategy for Inclusive Innovation](#). Alongside Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, she launched the [Women's Entrepreneurship \(WE\) initiative](#), and founded [Entrepreneurship Essentials for the Military Community](#) and a start-up certification program to protect U.S. innovation from being offshored. Through her leadership, the USPTO has successfully influenced policies, regulations, and legislation in other countries and multilaterally to support U.S. companies and innovation and to reduce barriers for global IP protection. She also worked with Congress and in the courts, including the Federal Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court, to advance clear laws that incentivize and protect U.S. innovation. She has been listed as one of the top 50 Women in AI and one of the top 50 IP leaders globally, and she has been featured in [Forbes](#), [Fortune](#), [TechCrunch](#), and many IP trade publications for her extensive knowledge in AI and innovation policy.

Winston partners have a proud and long-standing tradition of accepting leading roles in public service, with many rejoining the firm following their stints in the government. Kathi's announcement follows on the heels of Julissa Reynoso rejoining the firm earlier this year after having served as Ambassador to Spain and Andorra and as Chief of Staff to First Lady Dr. Jill Biden.

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