Washington’s Top 40 Under 40: Scott M. Kelly Recognized as “DC Rising Star” by National Law Journal

Banner Witcoff’s Scott M. Kelly is named a “DC Rising Star” in the National Law Journal’s 2023 Legal Awards, recognizing him as one of the region’s 40 most promising lawyers age 40 and under.

The National Law Journal’s legal awards “highlights lawyers who have wielded influence in their practice areas in the D.C. area and beyond.” Recipients are considered innovators who have built unique practice niches, secured wins for clients, built robust books of business and possess strong leadership qualities. The firms and attorneys recognized stood out for their “work guiding clients through high-stakes litigation, their cutting-edge approaches to environmental, social and corporate governance issues, as well as their diversity and inclusion initiatives.”

In his National Law Journal profile, Scott outlines how he and the Banner team helped cybersecurity company Centripetal Networks develop an industry-leading cyber security patent portfolio regarding packet filtering technology. Scott is also the firm’s patent prosecution team lead for credit card and banking titan, Capital One.

When asked about working with Scott, Sean Moore, CTO of Centripetal, said in the award submission: “Scott is more than just an intellectual property attorney; he is a trusted advisor. He invests heavily in understanding our business goals and complex technologies and incorporates that knowledge into our patents. He explains the nuances of patent law in easy-to-understand terms so that we can make the best business decisions regarding our patent portfolio. He doesn’t just understand the legal issues—he takes the time to understand our technology innovations, our business, our markets, and our competitors to achieve the best results.”

Scott credits the many mentors he’s had in his career for helping him get where he is, and aims to pay it forward so that others can have the same opportunities. Scott actively works with UVA law students to offer his guidance on careers in patent law. And he recently began mentoring startup

founders at Virginia Tech through the cs/root program. He is active in educating the next generation of lawyers, having served as an adjunct professor at American University's Washington College of Law. He currently serves as a Den Leader with his local Cub Scout pack, teaching youth the value of giving to their community through service projects and civic engagement.

The full list of the 2023 National Law Journal's Legal Awards can be found by clicking here.

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NLJ AWARDS: PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

DC RISING STARS

Banner & Witcoff



Scott Kelly
Senior Shareholder

Describe your biggest win or accomplishment in practice.

I got involved with Centripetal when they were still a smaller client and had not pursued their case against Cisco. When the stakes were raised by litigation and an initial record-setting verdict, the client continued to turn to me for strategic counseling, portfolio development, and to defend their patents at the USPTO. Knowing that I was a trusted advisor they turned to when dealing with the most significant battle of their company's life was incredible confirmation. We were able to achieve wins in IPRs confirming patentability of two key patents from their litigation last year.

What was the most valuable lesson you learned in your first year practicing law?

Always take ownership of any matter you work on. Strive to develop a full picture of how it fits into the larger strategy or advances the client's goals, then focus that understanding into crafting work product that achieves those goals.

Who is your greatest lawyer mentor and what has he or she taught you?

Brad Wright – the sharpest lawyer I've ever met. Brad treated me as a peer from the start. He taught me to question and prod in search of a complete argument, to not hesitate in challenging others when something felt off.

Please share a brief key to your success.

Earning my clients' trust is extremely important to me. They know I'm supported by a strong team, but trust comes from owning every aspect of their issue.

Posted: September 18, 2023