



Karen Dow



Even though Karen Dow is one of the country's leading biotech patent attorneys, she didn't like lab work that much in college.

"I majored in chemistry and biology, but then started thinking about what I could do with that education," said Dow, a partner in the San Diego office of Sughrue Mion, PLLC, where she focuses on patent prosecution and client counseling.

"I thought I could go to business school, but decided on law school, mainly because I didn't enjoy the lab work but liked the science. I learned about patent law as a student at Indiana University Law School and heard about a clerkship in patent law in Midland, Michigan. I was the only one in my class who probably qualified for it, so I applied, got the clerkship and thoroughly enjoyed it."

Born near Pittsburgh and raised outside Cleveland, Dow became the only lawyer in her family. She has specialized in patent work since 1979 as in-house counsel for firms such as Eli Lilly and Co. and Triton Biosciences, as well as major law firms. She joined Washington, D.C.-based Sughrue's La Jolla office as a partner in 2009.

In her chosen role, she helps clients obtain patents in biotech areas such as vaccines, cancer treatments, AIDS diagnostics, immunology, molecular biology, stem cells, bioinformatics, bioarray technology, microbiology, pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and organic chemistry.

Her work includes all phases of patent prosecution, including preparing and prosecuting original patent applications and reissue applications for domestic and foreign companies.

She also has extensive experience in patent interferences, due-diligence investigations, and intellectual property transactions such as licensing, collaboration, research and other types of agreements.

"I'm heavily involved in educating clients about patent laws, especially the new patent reform act," she said. "Sughrue is very well-known on the East Coast, but I'm involved in building more recognition on the West Coast, where our San Diego office has been located for about five years."

Dow likes to encourage women in law, the biotech industry and business in general. She credits female relatives for instilling that trait:

"The women in my family certainly influenced me, although none of them were professionals, just strong women. They influenced my drive and success. I mentor and have mentored men and women

over the years. I'm active in Athena San Diego (a leadership and training organization for women). I'm also on the board of directors of CONNECT (a group that fosters entrepreneurship for men and women), which involves a different kind of mentoring and cooperation. I like helping entrepreneurs and new businesses, with an emphasis on technologies."

She also is active in Lawyers Club of San Diego, which seeks to advance the status of women in the law and society, and in the San Diego Women's Foundation, a philanthropic organization.

One of the first women in her family to earn a college degree, she learned the value of hard work early.

"I started working in high school at 16 and my first job was selling bakery goods in a retail store. During college I worked



in an automotive parts packing plant for four summers, and I certainly learned that an education would give me opportunities that were different from those experiences. It reinforced my decision to obtain a greater education.

"I think women have to be very persistent and focused for success, and it does require sacrifice," she said. "Everyone needs to make their own decisions concerning what sacrifices to make for their careers."

"I was not raised to brag about myself, but I was one of the first women partners in patent law, and what I learned was that it takes time and energy to build a career and build a practice. I did the opposite of many attorneys by working at companies first, then at law firms. It was a valuable experience."

In her free time, Dow enjoys theater, music, tennis and pro football. "Not everyone knows this about me, but I'm a very big fan. I used to go to games but now I only watch them on TV. Having grown up in Cleveland, I became very interested in the sport."

~ By Glenn Grant, *The Daily Transcript*

"I think women have to be very persistent and focused for success, and it does require sacrifice."

4250 EXECUTIVE SQUARE, SUITE 900 | LA JOLLA, CA 92037 | PHONE: (858) 795-1180 | WWW.SUGHRUE.COM