

DAILY REPORT

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Adorno & Yoss adds IP partners to grow practice

BY MEREDITH HOBBS

ADORNO & YOSS has beefed up its nascent intellectual property practice with three partners handling patent and trademark prosecution, who formerly practiced together at Troutman Sanders.

Kenneth Southall and **Auma R. Reggy** joined Adorno & Yoss in mid-July. Southall had been lead IP counsel for **GE Consumer & Industrial**, and Reggy came straight from **Troutman Sanders**. **R. Stevan Coursey** joined a month later from **Home Depot**, where he'd been the legal department's head IP counsel.

Their hires follow that of patent prosecutor Carl K. Turk from Merchant & Gould in the spring.

Henry N. "Hank" Adorno, the firm's chairman, said the four make up the core of the firm's patent and trademark prosecution capabilities, which he plans to expand. The firm also plans to grow its IP litigation capabilities, which Adorno said are currently more in trade secrets and copyright than in patent. With the new hires, Adorno & Yoss has about five IP litigators and seven patent and trademark prosecutors, he said.

Southall, a patent prosecutor, practiced at Troutman Sanders, where he was a partner, until going in house at GE about three years ago. "Adorno & Yoss has an excellent platform for the sort of clients that I have represented in the past—large corporate clients that are seeking to have more diverse outside attorneys representing them," said Southall, who is African-American. He noted that his new firm is the largest U.S. law firm to be certified as minority-owned by the National Minority Supplier and Development Council.

Southall had worked closely with Reggy at Troutman and recruited her to Adorno & Yoss' emerging



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From left: Stevan Coursey, Ken Southall and Auma Reggy have joined Adorno & Yoss' IP practice.

IP practice. "Having her as part of the team was critical," he said. "She is an exceptional trademark attorney."

Reggy specializes in trademarks and copyrights and will develop that area at Adorno & Yoss. "The opportunity to come in and build a practice with me having a lot of leadership responsibility was very attractive," said Reggy, who became a partner upon joining Adorno.

She spent almost eight years at Troutman after a stint as a trademark examiner at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

"It's the next step in my career. Adorno gave me exactly the kind of fit I needed. It's a place where I have the autonomy to grow and develop business the way I know how," she said.

A native of Kenya, Reggy said large corporate clients with an interest in diversity have become part of her practice, so becoming a member of the nation's largest certified minority-owned firm was appealing. "When I visited the firm, I saw a lot of women who looked like me, and I felt I could be a stakeholder or a mentor for them," she said.

Reggy said she brought clients, both companies and people in the music and entertainment fields, but declined to name them.

Coursey, a patent prosecutor, said he and Southall became close friends after seven years of practicing together at Troutman, where he also worked closely with Reggy. Southall was a groomsman in his wedding, Coursey added.

"Adorno & Yoss offered me a fabulous opportunity to be a central cog in the start-up of its IP organization," said Coursey. "As soon as Ken called me, I said, 'Where do I sign up?'"

He said Adorno & Yoss' entrepreneurial spirit appealed to him. "I'd been in private practice for 14 years and decided that I preferred that to being in-house," he said.

Coursey left Troutman for Gardner Groff Greenwald & Villanueva in 2004, started his own firm and then went in house at Home Depot about a year and a half ago. He said he brings several longstanding clients with him to Adorno & Yoss, but declined to name them. ☎