



## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Top Lawyers 2023



### SONAL N. MEHTA

WILMERHALE | PALO ALTO

Litigation

WilmerHale partner Sonal N. Mehta was always interested in science and technology, but it was as a law student at UC Berkeley that she began to explore the intersection between science and law.

"I grew up with a mom who worked in the medical field and a dad who has a Ph.D. in physics, so I was surrounded by science and technology from a young age," said Mehta, the vice chair of WilmerHale's litigation and controversy department in Palo Alto. At UC Berkeley School of Law, said Mehta, intellectual property and technology law has been an integral part of the academic environment. "It was a large part of what people thought about and talked about, and that was ultimately what cemented my interest in IP law," she explained.

Mehta has been practicing intellectual property law in Silicon Valley for almost 20 years and finds it exciting and fulfilling to work in a field that she describes as helping to protect innovation. The attorney always says one thing to young attorneys considering practicing intellectual property or technology law: "You don't have to have a life sciences or science and technology background to do this," said Mehta. "A lot of people that do this job very well, practicing IP litigation at the very highest levels of our profession, don't have advanced degrees or even undergraduate degrees in STEM," she added. What attorneys should have instead, said Mehta, is a willingness to learn from the people around them.

Regularly recognized as one of the top intellectual property lawyers in the country, Mehta has a demonstrated record of getting results for her clients. For example, she headed the WilmerHale team defending IonPath, a life sciences startup founded by three Stanford University professors and a postdoctoral student, when it was sued by laboratory manufacturing company Fluidigm, now known as Standard BioTools.

Mehta and her team were able to obtain a summary judgment of noninfringement on some claims and a

dismissal of the rest of the claims against IonPath in 2021, and Fluidigm's appeal was dismissed the following year. "It's something I'm very proud of because it was a company that didn't have the experience dealing with complex IP issues but needed a team to come in and help them navigate the litigation," said Mehta. "It was very fast-paced and high stakes," she added.

Mehta also represented The Walt Disney Co. and Marvel in a patent infringement case filed against it by computer graphics company Rearden LLC in 2022. In a win for the defendants this February, Mehta convinced the court that Rearden's claims were invalid as a matter of law.

As intellectual property litigation at WilmerHale continues to grow, Mehta hopes the firm continues to do exactly what it is doing. "I think we have a true marquee intellectual property practice across all of our offices . . . and I hope we will continue on that trajectory over the next five to 10 years."

—Sunidhi Sridhar