

WilmerHale Partners Showcase Thought Leadership During Fordham IP Conference

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On April 8th and 9th, WilmerHale intellectual property and IP litigation partners joined an international lineup of prominent judges, government officials, academics and private practitioners for the 23rd Annual Fordham Intellectual Property Conference, held for only the second time at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom.

WilmerHale IP Department Chair Don Steinberg spoke at a well-attended session on patent priority rights. Following a presentation on priority issues by a UK attorney, Steinberg gave the US perspective, stating that priority issues in the United States are more likely to arise from intervening prior art or the possibility of a previous publication of a patent invalidating a later version than from issues of ownership. Patentees face particularly acute issues, said Steinberg, when a provisional (or other priority) application is not as detailed as a later utility application, and does not disclose all elements of the claims. Wolters Kluwer's respected Kluwer Patent Blog highlighted Steinberg's insights in its Fordham Conference 2015 series.

IP Litigation Partner Trevor Cook drew on his 35 years of global patent litigation experience to address the challenge posed by the duplication of IP rights in Europe. Cook's speech raised the question famously posed by the late Sir Hugh Laddie, former UK High Court judge, as to whether Europe's complex system of IP protection, which preserves national IP rights while also providing for EU-wide unitary rights, is a "moribund anachronism."

"The Fordham IP Conference is an important opportunity for us to demonstrate thought leadership at the cutting edge of IP in an international environment," says Cook, who notes that the event's format—with its intense, audience-led debates and its combination of international-level practitioners, in-house counsel, academics and judges—make it a uniquely valuable forum.

WilmerHale sponsored the 2015 Fordham IP Conference, which also drew other firm participants, including Palo Alto-based IP Litigation Co-Chair Mark Selwyn, London-based IP Litigation Partner Anthony Trenton, Partner-in-Charge of WilmerHale's London Alder Castle office Joe Pillman, and Boston-based IP Partner Dr. Mary Rose Scozzafava.