



BIOTECH STAR



Barbara Johnson: Backing Breakthroughs in Biotech

[By Jini Maxin Fernandez]

"IP issues can make or break any start-up or any company. They are so profound in business that one has to regard them as matters of life and death, and approach them by triage," says Barbara Johnson. Barbara is a biotech IP law expert, with almost 27 years of experience in biotech patents, and our star profile this week. Barbara Johnson's name figures in the Marquis company publications *Who's Who of American Women*, *Who's Who of Industry and Finance*, and *Who's Who in America*. In 2004, Johnson received the Grove City College Jack Kennedy Memorial Alumni Achievement Award.

In addition to law, Johnson also majored in biology and chemistry at Grove City College, which is located in Pennsylvania. At Grove City College, she was elected Beta Beta Beta at the Biological Sciences Honorary Society. After graduating with a B.S in 1979, Johnson went on to study law at the College of William and Mary's Marshall-Wythe School of Law in Williamsburg, Virginia. She received her J.D. in 1984.

She started her career as a patent agent at the NASA-Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia. She joined the Webb law firm in 1984, and shattered the glass ceiling by first becoming a director and then the vice president of the firm. Her practice areas include intellectual property related to chemical and medical products and processes, along with a tidy bit of IP licensing and enforcement. She supports clients in developing new products, discovering new technologies, and protecting their patents, trademarks, and copyright interests in medical research, chemistry, and health care.

In love with her profession, Johnson has authored numerous articles and delivers frequent presentations on biotechnology

and intellectual property law. Her published works include "How Many Lawyers Can Balance on the Head of a DNA Chip?" (*Biotechnology Law Report*, June 2002), and "Utility Plant Patents-A Practical Introduction" (*Biotechnology Law Report*, October 2002). A prolific writer, her other published works include:

- "Trademarks: Evolving Law, Practice and The Lollipop Lady," 71 *J.P.T.O.S.* 759, 1989
- "A Practical Guide to the Festo Case," (Co-Author with David C. Hanson), *The Practical Lawyer* reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Bar Association Intellectual Property Law* Section newsletter, Spring 2003, Vol. 7, No. 1.
- "Seven Strategic Initiatives Against Restriction Requirements." *Intellectual Property Today*, December 2005.

In the course of her career, Johnson has served as president of the Pittsburgh Intellectual Property Law Association and chaired the Pittsburgh section of

the American Chemical Society. She is a founding member of Impact Pittsburgh, a long-range planning initiative sponsored in part by the United Way of Western Pennsylvania.

But Barbara's love of her profession has not made her career-obsessed, or oblivious to the world around her. Johnson involves herself actively in social work and advocates for foundation initiatives offering gender-specific drug-and-alcohol treatments for nonviolent female offenders. An accomplished classical pianist and vocalist, she serves as a director for the annual piano competition sponsored by the the Steinway Society of Western Pennsylvania and is past chair of the Obershenk Medallion Trust, a foundation providing professional development resources to exceptionally gifted singers. Barbara Johnson has cultured an achievement profile that very few ever attain – a perfect combination of sciences and arts ruled over by law.

ON THE NET

Barbara E. Johnson, Director and Vice President

www.webblaw.com/bios/Johnson.htm

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