

Daily Journal

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Top Women Lawyers 2018

*The Daily Journal's Annual List of
Leading Women Lawyers in California*

Sarah E. Piepmeier

Piepmeier represents key technology companies in high-stakes intellectual property disputes. Often at issue are semiconductors, wireless standards, online video games, social networking, electronic books, antivirus and encryption software, hard drives, computer e-learning, relational databases and data aggregation, laser etching, high-voltage switchgears and various home appliances. She has successfully resolved otherwise business-crippling matters across multiple U.S. courts and administrative tribunals.

"I'm self-taught in computer science," she said. In the 1990s, before she went to law school, she worked at a law firm designing large-scale databases. "When I see software or video game cases today, they often come down to relations between database structures," Piepmeier said.

For San Jose-based client Cisco Systems Inc., she and a Kirkland team achieved multiple wins against Arista Networks Inc. of Santa Clara in several International Trade Commission proceedings and trials. The ITC issued exclusion orders finding that Arista infringed multiple Cisco patents prohibiting Arista from importing products containing the technology into the U.S. The team also convinced the ITC that Arista engaged in widespread copying of Cisco's technology and was an intentional infringer. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit af-



firmed the ITC's decision in September in the first case; appeals from the second case are ongoing. *In re Certain Network Devices, Related Software and Components Thereof (I & II)*, 337-TA-944 and 337-TA-945 (ITC, filed Aug. 26, 2016).

"The 944 case had a remand hearing in January," Piepmeier said. She was first chair and led Cisco's successful defense against Arista's equitable defenses and standards arguments. She also led Cisco's responses to Arista's submissions to the U.S. Trade

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Practice Type:
Intellectual property litigation

Representative, which defeated Arista's request for a veto of the ITC's exclusion orders. "We expect a decision in June. I was able to persuade the commission to remand the case to the [administrative law judge]. We won a number of patent disputes on Arista's original designs. Then Arista redesigned their product, and that is what we are still litigating. Based on some accounts, these cases strike to the heart of Arista's products. It is a serious matter for Cisco."

Piepmeier said her computer science background helps her translate technical jargon into language people can understand. "A lot of material in these cases is written in ways that are technically correct but incomprehensible," she added. "I look at it from a more accessible level of abstraction."

When she looks back at the arc of her career from designing databases to litigating cases, "It's been quite a leap," she said. "Everything I've learned adds another layer of challenge to what I do."

— John Roemer