HUSCH BLACKWELL

Stephen Gardner

PARTNER

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OVERVIEW

Steve helps clients navigate the full lifecycle of innovation, from advising on R&D-related activities, to patent drafting and prosecution, to negotiating IP licenses and other transactions.

Steve brings a dual focus to intellectual property matters, handling both patent prosecution and IP transactions.

While he represents both innovative IP owners, as well as organizations looking to navigate or license others' IP, much of his practice is devoted to clients that research and develop new technologies. These clients include major universities and academic research centers, hospitals and medical schools, pharmaceutical companies, and companies operating under federal grants and contracts.

His services to higher education clients include helping these institutions and their research foundations navigate federal grant funding requirements, industry collaborations, and out-licensing in ways that comply with legal requirements and institutional policies. For example, Steve is deeply familiar with the provisions of the Bayh-Dole Act and its applications to academic research and has drafted license agreements, IP policies, and tech transfer compliance documents for dozens of the nation's top research centers.

His services to corporate clients draw on both his experience in tech transfer licensing and Federal Government contracts. Steve assists corporate clients in navigating IP terms associated with

Industries

Education
Life Sciences

Services

Intellectual Property
Intellectual Property Counseling
Licensing & Tech Transfer
Patent Preparation & Prosecution
Technology Commercialization

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research tools, software, and vendor/subcontractor acquisitions, as well as IP due diligence in large transactions. Early in his career, Steve gained significant experience in IP and federal contract-related litigation, which he now draws upon to counsel clients on practical risks and potential remedies relating to their IP transactions.

In addition to advising on these agreement-oriented functions, Steve also continues to maintain a significant patent docket. Working with inventors and researchers is a highlight for Steve, who finds it rewarding to support the development of technologies that can have a broad public impact, especially in the healthcare, AI, and cybersecurity fields.

Steve was excited to join Husch Blackwell for its Healthcare, Life Sciences, & Education industry unit, a natural fit for his practice and passions that offers the opportunity to collaborate with a team focused on similar clients and challenges. Steve is also enthusiastic about the growing role of artificial intelligence in both the technologies being patented and the patent process itself, and he values the firm's in-house Data Science team and commitment to innovation in this area.

Clients value Steve's ability to balance creativity and practicality and appreciate the time he takes to fully understand their businesses and goals for their IP. By keeping both prosecution and transactional needs in mind, Steve helps clients protect and leverage their innovations effectively.

Experience

- Negotiated royalty buyout and technology acquisition in major ~$200M transaction.
- Routinely represent universities and research institutions in technology transfer and related agreements, including patent licenses, data sharing/licensing, sponsored research and material transfer agreements.
- Represent top pharmaceutical companies in technology transfer, licensing, and co-development agreements.
- Drafted and negotiated master research services agreement between international company and non-profit research center to create and support new $50M collaborative technology center.
- Successfully drafted and prosecuted multiple large patent portfolios in software and medical device technologies to allowance, often with claims coordinated to royalty provisions of associated license agreements.

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Experience

- Represented petitioners and patent owners in inter partes review proceedings before the USPTO.
- Represented research institution and licensee in successful patent enforcement program involving 13 defendants and six patent infringement cases.

Recognition

- *The Legal 500 United States*
  - Wisconsin Elite, Intellectual Property, 2026
  - Healthcare: Life sciences, Recommended lawyer, 2026

Education

- J.D., Marquette University Law School
  - *cum laude*
- B.S., Michigan State University
  - Computer Engineering

Admissions

- Wisconsin
- District of Columbia
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Federal Circuit
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois
- U.S. Court of Federal Claims
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

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Clerkships

- Honorable Edward J. Damich, United States Court of Federal Claims

Community Leadership

Steve values pro bono work and most recently assisted with an asylum project for Afghan immigrants in Wisconsin, helping them secure refugee status.



The Legal 500 United States

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