

Technology Group Of The Year: WilmerHale

By **Amanda James**

Law360 (February 21, 2019, 3:53 PM EST) -- WilmerHale's technology group has distinguished itself as a leader among firms, from preparing Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg to appear before Congress, to helping Apple settle a seven-year battle against Samsung for allegedly copying parts of the iPhone design, earning it a spot among Law360's Technology Groups of the Year.

The technology practice group is made up of about 300 attorneys who represent leaders of high-profile technology companies at a time when their innovative ideas often conflict with those of lawmakers.

"We help bridge the gap between Silicon Valley and Washington," said Reginald Brown, a partner who has been at WilmerHale for 14 years. "Silicon Valley companies are often disruptors on the technology side and Washington is about rules and the rules favor the status quo, so helping the disruptors talk to the establishment is an important skill and one that our attorneys have."

Brown prepared Zuckerberg to speak before Congress in April on topics ranging from alleged Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election to questions about data privacy safeguards. Working with well-known technology clients means his work on issues can set the needle for how smaller companies will handle those issues.

"If a company is on the bleeding edge of a privacy question, their experience dealing with it in one instance can lead to lessons that are transferable," Brown said.

Brown also noted that tech companies move quickly, and "they're very hands-on."

"They expect their lawyers to be conversant about their business, flexible, and hyper responsive," he added.

WilmerHale's technology practice group represents other high-profile tech companies, too, including Apple.

Partners Bill Lee, Mark Selwyn and Joe Mueller were lead attorneys representing Apple in a seven-year



dispute with Samsung over design patents related to the iPhone's appearance, which led to Apple being awarded \$538.6 million. The firm declined to comment on the case.

WilmerHale attorneys also advise technology companies on important business decisions. Last year, partner Mick Bain worked with Casa Systems, a Massachusetts-based network infrastructure company to advise them in the process of going public.

Launching an IPO, which used to be more common for technology companies, is now rare, because most technology companies are acquired by larger companies.

"That's important, because that's the way you can become an independent market leader, such as companies like Cisco and Intel, companies that are now household names," Bain said.

Casa stock began trading on Dec. 15, 2017, and the company was valued at the time at almost \$1.2 billion.

Bain said his work as a technology attorney has changed throughout the course of his 25-year career at WilmerHale. Now he's presented with new challenges. One area he's seen evolve is patient health. Patients can now connect with doctors and pharmacists online, and a lot of personal data is collected.

"It creates a big opportunity for people to do things with that data that they shouldn't, and those are issues our clients grapple with all the time and they come to us for those expertise," Bain said.

Bain said he sees the challenges as opportunities and is looking forward to continuing to grapple with the challenges that being in a practice group based on innovation creates.

--Additional reporting by Ryan Davis. Editing by Nicole Bleier.