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Haynes & Boone Merges With Calif. IP Boutique

By **Abigail Rubenstein**

Law360, New York (February 04, 2009) -- Texas-based Haynes and Boone LLP has expanded into California, swallowing intellectual property boutique MacPherson Kwok Chen & Heid LLP's Silicon Valley and Orange County offices.

With the 21 MacPherson Kwok attorneys and six patent professionals who joined the firm Feb. 2, Haynes and Boone boosted its ranks to nearly 550 lawyers in 12 offices worldwide.

David McCombs, firmwide chair of Haynes and Boone's technology practice, told Law360 that the merger was "a natural extension of our long-term relationship with Alan MacPherson and his team."

McCombs noted that the MacPherson Kwok group's "deep technical capabilities, combined with our comfort with the way they manage their business and quiet relationships, and their long-standing great reputation in the IP community," made them an ideal choice to launch Haynes and Boone's California outposts.

Expansion into California to make the firm bicoastal had long been a part of Haynes and Boone's long-term growth strategy, and talks between the two firms began in the summer of 2008 and progressed despite the death of MacPherson Kwok's founder Alan MacPherson before the acquisition was completed.

"This is a great opportunity for us and our clients, given commonality among some key clients and our keen desire to serve those on the West Coast," Haynes and Boone's managing partner Terry Conner said in a statement announcing the firm's combination with MacPherson Kwok.

All seven of the MacPherson Kwok partners have joined Haynes and Boone, including name partners Tom Chen and Edward C. Kwok, each of whom has a master's degree in

electrical engineering, and partners Jonathan Hallman, Jennifer Lantz, Steve Levitan, Greg Michelson and Clark Stone.

“As we sought a stable, multidisciplinary platform to expand our client services, Haynes and Boone frankly became the obvious best choice,” Chen said in a statement. “We share a common philosophy of result-oriented personal service. Our people are excited about becoming part of the Haynes and Boone culture of teamwork.”

Haynes and Boone plans to continue to grow its West Coast offices into full service branches, and Paul Searles, a partner currently based in Dallas, will move to California to serve as liaison to the new offices.

McCombs noted that Haynes and Boone is able to grow at a time when many firms are contracting because the firm manages its finances conservatively, which gives it the power to sustain itself in changing markets.

McCombs also said that the firm's IP practice was “growing and very healthy,” as are other areas of the firm. He pointed out that the firm believes that a core IP practice that includes transactions, patent prosecution and strategic development will continue to be essential to high-tech companies in 2009 and beyond, so the firm will continue to grow these areas of its technology practice to serve its clients.

While declining to give details, McCombs said that the firm would continue with its plans for expansion and was “carefully evaluating a variety of growth opportunities, but not growth for growth's sake.”