



## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Top Lawyers 2023



### VERN NORVIEL

WILSON SONSINI GOODRICH & ROSATI  
SAN FRANCISCO, SAN DIEGO,  
BOULDER & BOSTON

IP Counseling, Patent Strategies & Innovation

industry, and Norviel credits Uruguayan entrepreneur Alejandro Zaffaroni, who founded several Silicon Valley companies in the 1980s, with showing him the ins and outs of the field.

Zaffaroni was “one of the most prolific ‘company formation’ people in the industry, so I was able to work on projects for some of his companies as a young lawyer,” Norviel said. Speaking about Zaffaroni’s contributions to areas including oncology and immunobiology, the attorney said, “It was largely because of the passion of Alex and the people I saw around him that [the work in biotechnology] seemed to be important with a capital ‘I’ instead of a small ‘i.’”

Since his start in intellectual property law, Norviel has counseled several high-profile companies. For example, he advised Verve Therapeutics, a biotechnology company focused on cardiovascular disease, on intellectual property aspects before its June 2021 initial public offering, which sold more than 14 million shares and raised nearly \$270 million.

Norviel also advised Good Therapeutics Inc., an immuno-oncology company, in its \$250 million acquisition by its acquisition by Swiss healthcare company Roche. The merger of the two companies was announced last September.

“If you’re a small company, you have to hire the best. It really does matter and investors and acquirers really care about IP,” said Norviel. As these companies grow, Norviel said he always encourages them “to hire the best in-house [counsel] because IP is such an essential part of their value equation.”

For attorneys and businesspeople like himself in biotechnology, Norviel said, “It’s a little bit of a religion for us as opposed to just work.” As the life sciences intellectual property practice at Wilson Sonsini continues to grow, the attorney is grateful “to work with all these smart people on things that are going to help treat cancer or other diseases. It makes you feel good to be going home.”

—Sunidhi Sridhar

When Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati partner Vern A. Norviel accepted a job offer in intellectual property law over 30 years ago, he was embarrassed to tell his friends about working in what was then known as a “backwater practice.”

“Obviously, things have changed dramatically,” said Norviel, who has been with Wilson Sonsini’s intellectual property and patent groups since 2003. The attorney mainly advises clients in the biotechnology