

Esther M. Kepplinger

CHIEF PATENT COUNSELOR

Patents and
Innovations

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FOCUS AREAS

Intellectual Property
Life Sciences
Patents and Innovations

EXPERIENCE

Esther Kepplinger is Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati's chief patent counselor. Her responsibilities include serving as the firm's liaison to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO), ensuring that all of its patent filings are conducted in the most efficient and defensible manner, and enhancing the firm's *inter partes* PTO practice.

Prior to joining the firm in 2005, Esther served as Deputy Commissioner for Patent Operations at the PTO in Alexandria, Virginia, for five years. As Deputy Commissioner, she oversaw the nation's patent-examination process, with all the patent examiners in the United States reporting to her. Esther managed a budget of \$700 million and was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the country's seven patent technology centers, including about 4,500 people. During her tenure, patent applications increased dramatically and, in 2004, the PTO received more than 350,000 patent applications and granted around 170,000 patents. Esther also played a pivotal role in establishing the policies and strategic direction of the patent examining corps, helping to implement the PTO's goals for improving quality and efficiency of service. With the PTO since 1973, Esther has held a variety of other positions, including patent examiner and supervisor for a biotechnology art unit and group director for the chemical and materials engineering group. While at the PTO, Esther received a number of awards, including the Presidential Rank Award in 2002 and the Department of Commerce Gold Medal in 2004.

CREDENTIALS

Education

- Certificate in Advanced Public Management, Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, 1999
- Two Years Graduate Study, Biochemistry, Indiana University of Pennsylvania 1971-1973
- B.S., Biology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 1971

Associations and Memberships

- Member, Patent Public Advisory Committee, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
- Member, American Intellectual Property Law Association
- Member, Editorial Advisory Board, *World Patent Information*, published by Elsevier

Honors

- Included in *Intellectual Property Today's* "Who's Who in IP," 2001

Admissions

- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office