

Deborah M. Smith

PARTNER

Patents and
Innovations
San Diego

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FOCUS AREAS

Intellectual Property
Life Sciences
Patents and Innovations

EXPERIENCE

Deborah Smith is a partner in the San Diego office of Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati. She assists with the preparation and prosecution of patent applications in the fields of chemistry, pharmaceuticals, and biotechnology.

Prior to joining the firm, Deborah was a medicinal chemist at Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development in San Diego. In this role, she focused on the design and synthesis of organic compounds that modulate the inflammatory and immune response. Deborah received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Irvine, where she developed new synthetic methodologies. She went on to work as a postdoctoral researcher at Columbia University, where she developed novel catalytic carbon-carbon bond forming reactions. Deborah has co-authored several scientific publications and book chapters, and is a co-inventor on three U.S. patent applications.

CREDENTIALS

Education

- J.D., University of San Diego School of Law, 2016
Summa Cum Laude
- Ph.D., Organic Chemistry, University of California, Irvine, 2006
Recipient, Roche Excellence in Chemistry Award; Johnson & Johnson Graduate Fellowship in Synthetic Organic Chemistry
- B.S., Microbiology, Colorado State University, 2000
University Honors Scholar, Distinguished Scholars Award, Phi Beta Kappa, Minor in Chemistry

Honors

- Recognized among *San Diego Business Journal's* 2025 "Leaders of Influence in Law"
- Named to the 2025 and 2026 Lawdragon "500 X – The Next Generation" lists

Admissions

- State Bar of California
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

INSIGHTS

Select Publications and Presentations

- Co-presenter with D.K. Wiener and J.P. Edwards, "Tricyclic Histamine H₄ Receptor Antagonists," presented at the General Poster Session at the 239th ACS National Meeting, poster MEDI-521, San Francisco, California, March 2010
- Co-author with M.E. Pulling and J.R. Norton, "Tin-Free and Catalytic Radical Cyclizations," 129(4) *Journal of the American Chemical Society* 770-771, 2007

- Co-author with S.R. Shenoy and K.A. Woerpel, "Nucleophilic Additions of Trimethylsilyl Cyanide to Cyclic Oxocarbenium Ions: Evidence for the Loss of Stereoselectivity at the Limits of Diffusion Control," 128(26) *Journal of the American Chemical Society* 8671-8677, 2006
- Co-author with K.A. Woerpel, "Using Stereoelectronic Effects to Explain Selective Reactions of 4-Substituted Five-Membered Ring Oxocarbenium Ions," 6(12) *Organic Letters* 2063-2066, 2004
- Co-author with M.B. Tran and K.A. Woerpel, "Nucleophilic Additions to Fused Bicyclic Five-Membered Ring Oxocarbenium Ions: Evidence for Preferential Attack on the Inside Face," 125(46) *Journal of the American Chemical Society* 14149-14152, 2003

TECHNICAL FLUENCY

Biological Sciences and Biotechnology

- Microbiology

Therapeutics and Drug Discovery

- Antimicrobial Agents
- Drug conjugates
- Small molecule synthesis
- Small molecules

Chemistry and Material Science

- Chemical synthesis
- Chemistry
- Organic chemistry
- Organometallics
- Polymorph
- Process chemistry