

Chris Byrd

SENIOR COUNSEL

Technology
Transactions
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FOCUS AREAS

Biotech
Corporate Governance
Corporate Life Sciences
Emerging Companies and
Venture Capital
Life Sciences
Technology Transactions

EXPERIENCE

Chris Byrd is senior counsel in the technology transactions practice at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, where he advises leading public and private life sciences companies on a wide range of transactional and corporate matters, including strategic alliances and collaborations, joint ventures, product and technology licenses, copromotion agreements, manufacturing arrangements, and sponsored research arrangements, as well as corporate formations, venture financings, and corporate governance matters.

Chris brings 25 years of experience in the life sciences industry, including nearly two decades previously practicing in the technology transactions group at Wilson Sonsini and more than five years in senior in-house legal roles at Kite Pharma, a Gilead company, and ALX Oncology. His scientific training and senior operating experience enable him to engage efficiently with scientific and business teams as well as senior company management and boards and give him a broad perspective on the legal, business, scientific, and organizational considerations that shape successful strategic transactions and long-term partnerships. He has extensive experience in oncology, with a deep operational understanding of CAR-T therapy, immuno-oncology agents, and antibody-drug conjugates, as well as direct experience with conducting clinical trials and launching products in China.

Prior to rejoining Wilson Sonsini, Chris served as general counsel and corporate secretary of ALX Oncology, a publicly traded clinical-stage immuno-oncology company. As a member of the executive leadership team, he advised senior management and the board on a wide variety of enterprise-level strategic matters. As the company's senior legal officer, his responsibilities included corporate securities and governance, strategic collaborations and general contracting, intellectual property, and all aspects of compliance.

Previously, Chris was senior associate general counsel at Kite Pharma, where he led Kite's corporate legal function. He advised Kite on strategic transactions, business development, alliance management, and commercial contracting during a period of rapid growth following Kite's acquisition by Gilead Sciences. He led or supported more than 20 strategic transactions with an aggregate potential value exceeding \$4 billion and helped manage a portfolio of approximately 50 existing licenses and collaborations. Chris also served as board supervisor of Fosun Kite Biotechnology, Kite's joint venture with Fosun Pharma in China, and supported Fosun Kite's launch of the first CAR-T therapy in China.

Chris began his career as a scientist. He holds a Ph.D. in biology from Caltech, where he worked with Professor Alexander Varshavsky, a pioneer in the then-emerging field of targeted protein degradation.

CREDENTIALS

Education

- J.D., Stanford Law School, 2000
Recipient, Hilmer Oehlmann, Jr. Writing Award

- Ph.D., Biology, California Institute of Technology
Recipient, Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award, Division of Biology
- B.A., Philosophy, and B.S., Molecular Biology, University of Texas
Phi Beta Kappa, Endowed Presidential Scholar

Admissions

- State Bar of California
- Bar of the District of Columbia

MATTERS

Select Matters

- Represented Nanjing Legend in its worldwide collaboration and license agreement with Janssen for BCMA-directed CAR-T therapy, now marketed as CARVYKTI®. The transaction included a \$350 million upfront payment, 50/50 cost and profit sharing, and rights spanning more than 180 countries.
- Represented Alector in its worldwide co-development and option agreement with AbbVie involving two antibody candidates for dementia and neurodegenerative diseases, including a \$205 million upfront payment and 50/50 cost and profit sharing.
- Represented Array BioPharma in transactions involving its MEK-inhibitor program, including licensing and subsequent asset-reversion matters involving Novartis and later collaborations with Pierre Fabre and Ono.
- Represented Carmot Therapeutics in a research collaboration with Amgen that generated the KRAS G12C program that ultimately produced LUMAKRAS®.
- Led Kite Pharma's divestiture to BioNTech of its solid-tumor neoantigen T-cell receptor program and associated clinical manufacturing facility.
- Led the negotiation of Kite's strategic collaboration with Shoreline Biosciences to develop allogeneic iPSC-derived CAR-NK cell therapies, a transaction providing for up to \$2.3 billion in upfront and milestone payments plus royalties and recognized as the 2021 California Life Sciences Strategic Partnership of the Year.