

Volunteer Generous with Intellectual Property Advice

Roger Belfay has become the “go-to” person for intellectual property law questions at the LegalCORPS brief-advice business law clinic in St. Paul. He routinely staffs that clinic on the first Tuesday of each month – and clients with patent, trademark or copyright questions routinely fill his schedule on those days.

Volunteer attorneys at other LegalCORPS business law clinics – and Twin Cities area SCORE business advisers as well – frequently refer clinic clients to those first-Tuesday LegalCORPS clinics in St. Paul. (The drop-in clinics take place from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. every Tuesday at the SCORE chapter office at 176 N. Snelling Avenue, Suite 300 [3rd floor of the Associated Bank Building at Selby & Snelling].)

Belfay has volunteered monthly at the LegalCORPS clinics in St. Paul since they began in 2005 at the since-closed Business Planning Center on University Avenue. He also regularly presents LegalCORPS-sponsored free workshops at the Minneapolis Central Library on “Traps and Pitfalls in Intellectual Property.”

He helps pro bono clients navigate the often thorny course of protecting their intellectual property. For instance, a recent client who had been selling her product for five years learned that another party had begun marketing her product online – with a “patent pending” designation. She learned further that that other party was seeking to secure his own patent for her product.

Belfay provided evidence of his client’s prior sale of the product to the other party’s attorney. The other party’s and his attorney’s “duty of candor” to the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office compelled them to notify the USPTO – which halted the pending patent application. Stopping this “bad actor” pleased Belfay.

He also finds it “personally satisfying” to assist low-income entrepreneurs clients through LegalCORPS who are just starting businesses and still are in a financial position where they cannot afford to hire attorneys.

Belfay has been a registered patent attorney since 2002 and has had a successful solo IP practice since then. Before becoming a registered patent attorney, he had extensive software and electronics engineering experience. As an engineer, he worked on several high level projects for United Defense and Lockheed-Martin. Belfay has a BS in Electrical Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, an MS in Computer Science from Union College, an MBA with focus on Organization from Syracuse University, and a JD from William Mitchell School of Law.



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