

# TRAILBLAZERS

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

### BOB STEINBERG

LATHAM & WATKINS LLP

**PIONEER SPIRIT** Bob Steinberg earned an undergraduate degree in engineering. "In 1982, I met a patent attorney who indicated that the landscape of patents was about to change because of the new Federal Circuit. So I applied to law school rather than get an MBA." After spending time in private practice, he became CEO of a software company called xSides. Fifteen years ago, he returned to Latham to help establish its IP practice.

**TRAILS BLAZED** When the Patent Trial and Appeal Board was promulgated in 2012, Steinberg realized it could be a game changer. "But mistakes were being made by practitioners, and actions by judges could be improved. I called opposing counsel and pitched the idea of a PTAB bar association. They liked the idea, and we invited a small group of similarly minded people to put together a board. We had almost 1,000 members by our inaugural event in February 2016." Steinberg was elected the association's first president. "It's been a wonderful way to get to know fellow practitioners, and we've opened up the dialogue of communications with the PTAB to help the community do an even better job."

**FUTURE EXPLORATIONS** Patents and patent litigation have never been so important. "The PTAB is now becoming where the markets need to figure out if legal barriers to entry are going to hold them up. That's important due to the decreasing barriers to entry posed technologically." Several recent court proceedings, including the TC Heartland case and *SAS Institute v. Michelle Lee*, will have significant impacts. "This is a changing landscape."

