



(L to R): Horacio Gutierrez, Microsoft Corporate VP and Deputy General Counsel in the company's IP and Licensing Group, Emery Harlan, GSH Chairman, Employment Litigator and Client Relationship Partner for Microsoft matters and Brad Smith, Microsoft's General Counsel and EVP of Legal and Corporate Affairs

## Microsoft elevates Gonzalez Saggio & Harlan LLP to its Premier Provider Program for Legal and Corporate Affairs

**GSH the only minority-owned** law firm to participate in Microsoft's program overseeing bulk of software giant's annual legal work; GSH advises Microsoft on patent filings and IP licensing, litigation, contracts, employment matters, venture capital and other areas; GSH joins elite group of AmLaw Top 10 and Top 100 Firms on short list.

Gonzalez Saggio & Harlan LLP has been named a Premier Provider for Legal and Corporate Affairs by Microsoft Corp., placing the minority-owned firm among a handful of leading law firms doing substantive work for the software giant.

GSH is the only minority-owned firm among the dozen law firms currently participating in Microsoft's Premier Provider Program, which controls a significant share of the software giant's annual legal work and budget. It is also one



of the smallest providers in the program, which is comprised primarily of well-known firms in the American Lawyer Top 10, Top 50 and Top 100 globally. Nearly three-quarters of GSH's attorneys are women or minorities.

GSH has been handling a variety of matters for Microsoft since 2009, starting with patent filings and patent licensing transactions. The firm has since expanded its assignment and now advises Microsoft in a

number of other areas, including commercial litigation, technology licensing, contracts, torts, employment matters, and venture capital investments and related transactions.

Founded in 1989, GSH has around 120 lawyers in 16 offices around the U.S. The firm was chosen to join Microsoft's short list of premier legal providers on the basis of its past perfor-

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mance and the ability to provide consistently high service across multiple disciplines. The program seeks not only to ensure overall excellence for Microsoft legal matters but also to control expenses at one of the world's largest in-house legal departments, with more than 1,000 lawyers, professionals and support staff.

Premier providers are picked based on a high degree of proven success; firms must also be nominated to the program by a member of Microsoft's legal or corporate affairs department. The program was originally established in Microsoft's 2005 fiscal year and updated in FY 2010. There is no term limit for participating firms but Microsoft reviews the list biannually – a formal refresh is set to occur on July 1 at the start of the company's 2014 fiscal year.

"Our Premier Provider Program has been a big factor in helping the company optimally manage our large portfolio of legal matters, working with a core group of top-flight firms whom we truly regard as partners in our overall success," said Brad Smith, Microsoft's General Counsel and Executive Vice President of Legal and Corporate Affairs.

"We're delighted to bring Gonzalez Saggio & Harlan into the program," he added. "Since we first started working with the firm four years ago, the relationship has grown steadily and GSH presently is engaged in a broad range of high-value matters – transactional, litigation, intellectual property, workplace and other areas. GSH brings highly skilled, diverse lawyers and a value-driven approach to client service. Their presence in the program makes our entire legal team stronger."

GSH is accustomed to big-firm recognition greater than its size might suggest. In recent years the firm has consistently been named to the list of "Who Represents America's Biggest Corporations" by Corporate Counsel magazine – based on a survey of legal departments at Fortune 100 and Fortune 250 firms. It has also been honored by the National Minority Supplier Development Council, which recognizes certified minority businesses with nationwide capability. The firm's lawyers are regularly cited in top legal

rankings in the Midwest and by practice.

Horacio Gutierrez, Microsoft Corporate Vice President and Deputy General Counsel in the company's IP and Licensing Group, has worked with GSH on patent procurement and related matters since 2010 and said its designation as a premier provider reflected the firm's successful working relationship with Microsoft in multiple areas.

"Gonzalez Saggio & Harlan has done an outstanding job on IP procurement and licensing matters and we were pleased to see that its attorneys were able to take on other types of work," Mr. Gutierrez said. "It's rare to find a high-quality general practice firm of GSH's size and footprint. The firm's lawyers bring great skill and versatility, as well as efficiency in servicing our matters, and their commitment to diversity sets a high bar. GSH quickly established itself as a valuable IP counsel and I'm pleased to see them officially added to the company's premier provider program for the legal department as a whole."

GSH's client roster spans major names in both the corporate and government sectors. Clients include AGL Resources, Du Pont, Harley-Davidson, Johnson Controls, Los Angeles Unified School District, McDonald's, Panasonic Corporation of North America, Prudential, Rockwell Automation, Target, Xerox and other companies.

"We are ecstatic at the firm's inclusion in Microsoft's Premier Provider Program – it places us in rarified company alongside some of the best law firms in the world working on behalf of the one the leading technology companies in the world," said GSH Chairman Emery Harlan, an employment litigator who is also the client relationship partner on Microsoft matters.

"We also realize this is not a lifetime appointment," he added. "Microsoft undertakes a diligent and regular review of its outside counsel and our goal is obviously to sustain and hopefully grow our level of representation in years to come. We congratulate the other firms for their continuing part in the premier provider program and hope they don't mind welcoming an upstart to the group." ■