

## TWIN CITIES COUNSEL TO COUNSEL

### A SPECIAL REPORT

The National Law Journal this week highlights lawyers who serve as outside counsel to some of the top in-house legal teams at companies based in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Twin Cities Counsel to Counsel is a follow-up to our Twin Cities Legal Departments of the Year reports, which we published earlier this year and in 2014. Those reports spotlighted top corporate counsel teams thriving in the region's manufacturing, medical, technology, food, real estate and banking sectors. We focused on legal departments that are performing at exceptional levels in outside-counsel management, corporate compliance, mergers and acquisitions, diversity initiatives and pro bono and community service. Among those companies were 3M Co., Best Buy Co. Inc., Xcel Energy Inc., Supervalu Inc. and Tennant Co. In this week's report, we bring you the lawyers who partner with those companies to close the big deals, meet regulatory demands, provide critical, free legal services to their communities and diversify their workforces. These attorneys practice at law firms rooted in the Twin Cities area. Some of them have worked with their clients for decades and others have forged new relationships as the Twin Cities economy has rebounded.



## JOHN ADKISSON

### PARTNER, FISH & RICHARDSON

Outside counsel to 3M Co., Twin Cities Legal Department of the Year 2014.



Fish & Richardson partner John Adkisson has helped protect 3M Co.'s core technology since 2001, handling high-stakes patent litigation involving ubiquitous products like Post-it notes and reflective sheeting used in road signs.

"It's almost like working for a number of companies, because I get exposed to so many different technology areas," Adkisson said.

In 2013, for example, he helped settle the company's long-running battle with Avery Dennison Corp. over reflective sheeting technology, which involved 13 of 3M's patents at one point. The settlement resolved two 3M patent infringement cases and an Avery antitrust matter.

"It's a big, important product for the company," Adkisson said. He was lead counsel on the two patent cases in the settlement and participated in the antitrust case. 3M's product at issue accounts for about 35 percent of its durable sheeting products business, according to court papers.

The case brought together the talents of Fish & Richardson, which had 344 lawyers, according to the latest National Law Journal survey of the nation's 350 largest law firms, and 3M, which had \$32 billion in sales in 2014.

The long and contentious litigation also spawned a precedent-setting U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruling in 2012. Adkisson wrote the brief for the *3M v. Avery Dennison* appeal.

The ruling clarified the law about what allows a party to file a declaratory-judgment case, which asks the court to rule that the plaintiff is not infringing a patent. The case "continues to be cited to this day," he said.

Adkisson said he's worked on 20 different 3M cases over the years and has "grown up as a lawyer representing 3M."

As has the firm's Minneapolis office. Fish & Richardson, which was originally based in Boston, set up its Twin Cities office in 1994 to serve 3M better, he said.

Adkisson combines sound legal judgment with strategic thinking, said 3M's chief intellectual property counsel Kevin Rhodes. He said he entrusts Adkisson with the company's "most significant IP litigation matters."

—SHERI QUALTERS