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TOP INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAWYERS 2025



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Sharif E. Jacob, a partner in Kecker, Van Nest & Peters' intellectual property and commercial practice groups, has represented leading companies in video streaming, social networking and the app economy in dozens of disputes before U.S. district courts, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, the International Trade Commission and the Patent and Trademark Office.

He joined the firm in 2008 after graduating summa cum laude from UC College

of the Law San Francisco and clerking for then-Chief Judge Mary M. Schroeder of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

"From Judge Schroeder, I learned to take a complex legal and factual record and synthesize it into a bench memo that was clear, succinct and that explained the issues without extraneous details," Jacob said.

Raised in Ohio, Jacob went East to Yale University, where he majored in behavioral neuroscience. "I loved science, and I became fascinated by the intersection of law and technology," he said.

So, he moved West to what was then known as Hastings College of the Law. "At first, all I knew about San Francisco was cable cars, Rice-a-Roni and the Golden Gate Bridge," Jacob said. "What I found was San Francisco's vibrant diversity, and I vowed to live here."

Intellectual property law was frequently on Northern District dockets, and Jacob took judicial externships with District Judge Charles R. Breyer and Magistrate Judge Joseph C. Spero. "I wanted to learn from any of the great Northern District judges, and I learned how incredibly important strategy is in the complicated thicket that is IP law. You have to think seven steps ahead, and I came to love the challenge."

Currently, Jacob is lead trial counsel for Netflix Inc. as it defends against patent challenges filed by Broadcom Corp. He and the Kecker team successfully moved two cases to the Northern District from their original venues in Texas and the Central District of California.

The cases started with 17 patents; Jacob and his team have invalidated 13 of them in court or on inter partes review. In January 2025, Jacob and his Kecker team won a summary judgment motion that eliminated one major patent, which significantly reduced Broadcom's damages claims. *Broadcom Corp. et al. v. Netflix Inc.*, 3:20-cv-04677 (N.D. Cal., filed July 14, 2020).

The patent described "a network adapted to process data," which Jacob analogized to nothing more than the abstract idea of routing information. U.S. District Judge James J. Donato of San Francisco agreed, writing that the concept dates from at least as far back as 1878, comparing the process to the work of a telephone switchboard operator.

The parties recently filed stipulations dismissing the three patents that have not yet been invalidated in the action pending before Judge Donato. Of the 12 patents asserted there, none remain standing.