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Nutter nabs seven-person team from Boston IP law firm

GREG RYAN

Law and Money Reporter
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The Boston law firm Nutter McClennen & Fish LLP has snapped up a seven-person team of intellectual property professionals from Sunstein Kann Murphy & Timbers LLP, including new leaders for its IP and life sciences practice groups.

Steven Saunders and Kathleen Williams joined Nutter on Thursday as co-chairs of the firm's IP department and life sciences group, respectively. Saunders came to Nutter after two decades at Sunstein, a Boston IP law boutique. Williams had been at Sunstein for five years, having joined from the firm that was known as Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP before it merged with Locke Lord LLP in 2015.

Nutter has also brought on partner Jeffrey Klayman, an associate; two lawyers with the "of counsel" title; and a technology specialist. All are Boston-based. Together, the group covers IP issues ranging from patent prosecution to litigation.

Nutter has added several outsiders to lead practice groups over the past year. It hired Seth Berman, a cybersecurity executive, to lead its privacy and data security group; Thomas Curry, formerly the U.S. Comptroller of the Currency, as co-leader of its financial services group; and Morse Barnes-Brown & Pendleton PC attorney Shannon Zollo to lead its mergers and acquisitions practice.

"One of the challenges – and it's a really wonderful challenge to have – is the people we've brought in are *somebody*,"



New Nutter partners (from left to right) Jeffrey Klayman, Kathleen Williams and Steven Saunders.

Nutter managing partner Deborah Manus said. "It seems right if you bring someone like that in, they're going to lead a practice group."

As of early 2018, 13 percent of Nutter's work was IP-related, according to Business Journal research. At that point, the firm had 21 IP lawyers in Massachusetts. Manus called growing the IP practice a strategic priority. "We want to serve the needs of the market," she said. "The alignment with the Boston economy of a high-quality IP practice is perfect."

Sunstein, the firm that Saunders, Williams and their team left, is devoted

almost exclusively to IP work. Saunders and Williams said they were attracted to Nutter's broader platform. "Many times, my clients will ask me questions that go beyond IP," to areas like real estate and employment law, Williams said.

The duo said they began searching for another firm independently of one another. Saunders, who is actively involved in angel investing, said one of the groups he's involved with in that space has regular meetings at Nutter's office. "I can't tell you how many times I've been to the Nutter offices before, because Nutter is at the forefront of startup activities and growing-business activities," he said.