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Volunteer Spotlight: Elisabeth Kasznar Fekete

Shefali Sewak, Sewak & Associates, New Delhi, India

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Elisabeth Kasznar Fekete is Senior Partner and cofounder of Kasznar Leonardos Intellectual Property in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

While studying law, Elisabeth worked for a year as a business interpreter, speaking seven languages. When she took a class and internship in trademark law, the business diversity, vibrancy and subtleties of trademarks motivated her so much that it changed the course of her professional life.

Elisabeth has long been active in INTA. She has attended the Annual Meeting for the past 15 years, and currently serves on the Trademark Reporter Committee, with a focus on its Minders and Solicitors Task Force.

While Elisabeth has enjoyed all the projects and committees in which she has been involved, a source of special satisfaction is her service as chair of the Latin America & Caribbean Subcommittee of INTA's Legislation and Regulation Committee in 2008–2009. Several debates among and extensive research by the members of this Committee resulted in a report titled "Legislative Trends Regarding Trademarks in Latin America: An Outline of Current Bills and the Legislative Process."

Elisabeth feels there are two important issues developing in Brazilian trademark law. The first is the protection of trademarks of high repute against imitation and infringement in areas of activity different from those of the original trademark. Despite the fact that trademarks of high repute enjoy such special protection under a statute enacted in 1996, it is only recently that the Instituto Nacional de Propriedade Industrial (INPI) enacted regulations, which entered into force on March 10, 2014, to speed up the grant of registrations for such trademarks. The second issue is the protection of nonconventional trademarks, which up to now have been protected in Brazil as a form of trade dress, under the law against unfair competition. Once the INPI starts granting such marks registration, nonconventional trademarks will be brought into the realm of trademark law and afforded more effective protection.

Elisabeth's favorite marks include ITAÚ UNIBANCO, used by the largest private bank in Brazil, which currently is expanding throughout Latin America; VIVO, which is owned by Telefónica and is one of the most famous trademarks in the country; and H. STERN, belonging to jewelers who employ the beauty of Brazilian gems in modern designs.

Elisabeth devotes a good deal of time to educating students across a range of business law subjects. She teaches both at the São Paulo Bar Association's Superior School for Attorneys (ESA-OAB/SP) and as Adjunct Professor in the Post Graduation Program in Intellectual Property at Fundação Getúlio Vargas Law School in São Paulo. Having practiced law for over 32 years, Elisabeth finds it rewarding to spend time training younger generations of lawyers.

Writing is one of Elisabeth's passions. She has a number of publications under her belt, including one book and more than 30 published papers and book chapters.

While not working, Elisabeth spends her time learning from and traveling with her husband, who is a chemical engineer, and her two adult children.

Although every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of items in the INTA Bulletin, readers are urged to check independently on matters of specific concern or interest.



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