LeClairRyan offers a broad range of intellectual property services that are particularly focused on the life sciences and biotechnology arts. We regularly assist clients with strategically managing their patent portfolios and work with them to protect and maximize the value of their intellectual property rights. Our team of attorneys, patent agents, and Ph.D. technical specialists offers a full range of intellectual property legal services, including drafting patent applications and prosecuting them through the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; managing foreign patent prosecution; rendering invalidity, non-infringement, and freedom-to-operate opinions; conducting intellectual property due diligence; preparing and negotiating license agreements; conducting inventorship analyses and managing inventorship disputes; and litigating patents in both national and international venues.

We have substantial experience and knowledge in a variety of areas in the life sciences and biotechnology arts. For instance, we have significant experience in new use therapies; vaccine components and their formulations, particularly recombinant vaccine components (e.g. proteins, chimeric polypeptides and virus-like particles); drug delivery formulations for delivery of biological or chemical agents; recombinant and/or modified nucleic acid, peptide, and polypeptide products for therapeutic and diagnostic use; recombinant expression vectors and systems; antibodies and antibody mimics, including immunotherapeutic agents and immunodiagnostic reagents; stem cells, methods for producing stem cells, and therapeutic uses of stem cells; nucleic acid amplification processes; protein purification processes; filtration membranes and their use for purification and cell co-culture; medical devices; diagnostic assays and diagnostic sensor platforms; screening assays for molecule identification; and transgenic organisms, including single celled organisms and multicellular organisms such as plants and animals.

We also possess substantial depth of experience in post-issuance practice (interferences, reexaminations, reissues and oppositions). Our group has handled a number of interferences before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on various biotechnology-related applications and patents, including vaccine components (including proteins and virus-like particles); nucleic acid arrays; transgenic plants with pathogen-derived resistance; replicase-mediated resistance in transgenic plants; microporous membrane filtration products and processes; and pharmaceutical products and formulations. We routinely prosecute reexamination applications as a strategic means to attack a competitor’s patent, either alone or in parallel with patent litigation. We have also utilized reissue applications to broaden or correct an issued patent as well as handle inventorship disputes. In addition, we have worked with foreign counsel in both Europe and Australia to manage opposition proceedings, particularly in cases that involve corresponding U.S. patent disputes.

Our clients range from leading companies to mid-size life sciences companies to start-ups. We have experience working with technology transfer offices of large and small universities as well as the licensees that hold rights in university-owned patents.

Representative members of the group include:

- Michael L. Goldman
- Edwin “Ted” Merkel
- Georgia Evans
- Tate L. Tischner
- Shelley A. Jones
- Carissa Childs, Ph.D.
- Megan L. Thisse
- Amanda L. Connors
- Neelaabh Shankar, Ph.D.
- Hongling Zou, Ph.D.
Michael L. Goldman has prosecuted patent applications on a variety of pharmaceutical and biotechnology matters. His patent work in these industries has included DNA diagnostics, immunoassays, allergy medications, inhibitors of fibroproliferative disorders, vaccines, genomics, DNA molecules from pathogens of human and plants, transgenic plants, and cell separation. Additionally, he has advised clients in these industries on licenses, material transfer agreements, sponsored research agreements, and other contracts.

Edwin “Ted” Merkel has more than 15 years of patent prosecution experience, with an emphasis on biotechnology and chemical arts. His prosecution experience encompasses the procurement of patents in both the United States as well as abroad, representing universities, privately held companies and publicly traded companies. In the biotechnology field, he has prepared and prosecuted applications concerning novel compositions, including recombinant and/or modified nucleic acids, proteins and peptides; drug formulations and drug delivery systems; and immunotherapeutics, to name a few.

Georgia Evans focuses her practice on all aspects of intellectual property, particularly in the chemical and biotechnology industries. Ms. Evans assists clients with strategically managing their intellectual property portfolios, including preparing and prosecuting patent applications in the United States, international patent prosecution, and intellectual property counseling, opinions and strategy services. She has represented corporate, academic and other institutional clients.

Tate L. Tischner focuses his practice on intellectual property matters in a broad range of technologies, with particular focus in biotechnology, chemistry and botany. His experience includes all aspects of U.S. patent prosecution and foreign patent prosecution. He also has extensive experience in patent litigation, post-issuance procedures (interferences, reexaminations, reissues, and oppositions), and opinion work.

Shelley A. Jones has extensive patent prosecution experience, particularly in the fields of biotechnology and the chemical arts. She represents both corporate and academic institutions, prosecuting patents in the United States and abroad. Her prosecution experience includes pharmaceutical compounds and formulations; diagnostic assays and sensor platforms; screening assays; stem cell culturing techniques; transgenic animals and plants; novel proteins and nucleic acids; and medical devices, to name a few.

Carissa Childs, Ph.D. focuses her practice on biotechnology and pharmaceutical patent prosecution matters. As a toxicologist, Ms. Childs has a broad knowledge base in the areas of molecular biology, physiology, pharmacology, neuroscience, and toxicology. She has experience in writing and prosecuting patent applications relating to nucleic acid, peptide and antibody therapeutics, cancer immunotherapeutics and diagnostics, vaccines, neural stem cell technologies and therapeutics, nucleic acid detection assays, toxicological screening assays, and tissue engineering technologies.

Megan L. Thisse concentrates her practice on the preparation and prosecution of patent applications in a variety of technologies, but with a particular focus in the fields of biotechnology, agricultural biotechnology, medical devices, and related arts. In particular, Ms. Thisse has prepared and prosecuted applications relating to protein and peptide therapeutics, stem cells and related therapeutic technologies, immunotherapeutics, bacterial plant pathogens, and surgical medical devices.

Amanda L. Connors prepares and prosecutes patent applications related to pharmaceutical compounds and formulations, including vaccines and therapeutics; diagnostic and other screening assays for cancer detection and treatment; novel proteins and nucleic acids; and microfluidic devices.

Neelaabh Shankar, Ph.D. procures or investigates patents related to genes and gene expression systems, biologics (protein-, DNA-, and RNA-based therapeutics and diagnostics), viral vectors for gene therapy, immunology and immunotherapeutics, transgenic animals and plants, green technology for fuel production, medical devices and their fabrication, diagnostics (enzyme-, nucleic acid-, and antibody-based), novel drugs, compositions and drug delivery systems, and biologic or drug treatment methods.

Hongling Zou, Ph.D. focuses her practice on the preparation and prosecution of U.S. and foreign patent applications, primarily in the chemical, biotechnology and nanotechnology industries. She also works on a range of patent matters including patentability assessment, freedom-to-operate analyses, patent landscape analyses, patent strategy consultations, and patent portfolio development.