

Katherine Franco | Partner
Intellectual Property

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Katherine Franco is a registered patent attorney who concentrates her practice in the protection of innovation with a special focus on high-tech.

She primarily focuses on patent preparation and prosecution, licensing and acquisition of intellectual property rights, opinion work, and client counseling. Her emphasis lies in applying her computer science and engineering background to technical disciplines related to software and electronics, such as:

- Artificial intelligence and machine learning
- Virtual and augmented reality applications
- Image processing systems and technology
- Electronic gaming technology
- Consumer electronics and mobile device technology
- Security software and systems
- Computer hardware
- Media applications
- Cloud-based systems
- Data center technology

She has significant experience supporting clients in the development and management of strong intellectual property portfolios to fit a variety of business needs. Katherine is skilled at assisting high-tech companies to protect emerging technologies, as well as guiding organizations entering the software space through the challenges of software protection and patent eligibility. Her practice includes strategic patent strategy including utilizing United States Patent and Trademark Office (“USPTO”) pilot programs to produce high-value patent assets for her clients. In addition, Katherine has significant experience in leveraging patent assets to

target competitor products through targeted continuation applications.

Katherine has served as an adjunct professor at the University of Houston Law Center, where she developed the curriculum for and taught “Advanced Topics in Software Protection,” providing students a holistic view of the protection of software through all aspects of intellectual property.

Katherine also serves as co-chair of Blank Rome’s Voter Protection Pro Bono Working Group, which partners with nonprofit organizations and government offices to ensure fair access to the polls.

During law school, Katherine served as a judicial intern to the Honorable Arthur J. Gajarsa at the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Prior to practicing law, she supported technology licensing and technology transfer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Rice University.

Outside The Firm

Katherine is a community leader in Houston and Harris County, and has served on numerous committees of government office holders. She is a member of the Board of Trustees for Geohazards International, an international nonprofit dedicated to saving lives by empowering at-risk communities worldwide to build resilience ahead of disasters and climate impacts. Katherine is also a member of the Community Advisory Board for the Community Responsive Algorithms for Social Accountability (“CRASA”) project at the University of Houston, dedicated to developing an algorithm accountability benchmark to meet societal and legal needs and guide best practices.

Admissions

- Texas
- U.S. District Court - Southern District of Texas
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

Memberships

- Houston Intellectual Property Law Association

Education

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology, BS
- University of Houston Law Center, JD

Recognitions

- 2024–2025, Patent Law, Houston, TX, listed in *Best Lawyers in America*©

(Woodward/White, Inc.)

- 2024, “Outstanding Diversity Champion,” *Houston Business Journal's* Diversity in Business Awards
- 2022, “Top Women in IP,” *Texas Lawyer Magazine's* Texas Legal Awards
- 2022, “40 Under 40,” *Houston Business Journal*
- 2017, “Woman to Watch,” *Houston Business Journal's* Women Who Mean Business Awards
- 2017, Finalist, “Diversity Role Model,” *Houston Business Journal's* Diversity in Business Awards

Professional Activities

Katherine is a member of the MIT Club of South Texas, for which she previously served on the Board of Directors and as a liaison between the MIT Club of South Texas and the MIT Enterprise Forum. She also serves as an Educational Counselor for MIT. Katherine is an active member of ChIPs Network, the Hispanic Bar Association of Houston, and the Houston Intellectual Property Law Association, where she is a member of the Inventor of the Year committee.

Languages

- Spanish