WILLIAM J. COUGHLIN

CONSULTING COUNSEL / DETROIT METRO OFFICE

Bill Coughlin serves as Consulting Counsel to Harness IP. He works with the firm's CEO and assists with short and long-term strategic business planning, diversity and inclusion initiatives, client relationships, and firmwide operations, helping guide the firm to continued success in the new decade and its second century of business.

Bill is a registered patent attorney with extensive in-house and outside counsel experience. He previously served as President & CEO of Ford Global Technologies, LLC and Assistant General Counsel to Ford Motor Company from 2000 to 2018. He also previously served as Chief Patent Counsel & IP Leader for DaimlerChrysler and Chief Trademark Counsel for Chrysler Corporation. Prior to working in-house, Bill was a Principal at Harness IP from 1984 to 1995.

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KEY MATTERS

- As President & CEO of Ford Global Technologies, Bill led a team of IP attorneys across 5 countries, greatly increased the company's invention disclosure programs, grew its royalty income, and negotiated M&A IP terms in China and Russia. He also led the auto giant to invest in new software technologies.
- As Chief Patent Counsel for DaimlerChrysler, Bill briefly lived in Stuttgart, Germany, where he led and collaborated with a team of international IP experts. He also created a Rapid Patent Procedure for streamlining the patenting process and facilitating more efficient communication efforts between in-house and outside counsel.
- As a Principal and patent attorney with Harness IP, Bill was an early advocate for investing in computer networks and helped develop IP management software to serve the firm's clients. He also successfully led several litigation efforts, including IP lawsuits before the ITC, all of which were settled on favorable terms. Notable clients included Kmart (trademark matters), Dow Chemical (process controller technology), and TRW (satellite technology).

NEWS/EVENTS

IN THE NEWS

- Bill Coughlin talks to MSU Law about IP Innovation Diversity Sprint

- Bill Coughlin Talks to Michigan Lawyers Weekly for their Sidebar Series
- Bill Coughlin Discusses the Next Evolutions in Patent Licensing and Legal Service with IAM Media
- Bill Coughlin Interviewed By Law360 for their Law Firm Leaders Series
- Bill Coughlin Discusses the Benefits of Law Firm CEOs with World Trademark Review
- Q&A with Law.com: Harness IP's New CEO Bill Coughlin

EVENTS

- Bill Coughlin to Participate in Diversity and Inclusion Webinar
- IP Innovation Diversity Sprint Event for Michigan State University's Law Students
- Bill Coughlin Set to be a Panelist at IPWatchdog Con2020 — Rescheduled for September

BACKGROUND

Bill is a longtime champion of Metro Detroit's business and technology communities. Before becoming a patent attorney, he began his career as an electrical engineer working on batteries for electric vehicles before he pivoted to a career in intellectual property law. While at Ford, he spearheaded the opening of a Detroit chapter of Techstars (a national startup accelerator) to mentor and fund early-stage companies in the mobility sector and other tech areas. He also served as Adjunct Professor at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School for more than ten years and taught classes in trade secret law, e-commerce law, and IP risk management.

In his spare time, Bill is also the CEO of an organic farming initiative.

MEMBERSHIPS

- Harness IP Diversity & Inclusion Committee

EDUCATION

Graduate, The Stanford Executive Program, Stanford University, 1998

J.D., Michigan State University, 1980

B.S., Electrical Engineering, University of Michigan, 1975

BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

Michigan

U.S Patent and Trademark Office