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Mary Lou **Wakimura** JD '86

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Born in Denver, CO, and raised in the southern suburb of Englewood, Mary Lou Wakimura JD '86 is the second youngest of seven children.

"Both of my parents are second generation Japanese Americans who witnessed first hand the WWII era in America. My father was a United States Army veteran of WWII," says Wakimura. "Each of my siblings also graduated from a four-year college. None are lawyers but two of my sisters married general practice attorneys."

"It was during my undergraduate work in applied mathematics and computer engineering at the University of Colorado in Boulder, that I first became interested in law," Wakimura explains.

"I had a part time job at IBM in Longmont, CO, debugging programs for new products. It was there that I first met a patent attorney," says Wakimura. "I had never heard of such a position/career before."

"At the time, the IBM philosophy seemed to encourage adding on to an engineering degree; that was 'the ideal.' It was then suggested that I add a law degree to my applied math/computer engineering degree, with the goal of becoming a computer/software patent attorney. There weren't many patent attorneys trained in computer science at the time, so that the first such patent attorney would do well according to IBM projections," Wakimura says. "This one tip set in motion my move to New Hampshire to attend law school at Franklin Pierce Law Center."

Now a partner at Hamilton, Brook, Smith & Reynolds in Concord, MA, Wakimura has assisted clients with patent preparation, prosecution, and portfolio management for more than 20 years.

She focuses her practice on computer-related technologies and systems relating to business methods, imaging, medical systems, bioinformatics, and electro-mechanical matters, with or without a software component.

"In the 80s and 90s (somewhat the beginning of the computer era/digital age), I drafted and prosecuted computer-based technology patent applications for corporate clients such as Wang Laboratories, Inc. and Digital Equipment Corp, and for university clients such as MIT and University of Massachusetts Medical Center," Wakimura explains.

Wakimura has also served as outside patent counsel for several locally-grown companies, both early-on in their life cycles and through their key growth years: Aspen Technology Inc., Be Free, Inc., DSP Software Engineering and Zoom Information, among them.



"In the medical and life sciences technology area, I have drafted and prosecuted patent applications on radiology systems, brachytherapy (cancer radiation therapy) systems and controls, an artificial pancreas and various diagnostic devices and apparatus, to name a few," explains Wakimura.

"Much of my work has resulted in granted patents issued in the United States and in multiple foreign countries. In several instances, the patents portfolio added value to the respective company at an appealing rate and resulted in acquisition by an industry leader," Wakimura says.

"In a way, I look at patents drafting and prosecution as a teaching exercise — teaching the patent examiner about the client's invention and new technology and ultimately teaching the public, through the published patents and patent applications that I have drafted," says Wakimura.

"If I were not a patent attorney," admits Wakimura, "I would look into being a math/science teacher at the middle school/high school level. Then I might have the opportunity to coach a team sport after school."

Wakimura is married to Mark F. Knowles, a New Hampshire native, who she met at the 1984 Pierce Law commencement ceremonies, when she served him a glass of punch. His best friend, Royce Vehslage JD '84 who graduated that day, later performed their wedding ceremony. They reside in Atkinson with their two children, Angus and Midori, and a chocolate Labrador retriever, named Toko.