

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

SIMPSON STRONG-TIE COMPANY INC.,
Petitioner

v.

COLUMBIA INSURANCE COMPANY,
Patent Owner

Case PGR2024-00050
U.S. Patent No. 11,920,339

**DECLARATION OF ERICK C. HOWARD IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONER
SIMPSON STRONG-TIE COMPANY INC.'s MOTION FOR *PRO HAC*
VICE ADMISSION**

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Patent Trial and Appeal Board
U.S. Patent & Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Simpson Strong-Tie EX1046
PGR2024-00050
U.S. Patent No. 11,920,339

I, Erick C. Howard, declare as follows:

1. I am a Partner with the law firm of Shartsis Friese LLP. I respectfully submit this declaration in support of my motion for admission *pro hac vice* to the above-captioned post-grant review proceeding to represent Simpson Strong-Tie Company Inc. (“Petitioner”).

2. I represent and advise Petitioner in connection with this PGR proceeding involving U.S. Patent No. 11,920,339 (“the ’339 patent”). I also represent Petitioner in connection with the underlying district court litigation, which includes *Columbia Insurance Company, et al. v. Simpson Strong-Tie Company Inc.*, Case No. 3:19-cv-04683 (N.D. Cal.), involving related U.S. Patent No. 10,316,510 (“the ’510 patent”); *Columbia Insurance Company, et al. v. Simpson Strong-Tie Company Inc.*, Case No. 5:23-cv-02432 (N.D. Cal.), involving related U.S. Patent Nos. 11,021,867 (“the ’867 patent”) and 11,649,626 (“the ’626 patent”); and *Columbia Insurance Company, et al. v. Simpson Strong-Tie Company Inc.*, Case No. 5:24-cv-01652 (N.D. Cal.), involving the ’339 patent.

3. I have been a member in good standing of the Bar of the State of California since 2001. My California State Bar number is 214107.

4. I practice litigation, including patent litigation, and have done so throughout my career as an attorney. I have litigated numerous patent cases across the country. A copy of my biography is provided as Appendix A.

5. I have been actively involved in the present PGR proceeding regarding the '339 patent. I have extensively reviewed the '339 patent, its corresponding file history, and related materials in connection with both this PGR proceeding. Not only have I reviewed and developed an understanding of the '339 patent and its corresponding file history, but my work in the concurrent litigation involving the '339 patent has also resulted in my detailed review of the Petition for Post-Grant Review (including the proposed invalidity grounds therein, the cited references, and exhibits), the Petition's accompanying Declaration of W. Andrew Fennell, Patent Owner's Response, Patent Owner's Contingent Motion to Amend, and Patent Owner's accompanying declarations (Exhibits 2050-2060). I have gained significant familiarity with the issues in this PGR proceeding.

6. I have advised Petitioner on strategy regarding Petitioner's arguments, and I have worked with Petitioner and with lead counsel and back-up counsel named in this proceeding to identify and analyze the references relied upon in the petition and to draft the petition.

7. I have represented Petitioner for over 20 years in connection with a wide variety of intellectual property issues. My representation of Petitioner has included numerous matters related to patents and to joist hangers. Over the years of representing Petitioner, I have developed a deep understanding of Petitioner's product line, including the joist hanger technology at issue in this proceeding.

8. I have not been suspended or disbarred from practice before any court or administrative body. No sanction or contempt citation has been imposed against me by any court or administrative body. I have never had an application for admission to practice before any court or administrative body denied.

9. I have read and will comply with the Office Patent Trial Practice Guide and the Board's Rules of Practice for Trials set forth in part 42 of Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations.

10. I will be subject to the USPTO Rules of Professional Conduct set forth in 37 C.F.R. §§ 11.101 *et seq.* and disciplinary jurisdiction pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 11.19(a).

11. I have not applied to appear *pro hac vice* before the Office in any proceedings in the last three years.

12. I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true. I further declare that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of this proceeding.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 7/8/2025



Erick C. Howard
SHARTSIS FRIESE LLP

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