



Rainer Hilli and Roschier – on the same path for 35 years

This year is Roschier's 85th anniversary and Partner Rainer Hilli's 35th anniversary with the firm. During his years at Roschier, he has played a major role in shaping the field of intellectual property in Finland and at the firm, always emphasizing the importance of a strong network and sustainable and ethical values. We sat down for a chat about past, present and future endeavors.

Back in the day, Rainer Hilli, Partner and longtime Head of Roschier's Intellectual Property practice, made a very deliberate choice to dedicate his professional life to advocacy and to Roschier.

"I spent a year studying economics before I started studying law at the University of Helsinki. After graduating, I immediately joined Roschier and worked there for some years before I was headhunted and joined the paper industry. Some time later, I decided I preferred working at a law firm and re-joined Roschier. I have never looked back."

One of the reasons for him coming back to private practice was his interest in the development of the law firm as a business.

"I have been lucky to have had the opportunity to be a member of the Board at Roschier for several years, serving as Managing Partner between 2011 and 2016 and Chair of the Board between 2016 and 2019."

An entrepreneur at heart

Nationally and internationally, Rainer Hilli is a well-known name in the field of IP. He is constantly top-ranked among IP practitioners, and has done much to develop the field of IP in Finland, playing a crucial role in building Roschier's IP practice. In 2018, he was even chosen as the IP person of the year by the IPR University Center, which is an honor that not many lawyers have had bestowed on them.

"I'm very proud of our IP & Tech practice – we have the largest and by far the leading practice in Finland and one of the best in the Nordics. On a personal level, every case won is a highlight, and complex cases are intriguing. I am happy that our practice attracts excellent lawyers, and I am committed to nurturing talent, helping more junior colleagues develop and grow in their role."

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Rainer Hilli has an entrepreneurial mindset; he likes to drive things forward.

“One of the reasons I chose to focus on IP in the early 1990s was that the field was fairly undeveloped in leading law firms in Finland. I saw an irresistible opportunity to be a part of a pioneering movement towards a more intangible society.”

“I have always liked trials and being in court, having the opportunity to really dive in and learn as much as possible about the case and other case law. I like to plead my case and negotiate solutions.”

He is proud to see that many of the junior Associates who have started their career with Roschier have become stars in their field and developed impressive knowledge and strong networks – both those who have stayed at Roschier and those who have made their careers elsewhere.

“International networks are very important, and I have been an active member in many national and global IP organizations, for example as President of the Finnish AIPPI, which now is chaired by my colleague **Johanna Lilja**.”



Onward and upward

When Rainer Hilli started at Roschier in 1986, he was the 12th lawyer in the firm. The growth over the years has been phenomenal, with today's close to 300 lawyers, in Helsinki and Stockholm, and more than 100 business professionals.

“Back then we were all dealing with all kinds of different matters. Nowadays, we are highly specialized in our own legal fields.”

Much has also happened in terms of technological developments.

“When I started, we used telex and the first fax was introduced. Later on, there was just one computer in the office. I remember the consensus at that time being that there would be no need for everyone to have their own computer,” he says, laughing.

When asked about highlights in his professional life, Hilli says that highlights are difficult to single out, as the direction is always forward, always up, and the development constant, on a personal basis as well as firm-wide.

“If anything, I'd like to mention the firm events arranged for all Roschier people at different locations. They have offered us the opportunity to get to know our immediate colleagues better and to meet colleagues we don't work directly with, in relaxed surroundings.”

He also mentions Roschier's constant evolution and development into the leading business law firm in Finland and one of the leading firms in Sweden.

“The success of our Stockholm office, founded 16 years ago, is undeniable. We had a solid foundation and values to build upon, from our long history in Finland, but nevertheless, the work and dedication that our colleagues in Stockholm continue to display is key. We work closely together and have a joint strategy for both offices, but with local flavor when needed.”

A solid foundation

It is important to adapt and even to change course – not to be afraid of change. It takes a certain amount of courage to try something without being at all sure how it will work out, and that is part of us being forward-leaning,” says Rainer Hilli.

Roschier’s goal is not to be everywhere, but to be a leading actor in each location. There has been a Roschier office in London as well as in several cities in Finland.

“The decision to open up an office in Stockholm was a sign of us listening to our clients – many of them had significant business activities in Stockholm, or had their head office there and wanted us to advise them locally.”

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Roschier has seen successes through the years but also challenges, the most recent one being the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I would say that we have managed better than we feared last spring. Once the pandemic is over, things will be back to business as usual – or even better.”

As a consequence of the forced isolation and distance work, technological developments have been rapid.

“One positive thing about all our new working tools is that I have been able to see, for the first time, some long-time clients, whom I have never met in person and only communicated with on the phone or by email. Now, tools such as Teams and Zoom have made it easy to deepen our connections without travelling.”

Article written by Åsa Nyman