

Kathi Vidal, Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

Kathi Vidal serves as the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) – America’s Innovation Agency.

As the chief executive of the USPTO, she leads one of the largest intellectual property (IP) offices in the world, with more than 13,000 public servants and an annual budget of more than \$4 billion. She is the principal IP advisor to the President and the Administration, through the Secretary of Commerce, and is focused on incentivizing and protecting U.S. innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity. Named one of *Managing IP*’s top 50 most influential people in IP in 2022, she leads an agency whose mission is to help American workers and businesses compete and collaborate. As Director of the USPTO, Vidal is working to expand American innovation for and from all, and to bring more ideas to impact, including serving as the Vice Chair of the Council for Inclusive Innovation (CI²), alongside Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo and the Council members, a Co-Chair of the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (NACIE), and the Co-Founder, with the Secretary, of the Women’s Entrepreneurship (WE) initiative.

Director Vidal grew up in a career military family and spent her childhood on military bases in the United States, Panama, Germany, and the Azorean Islands (Portugal). Her interest in science led her to attend Binghamton University at the age of 16, where she received her bachelor’s in electrical engineering. Before graduating, she started her career at General Electric (GE) Aerospace (later Lockheed Martin). She was selected into the Edison Engineering Program and pursued her master’s in electrical engineering in Syracuse University’s night program. During her time at GE, she designed one of the first artificial intelligence systems for aircraft, as well as aircraft and engine-control systems that continue to keep our military safe today.

Recognizing the value of innovation, Director Vidal pursued a career in IP. She put herself through law school and obtained a Juris Doctor from the University of Pennsylvania, where she was Editor-in-Chief of the University of Pennsylvania Law Review. After clerking for Judge Alvin Anthony Schall on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, Director Vidal joined Fish & Richardson P.C., where she became a recognized expert on IP law, led a litigation group of 270 attorneys in 11 global offices, and served on the firm’s Management Committee. She later joined Winston & Strawn LLP, where she served on the firm’s Executive Committee and was Managing Partner of its Silicon Valley office. Director Vidal has helped harness and protect innovation at all levels. Throughout her career, Director Vidal has represented new innovators and startup companies with limited resources. She has also represented many of our country’s most successful and well-known companies.

Director Vidal lives with her family and rescue dog Oliver.