

*Andrea Falk Sellers is an attorney at Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP in Kansas City. Her background in science gives her the knowledge to work on patents, technology licensing agreements, trademarks and copyrights.*



Contributed Photo

## SCIENCE SETS STAGE FOR PATENT ATTORNEY

By Barbara McBreen

Andrea Falk Sellers feels at ease advising her clients as both a scientist and entrepreneur. With a career path that took her from decoding DNA to drawing up patents, she is as much of an entrepreneur as the clients she counsels.

“Entrepreneurs take advantage of new opportunities. They aren’t afraid to change paths and try something new,” says Andrea Falk Sellers (’94 agricultural biochemistry), partner at Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP in Kansas City.

Falk Sellers works on patents, technology licensing agreements, trademarks and copyrights. She’s in the heart of the nation’s animal health corridor and many of her clients are agricultural-based companies in industries ranging from veterinary products to agrichemicals.

“One day I might be talking to an inventor about a new chemical compound and the next day I could be working on a worldwide patent strategy for a potential breakthrough drug technology,” she says.

Falk Sellers started out in agricultural

biochemistry at Iowa State, but changed paths as a junior. She credits Don Beitz, Iowa State University Distinguished Professor in animal science, for giving her the guidance to pursue a career outside the laboratory.

“I decided I didn’t want to be a scientist, but I wanted to stay connected to science. Dr. Beitz arranged a meeting with the patent attorneys that represented his lab at Iowa State—it was the best of both worlds,” says Falk Sellers.

Falk Sellers received her law degree from the University of Iowa in 1997. She recently returned to the law firm after three years as associate general counsel for the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the world’s largest foundation devoted to entrepreneurship.

While at Kauffman, Falk Sellers worked on an internet startup initiative, the iBridge Network, designed to make university innovations more transparent and accessible to potential licensees, including entrepreneurs. During her tenure, the network

increased from seven universities to 100 and from 700 innovations to 10,000.

At Stinson Morrison Hecker she is known for her expertise in intellectual property development and protection. Tony Strait, Associate General Counsel at Ceva U.S. Holdings Inc., says her understanding of science allows her to comprehend the unique characteristics and market positioning of its animal health products.

“She gets our business, which makes her very effective and efficient in helping us achieve our objectives,” Strait says.

The Iowa State Program for Women in Science and Engineering introduced Falk Sellers to the lab and her career in science. She spent the summer before her senior year in high school learning about sequencing gels and decoding DNA.

In October, Falk Sellers was recognized by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for her achievements and received the Superior Achievement Award for Early or Mid-Career Alumni. 

### BE SOCIAL

Get updates about recent news and events from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences via social media. Follow us on **Twitter** at “iastate\_cals.” Like the college page on **Facebook**. Join the alumni group on **LinkedIn**. For links, visit [www.ag.iastate.edu/stories](http://www.ag.iastate.edu/stories).



### ▶ CLASS NOTES AND MORE: GET AG AND LIFE SCIENCES ALUMNI ONLINE

Want to hear what your classmates are up to and get recent news from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences? Sign up for the monthly alumni e-newsletter *Ag and Life Sciences Alumni Online* for class notes, research news, faculty, staff and student updates, and notices of college events.



E-mail [stories@iastate.edu](mailto:stories@iastate.edu) to join the mailing list.