

Foreword

The American intellectual property system has played a unique role in the history of our country's economy. Patents, trademarks, and copyrights have protected American creativity and ingenuity from our earliest agrarian roots, when the first patent was issued in 1790 for a method of making potash fertilizer, through today's state-of-the-art and high-tech inventions.

The strength and vitality of America's high-technology economy depends directly on the availability of effective mechanisms to protect new ideas and investments in innovation. The strong impact of intellectual property protection on the American economy and global trade prompted designation of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) as a High Impact Agency. The continued growth and increase in applications for patents and trademark registrations underscore the ingenuity of U.S. inventors and entrepreneurs. Since 1790, when Congress enacted the first patent law, the USPTO has been at the cutting edge of our Nation's technological progress and achievement. It is a history of which we are very proud.

Restructured in March 2000 as a Performance-Based Organization, the USPTO administers the patent and trademark laws, providing systematic protection to inventors and businesses for their inventions and corporate and product identification, and encourages innovation and the scientific and technical advancement of American industry through the preservation, classification, and dissemination of patent information. In addition to the examination of applications for patent grants and trademark registrations, the USPTO provides technical advice and information to other executive branch agencies on intellectual

property matters and the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights.

For more than 200 years, those who depend on the protection of intellectual property have known that they could rely on the USPTO as the advocate and guardian of the rights of inventors, creators, and innovators. It is a heritage and a responsibility that we carry into the 21st century with pride and a sense of accomplishment.

The dynamic relationship between Government, commerce, and invention is reflected in the new corporate signature of the USPTO. The eagle and its positioning convey Governmental protection and promotion of creativity and the light bulb symbolizes innovation. The four stars represent support for intellectual property rights in America that spans four centuries from the colonial period to the present.

Commissioners Anne Chasser (left) and Nick Godici unveil the new USPTO logo at Community Day ceremonies on August 3, 2000.

