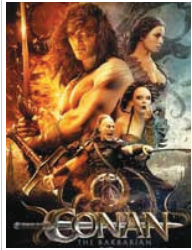


## Northampton lawyer and son hit Hollywood's red carpet

By: Mass. Lawyers Weekly Staff © August 17, 2011



Northampton attorney **Frederick U. Fierst** and his lawyer-in-training son have been partying like movie stars.

Fierst, who practices at **Fierst, Pucci & Kane**, and his son, Dan, a second-year at the University of Massachusetts School of Law in Dartmouth, strolled Hollywood's red carpet during the Aug. 11 premiere of what they hope will be this season's blockbuster movie.

Fierst represents Paradox Entertainment in Beverly Hills, which licensed the film rights to "Conan the Barbarian" after tracking down the intellectual property owners in a small town in

Texas. Dan also has a stake in the Conan movie's success: He spent the summer of 2006 as the producer's personal assistant.

The 3D film stars a relatively unknown actor named Jason Momoa, a Hawaiian who played a lead role on TV's "Baywatch." He was cast alongside some bigger names, including Stephen Lang, Ron Perlman and Rose McGowan.

"We're hoping this makes Jason a star," says Fierst, who has somehow managed to be a major entertainment lawyer without relocating to LA or NYC. Fierst, who rides his bicycle to the office, has a client list that is as varied as it is impressive. He's worked with Paul Simon, Pink Floyd, the developers and owners of the "Tetris" videogame, and the creators of the "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles."

Before Fierst and Paradox could get Conan onto the big screen, they had to get their hands on the IP rights. Conan's creator, Robert E. Howard, was a prolific writer of pulp fiction from the late '20s until 1936, when he killed himself.

Because Howard died without a will, everything he owned went to his father, who left the Conan rights and the rest of Howard's work to the town doctor, a close friend. The doctor passed the properties to a trust.

"It took us a long time to figure all this out and find the trustees, who are in Cross Plains, Texas," Fierst says. "When we bought the Conan property and other properties, everything was pretty much dormant. No one really understood the copyright status."

Warner Bros. held the rights to Conan and eventually picked up its option but never made the film. When the rights reverted, Paradox and Fierst sat down with several major studios that wanted to make the movie but ended up going with Millennium Films, which made the highest offer.

Then Fierst filed for trademarks worldwide for Conan and other properties created by Conan, inking licensing deals with Dark Horse Comics and videogame developers while also developing other Howard characters into scripts.

"The theory was if we can get the Conan movie made, then on the sizzle of that movie we would be able to produce some other films," Fierst says.

Sounding like a seasoned showbiz lawyer, Dan adds: "Conan is a brand that's already established and it's also ripe for many sequels. In theory, one could seemingly make endless sequels."

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