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Good News for Accused Texas IP Counsel

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A Texas state court has lifted the temporary restraining order against Charlotte Rutherford, the former deputy general counsel for intellectual property at Schlumberger Ltd. [The company has accused her of trade secret theft.](#)

Both parties signed [the request to dissolve the order \[PDF\]](#) against Rutherford, who is now senior vice president of Acacia Research Group, a patent licensing company.

“On Friday afternoon, March 14, Schlumberger obtained a Temporary Restraining Order from the Court without providing us with any advance notice or the opportunity to oppose,” according to a statement from Matthew Vella, Acacia’s chief executive. “Now that we have appeared before the court, the temporary restraining order has been dissolved.”

Vella continued, “We maintain that Schlumberger’s allegations against ... Rutherford are a bullying tactic in response to a patent infringement action brought against Schlumberger [by Acacia]. We believe Schlumberger’s allegations are baseless and look forward to proving exactly that in court.”

Schlumberger spokesman Joao Felix said the company does not comment on pending litigation.

Schlumberger alleged in its original legal action that Rutherford had taken flash drives with internal confidential information on them when she left the company last year.

Schlumberger claimed a breach of fiduciary duty, misappropriation of trade secrets, conversion, breach of contract and a violation of the Texas Theft Liability Act.

The company seeks a permanent injunction against Rutherford to keep her from using any stolen data, unspecified damages exceeding \$100,000, and an order to return all Schlumberger property, including confidential information, to the company.

The Harris County District Court in Houston has scheduled a hearing on March 28.

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