

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE MICHAEL G. WILLIAMSON, UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY JUDGE (*Posted: Monday, November 7, 2022*)



The United States Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Florida is deeply saddened to announce that the Hon. Michael G. Williamson passed away on November 3, 2022. For more than two decades, Judge Williamson, a brilliant writer and thinker with a keen sense of humor, served the Middle District of Florida with honor and distinction, including as its Chief Judge from 2015 to 2019. Judge Williamson will be greatly missed by his friends and colleagues in the Middle District of Florida.

A 1976 graduate of Georgetown University Law Center, Judge Williamson practiced law in Orlando for two decades. As an attorney with a state-wide Chapter 11 practice, he was known for his professionalism and civility.

In 2000, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals appointed Judge Williamson to the bankruptcy bench in Tampa. As a judge, Judge Williamson fulfilled his vocation as a writer, speaker, and educator. During his twenty-two years on the bench, Judge Williamson authored more than 220 reported decisions, spoke at more than 280 seminars, and authored a *Practical Evidence Manual*, a go-to resource for Middle District bankruptcy practitioners. Judge Williamson also served as a co-author of West's *Bankruptcy Law Manual* since 2013 and as an Adjunct Professor at Stetson University College of Law since 2014. Judge Williamson's influence on the practice of bankruptcy law in the State of Florida, and nationally, cannot be overstated.

All the while, Judge Williamson maintained his commitment to the attorneys who practice in the Middle District of Florida. For over two decades, Judge Williamson was a Master in the J. Clifford Cheatwood American Inn of Court, serving as the Inn's President in 2004. From 2016 to 2019, Judge Williamson served as a Judicial Board Member of the Tampa Chapter of the Federal Bar Association. And he continued to serve on the Executive Council of the Business Law Section of The Florida Bar.

Judge Williamson is a Fellow in the American College of Bankruptcy. He was the first recipient of The Florida Bar Business Law Section's Distinguished Lifetime Service Award, and in October 2022, Judge Williamson received the Judge William L. Norton, Jr. Judicial Excellence Award, a national award presented annually by the American Bankruptcy Institute in recognition of a bankruptcy judge's dedication to the insolvency community.

Judge Williamson was also instrumental in developing the Rule of Law abroad. He has assessed commercial laws in Azerbaijan, Macedonia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. And he has taught principles of insolvency law to lawyers and judges in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Republic of Georgia, Bahrain, and Ukraine. But Judge Williamson is perhaps best known for his work in Afghanistan, where, over the course of a decade, he drafted a new bankruptcy law from scratch and oversaw its enactment into law.

Judge Williamson's passing is a great loss to his wife, Linda, their family and friends, and to his colleagues and the attorneys who appeared before him. In his honor, the United States flags at the Middle Districts courthouses will be flown at half-staff this week.