

**TRUSTEE'S CORNER - MEET
LAURIE K. WEATHERFORD, CHAPTER 13 STANDING TRUSTEE, ORLANDO
By: Jill Kelso, Orlando Office of the U.S. Trustee**



Laurie K. Weatherford, is the Chapter 13 Standing Trustee for the Middle District of Florida, Orlando Division. She was appointed in October of 1996. Prior to her appointment, she was of counsel with the law firm of Maguire, Voorhis & Wells, where she worked with the Honorable Michael G. Williamson and Samuel J. Zusmann, Jr. and represented primarily debtors and creditors' committees in Chapter 11 cases. In that capacity, she tried a preference action before a jury in the bankruptcy court and obtained a defense verdict for her client in the In Re Braniff Airlines bankruptcy case.

Laurie is an honors graduate of the University of Florida, where she obtained a degree in recreation, and the Cumberland School of Law. During law school she was an Honor Court Justice, a Member of the International Law Moot Court Team and Copy Editor for the Cumberland Law Review. She was a member of the Student Senate at the University of Florida. Laurie is currently a member of the National Association of Chapter 13 Trustees, where she serves on the Human Resource Committee. She previously served on the Board of Directors of the Central Florida Bankruptcy Law Association, and is a past Chairman of the Bankruptcy Committee of the Orange County Bar Association.

In speaking about her position as Chapter 13 Trustee, Laurie stated that, "in contrast to my previous positions as attorney and Chapter 7 Trustee, being a Chapter 13 Trustee provides me with the opportunity to look for ways to help honest debtors retain their dignity while they navigate their current financial problems. I have also enjoyed the opportunity to look for creative solutions to recurring problems in Chapter 13." In fact, Laurie was instrumental in developing the Mortgage Modification Mediation procedures in the Middle District of Florida, Orlando Division.

On a personal note, Laurie has been a Gator fan since she was 8 years old and has supported the worst and the best Gator teams. According to Laurie, Gator football is family time. While she enjoys quilting and scrapbooking, she also likes adventure. Any time she travels, she likes to do at least one thing out of her box, i.e., white water rafting, parasailing, paragliding, skydiving, snowmobiling, dogsledding, zip-lining, and waterfall repelling. She is also very involved in her church.

LAURIE'S PRACTICE POINTERS FOR ATTORNEYS:

- The calendar is your friend. Use it.
- Train your staff. It is the attorney who should answer questions about your practice, not the Chapter 13 Trustee's office.
- Work on your negotiating skills.
- Client control. If you intend to communicate with your clients primarily via email, let your clients know that, and let them know you would prefer an email question. Keep in touch with your clients. If an issue will take more time than you can devote at that moment, then relay that information to your client.
- While her office tries to be very helpful and accommodating in working with attorneys and paralegals to get cases confirmed and see them through to completion, please do not procrastinate until the last minute and then expect her office to "fix it."
- Have your cases ready for confirmation hearings and 341 meetings. Paralegals review files two weeks before hearings. Do not wait until the day before a hearing, forcing paralegals to re-review your case yet one more time.
- Just because your client has something specific in mind, doesn't mean you should do it without first researching and making sure it really is in the client's best interests.