

## **Reset - It's a New Day and a New Year**

By: Lee Ann Bennett, Clerk of Court

Happy New Year! It's hard to believe that 2015 is behind us and that 2016 has already begun. In the last issue of the Court Connection, Chief Judge Williamson shared his vision of continuing the work started by Judge Jennemann during her term as Chief Judge. He shared that Judge Jennemann's mantra was "Think Bottom-Up, Not Top Down" on her quest of "Thinking District-wide." Chief Judge Williamson will continue that quest with his mantra "One Court, One Team." In his article, he highlighted the accomplishments achieved during 2015 and rightly gave credit to all involved. We are fortunate to have not only our staff involved in our quest but also members of the bar associations, the trustees, and the United States Trustee's office. We are thrilled so many of you will continue to serve on various committees, all of which contribute to the excellence of our Court. So, I wish to start the New Year by thanking you for your continued service to the Court.

We start the New Year with a new committee – the Newsletter Committee. I would like to recognize and introduce the members for this new committee:

Ed Comey, Chair (Law Clerk to Chief Judge Williamson)  
Susan Magaditsch (Budget Financial Supervisor – Tampa)  
Michael Schumpert (Supervisor – Jacksonville)  
Jodie Hollingsworth (Law Clerk to Judge Funk)  
Alexis Leventhal (Law Clerk – District)  
Marco Eguia (Web Programmer/Analyst – Orlando)  
Aimee Johnson (Financial Specialist – Orlando)  
Ray Readdick (Courtroom Deputy – Judge Funk)  
Jill Norris (Supervisor – Tampa)  
Laura Stevenson (Judicial Assistant – Judge Delano)

As you can see, we are blessed with an outstanding committee. I hope you will contact them with suggestions or concerns and we hope you will respond to their requests for articles for our newsletter.

I recently read a poster from the Federal Occupational Health and thought it was a great way to start the New Year and wanted to share.

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**Reset it's a New Day**

Think Positively

Work Productively

Exercise Daily

Eat Healthy

Relax More

Laugh Loudly

Have Fun

Be Happy

Share Love

Live Well

Welcome to the New Year!

**Pro Bono Corner**

**Tampa’s Pro Se Clinic 2015 Year-End Statistics**

The Tampa Bay Pro Se Clinic closed out 2015 with an impressive 268 hours volunteered out of 325 available hours.

The Tampa Division would like to acknowledge and thank the following attorneys and law firms for their commitment to the Pro Se Clinic and the hours they contributed in calendar year 2015.

- **50+** Michael Barnett
- **25-49** Traci Stevenson, Jane Sobotta, and Kelley Petry
- **11-24** Karen Gatto, Tim Sierra, the law firm of Stichter, Riedel, Blain & Postler, Lynn Pope, and Cheryl Thompson
- **0-10** Jake Blanchard, Brad deBeaubien, Wendy DePaul, Daniel Fogarty, Eric Jacobs, Angelina Lim, Kemi Oguntebi, Mark Robens, Scott Stichter, Lauren Stricker, and Mary Joyner

<b>2015 Clinic Stats</b>	<b>Hours Avail</b>	<b>Hours Volunteered</b>	<b>Litigants</b>	<b>Ch. 7</b>	<b>Ch. 13</b>	<b>Ch. 11</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
January	28	20	10	4	5	0	1
February	28	27	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
March	31	24	9	4	4	0	1
April	32	29	22	15	6	0	1
May	25	22	15	10	5	0	0
June	31	27	20	10	6	2	2
July	32	29	22	12	9	0	1
August	31	28	30	17	13	0	0
September	27	19	27	16	11	0	0
October	30	21	21	13	7	0	1
November	27	23	23	11	12	1	0
December	30	22	18	10	7	0	1
<b>YTD</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>

### **Orlando's Pro Se Clinic 2015 Year-End Statistics**

The Orlando Pro Se Clinic also finished 2015 with some big numbers. The Clinic received over 1,000 phone calls, saw 361 clients in the clinic, and had a total of 466 hours volunteered by local attorneys.

The Orlando Division thanks everyone involved for making it a success.

	<b>January 1 - June 30, 2015</b>	<b>July 1 - December 31, 2015</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of Volunteer Attorneys	146	125	<b>271</b>
Number of Volunteer Hours	275	191	<b>466</b>
Number of Clients Seen in Clinic	178	183	<b>361</b>
Number of Phone Calls Received	515	505	<b>1,020</b>
Number of Emails Received	55	97	<b>152</b>



## **Pro Bono Corner**

Thank you to David Garcide who helped the Court with a difficult, heart-wrenching case of a *pro se* single mother of three who had no hope of saving her home based on her lack of income and the unavailability of a modification option, given that her lender was a private investor. David took her outside to explain the finances that are necessary for a successful cure-and-pay plan. She agreed to give up her fight, and then she got a cash- for-keys deal that enabled her to have a rent deposit and funds to assist with her move.

**In the Spotlight**  
Awards and Recognitions



Anyone who knows Judge McEwen is well aware of her tireless commitment to pro bono service. We are pleased to announce that those efforts have recently been recognized by the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court, Jorge Labarga, who selected Judge McEwen as the first recipient of the Chief Justice’s Distinguished Federal Judicial Service Award. That award recognizes an active or retired judge for outstanding and sustained service to the public, especially as it relates to the support of pro bono legal services. Chief Justice Labarga will present the award to Judge McEwen at a ceremony on January 28, 2016 at 3:30 p.m. at the Florida Supreme Court. Please congratulate Judge McEwen on this extraordinary—and well-deserved—honor.

Click [here](#) to read the full news release.

**In the Spotlight**  
Awards and Recognitions



Clerk of Court, Lee Ann Bennett, is the recipient of the 2015 Director's Award for Outstanding Leadership given by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

The nomination was made by the Court's Administrative Staff, supported by our Judges as well as many other Judges and Clerks across the country. Lee Ann is the past President of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Clerks, and serves as the Clerk Representative to the Judicial Conference Committee on the Administration of the Bankruptcy System. She is recognized as an Outstanding Leader of the Judiciary from the Supreme Court down. Congratulations, Lee Ann!

Click [here](#) for the full article.

## **U.S. Trustee Spotlight**

### **Robert Altman, Chapter 7 Trustee, Jacksonville**

**By: Timothy S. Laffredi, Orlando Office of the U.S. Trustee**



Pictured: Doc Gooden (Pitcher, N.Y. Mets) and Bob Altman before a game in Tampa.  
Doc Gooden is the greatest pitcher Bob has ever seen.

Robert Altman is a Chapter 7 Panel Trustee for the Middle District of Florida, Jacksonville Division. Bob was appointed to the Panel in November 2002. Prior to his appointment as a Chapter 7 Trustee, Bob was already a well-established and well-respected member of the bankruptcy legal community in the Middle District. Bob devotes 85% of his practice to bankruptcy, and his extensive experience runs the bankruptcy gamut. Aside from his work as Chapter 7 Trustee, Bob has represented debtors, creditors, and other Chapter 7 trustees. Bob has also been involved in more than 100 Chapter 11 cases; has represented debtors and creditors' committees, and has been appointed as a Chapter 11 Trustee. He has significant experience in Chapters 12 and 13 as well, and even holds the honor of having filed the very first Chapter 12 case in the Middle District of Florida (Judge Funk served as the Chapter 12 Trustee)—possibly even the first Chapter 12 case in the country. Bob is currently his own boss at Robert Altman, P.A. Before that, Bob worked for several years at the Law Office of Lansing J. Roy, which handled a significant number of bankruptcy cases in the Northern and Middle Districts of Florida throughout the 1980s.

Bob is an honors graduate of the St. Johns River Junior College and the University of Florida, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in English Education. Before enrolling in law school, Bob spent three years teaching high school English and coaching high school baseball at Clay High School in Green Cove Springs, Florida. Bob attended the University of Florida College of Law, where he was active in the Civil Clinic. Before receiving his J.D. in 1982, Bob also spent a quarter teaching civics and history at Palatka High School. Bob remained very active after he graduated from law school, including publishing an article entitled *FDA: Regulation of Drug*



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*Production in Space*, 39 Food, Drug, & Cosmetic J. No. 4 (Oct. 1984). He has also served on various committees and boards throughout his career, including as a member of the Attorney Fee Arbitration Board, a member of the Chamber of Commerce Education Committee, and both a member and subsequently the chairman of the 7th Judicial Circuit's Ethics Committee.

Bob puts in long hours, getting to the office at 6:30 a.m. and leaving around 6:00 p.m. This is an improvement from when he was younger, where he would stay at the office until around 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. His work schedule usually includes weekends, except when the Mets are playing. Bob loves baseball – the Mets in particular – and he puts in all those long hours in part because his goal is to put in an offer to buy the Mets. He says he will continue to work diligently until he has raised the \$3,000,000,000.00 necessary to purchase the team.

**BOB'S PRACTICE POINTERS FOR ATTORNEYS:**

- Sit down with your client yourself (not through one of your staff members) and ask all the questions required on the Statement of Financial Affairs and the Schedules.
- If a client's answer to your questions invites further inquiry, ask the follow-up questions.
- Most debtors do not understand the questions being asked in the Schedules and Statements, so it is important that you ask a question in more than one way.

**Judge's Corner**

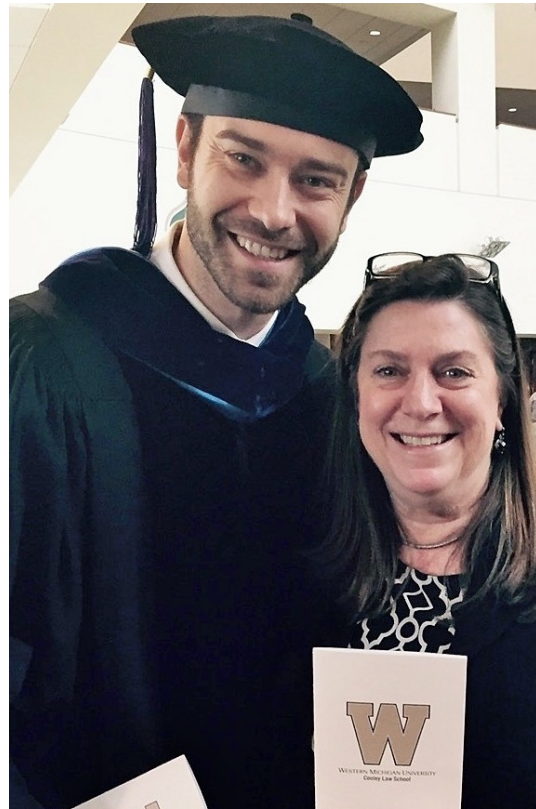


Judge Karen S. Jennemann pictured with her law clerk, Danielle Merola, after her recent swearing in ceremony.



**Judge's Corner**

Judge McEwen and her former student and fall semester intern Georgi Angelov, at his graduation from Western Michigan University Cooley Law School.



## **Court Committee Reports**

### **Procedures Drafting Committee Update**

By: Sara Mason

The Procedures Drafting Committee has finalized its drafting procedures on Schedules and Statements filed after the Petition, Motion to Modify Confirmed Plan, Motion for/Notice of 2004 Exam, Chapter 11 Closing and Rent Deposits. These procedures have either been sent back to Raymond Waguespack, after review by the originating Procedures Group, or are currently being reviewed by the originating group before being sent back to Raymond.

We are currently working on the procedures for Motion/Notice of Abandonment and Motion to Sever.

In addition, we have received Divisional information on Adversary Proceeding Closing, Motion to Compel, Withdrawal of Reference, Application for Payment of Administrative Expenses, Adversary Proceeding Dismissal, Motion to Redeem, Motion for Adequate Protection, Motion for Summary Judgment, Involuntary Case Opening, Appeals and Ancillary Matters. With Raymond's input, we will begin reviewing Adversary related procedures next.

## **Outreach Committee Update**

### **'Tis the Season of Giving**

The Clerk's Office and Chambers Staff across the district, through activities arranged by the Outreach Committee, came together to give back to a variety of organizations in their communities.

#### **Jacksonville**

The Jacksonville Division collected **\$1,212.00** through their Combined Federal Campaign, donating most of the funds to the SPCA.

#### **Orlando**

Orlando's Combined Federal Campaign collection went to the Camaraderie Foundation, which provides healing for "invisible" wounds of war (PTSD, TBI, depression, and marital issues) through free mental health counseling for military service members, veterans, and their families. Orlando also held their annual food drive for the Second Harvest Food Bank and collected **191** pounds of food.

#### **Tampa**

The Tampa Division's Combined Federal Campaign collected **\$958.00**. The funds were submitted to CARES, which provides services for home recovery and the elderly. Tampa's Outreach Committee also held a Food and Toy Drive in the Clerk's Office. They delivered more than **200 pounds** of food to the Metropolitan Ministries, and the toys pictured below were delivered to Champions for Children.



## **Cyber Security Tip – Tax Season is Identity Theft Season, Be Prepared!**

By: Laurie Ellwood, Network Administrator

Welcome to 2016! As we begin another year, we will keep our eyes open and try to stay ahead of any threats that come our way.

The next thing coming is tax season. I know none of us probably look forward to that, but it is around the corner, and we need to keep ourselves protected. The IRS is stepping in to help taxpayers by using its own awareness site:

<https://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Taxes-Security-Together>

The site and awareness program is designed to protect your federal and state accounts from identity thieves.

Many of the steps the IRS is taking regarding your accounts are invisible to you but will help to verify the identity of the taxpayer and the validity of the tax return. There are new password standards for tax software and they are doing a better job sharing information about identity theft schemes. (See [Fact Sheet 2015-23](#) for details on their efforts.)

Here are some tips you can follow to protect your tax and financial information this season:

- **Give personal information over encrypted websites only. Look for “https.”**
- **Use strong passwords and protect your passwords.**
- **Always use security software with firewall and anti-virus protections.**
- **Learn to recognize and avoid phishing emails, threatening calls or texts.**
- **Protect your personal data and don’t leave it lying around.**
- **Save your tax returns and records and keep them in a safe place.**
- **Back up your files to removable media and store in a safe place.**

**Dear Point and Click – January 2016**

Dear Point and Click;

**Question:** I have to serve an order in an Adversary Proceeding, and all the parties received notice of the entry of the order via CM/ECF. Must I also prepare and file a Proof of Service?

**Answer:** In short, the answer is no. In any situation where all required recipients received the order via CM/ECF activity emails, no proof of service is needed. This happens primarily in Adversary Proceedings. Previously, the Court was requiring the entry of a text-only entry stating all parties were served electronically via CM/ECF. Use of the text entry is no longer required.

As a reminder, here are some of the key points of the Service of Orders requirements in the Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Florida:

- When submitting a proposed order, always include service language as outlined in the Court's Style Guide posted on the Court's website.
- The name of the attorney included in the service direction language should be an attorney associated with the case in CM/ECF. It is acceptable for someone else in that attorney's office to complete the service.
- When directed to serve an order, service of the order and the filing of a proof of service must be completed within three days of the date of the order.
- Proof of Service is the preferred title to use on your service document (as opposed to Certificate of Service) so a non-attorney may prepare a proof of service, if needed.
- The appropriate docket event to use to file the Proof of Service is Proof of Service located in CM/ECF in the Miscellaneous categories located under both the Bankruptcy and Adversary menus. It is also available to Trustees in the Trustee/US Trustee event category under the Bankruptcy menu.
- There are two learning modules available to assist with service of orders. They are:
  - 1) Generating a Mailing Matrix, and
  - 2) Service of Orders Process.

Both are available on the Court's website under CM/ECF – eLearning.

Is there a CM/ECF related question you'd like to see answered in a future edition of the Court Connection? Send your questions to [newsletter@flmb.uscourts.gov](mailto:newsletter@flmb.uscourts.gov)

## **Update from the Clerk's Office**



**Forms and Rules:** The December 1, 2015 Updates to Official Forms went into effect with a smooth transition in the Clerk's Office.

**Budget & Finance:** On December 18, 2015 a full year appropriations bill for fiscal year 2016 was passed and signed.

Orlando welcomes two Spring interns on February 2, 2016: Melissa DiCerbo from FAMU and Richard Pallas from Barry University.



**Court Services**  
**Chief Justice Roberts highlights recent rules amendments.**

Chief Justice John Roberts recently issued his 2015 Year-End Report on the federal judiciary. In his Year-End Report, Chief Justice Roberts announced recent amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. While conceding that “[m]any rules amendments are modest and technical, even persnickety,” Chief Justice Roberts explained that the 2015 amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure—the product of five years of intense study, debate, and drafting—are different. In fact, it is because the changes are so significant that Chief Justice Roberts chose his Year-End Report to highlight them.

The central theme of the rules changes, which went into effect on December 1, 2015, is best summed up by the changes to Rule 1: Rule 1 now directs that the Federal Rules “should be construed, administered, and employed by the court and the parties to secure the just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of every action and proceeding.” Chief Justice Roberts explains that the underlined words were added to “make express the obligation of the of judges and lawyers to work cooperatively in controlling the expense and time demands of litigation” and to highlight that lawyers “have an affirmative duty to work together, and with the court, to achieve prompt and efficient resolutions of disputes.”

Other amendments give life to that express obligation. For instance, Rule 26(b)(1) now limits discovery to non-privileged matter that is “relevant to any party’s claim or defense and proportional to the needs of the case.” Rule 16 now shortens the deadline for judges to meet with lawyers after a complaint is filed to confer about the needs of a case and develop a case management plan. Rule 16, along with Rule 26(f), also now requires the parties to agree on the preservation and discovery of electronically stored information (ESI). In Chief Justice Roberts’ view, these amendments are a “major stride toward a better court system.”

But he cautions that it will require a genuine commitment by judges and lawyers to ensure that is the case. Judges, Chief Justice Roberts explains, must be willing to take on a stewardship role from the outset of a case. And lawyers must be willing to “affirmatively search out cooperative solutions, chart a cost-effective course of litigation, and assume shared responsibility with opposing counsel to achieve just results.” With a commitment from judges and lawyers alike, Chief Justice Roberts is hopeful the 2015 amendments will “help ensure that federal court litigation does not denigrate into wasteful clashes over matters that have little to do with achieving a just result.”

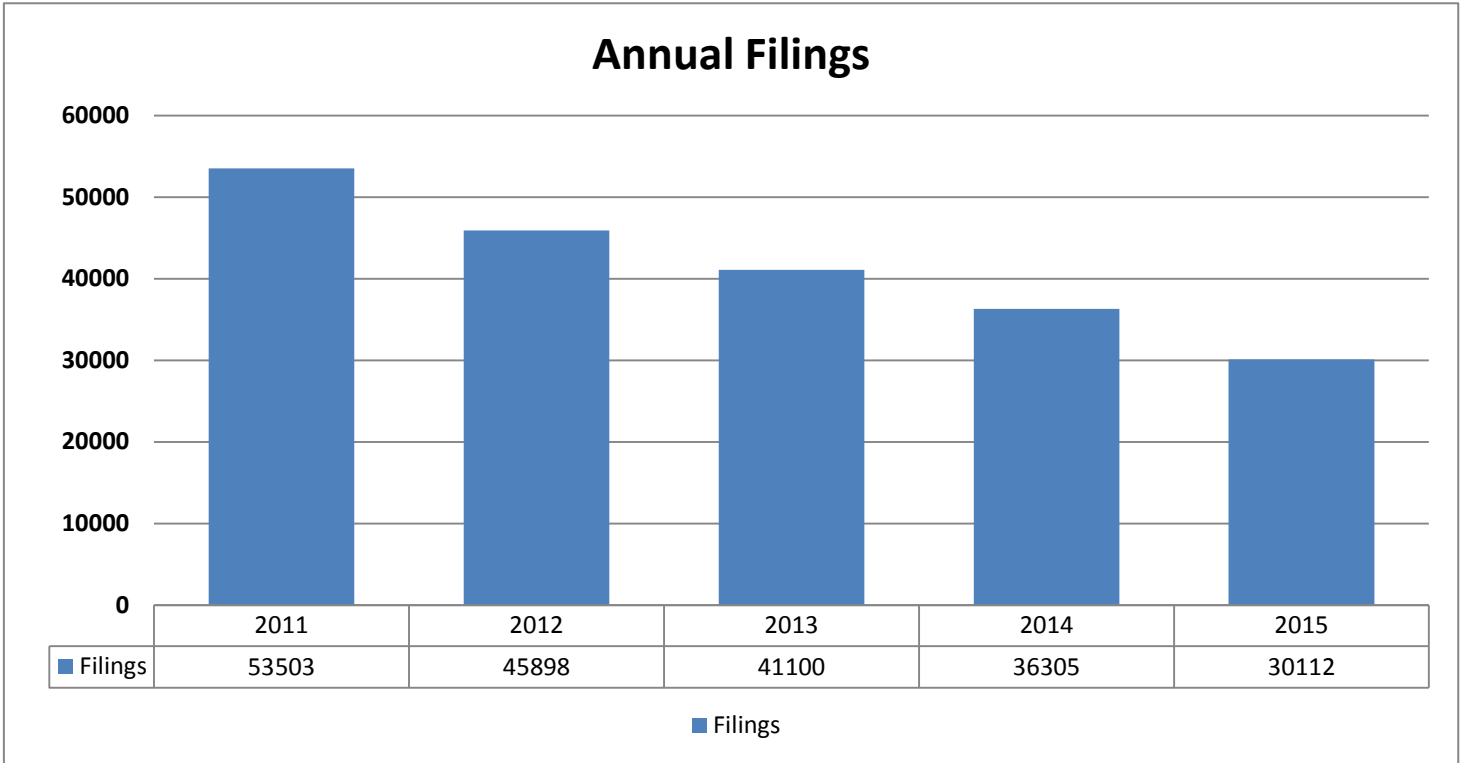
Click [here](#) for a full copy of Chief Just Roberts’ 2015 Year-End Report.

## **Court Services**

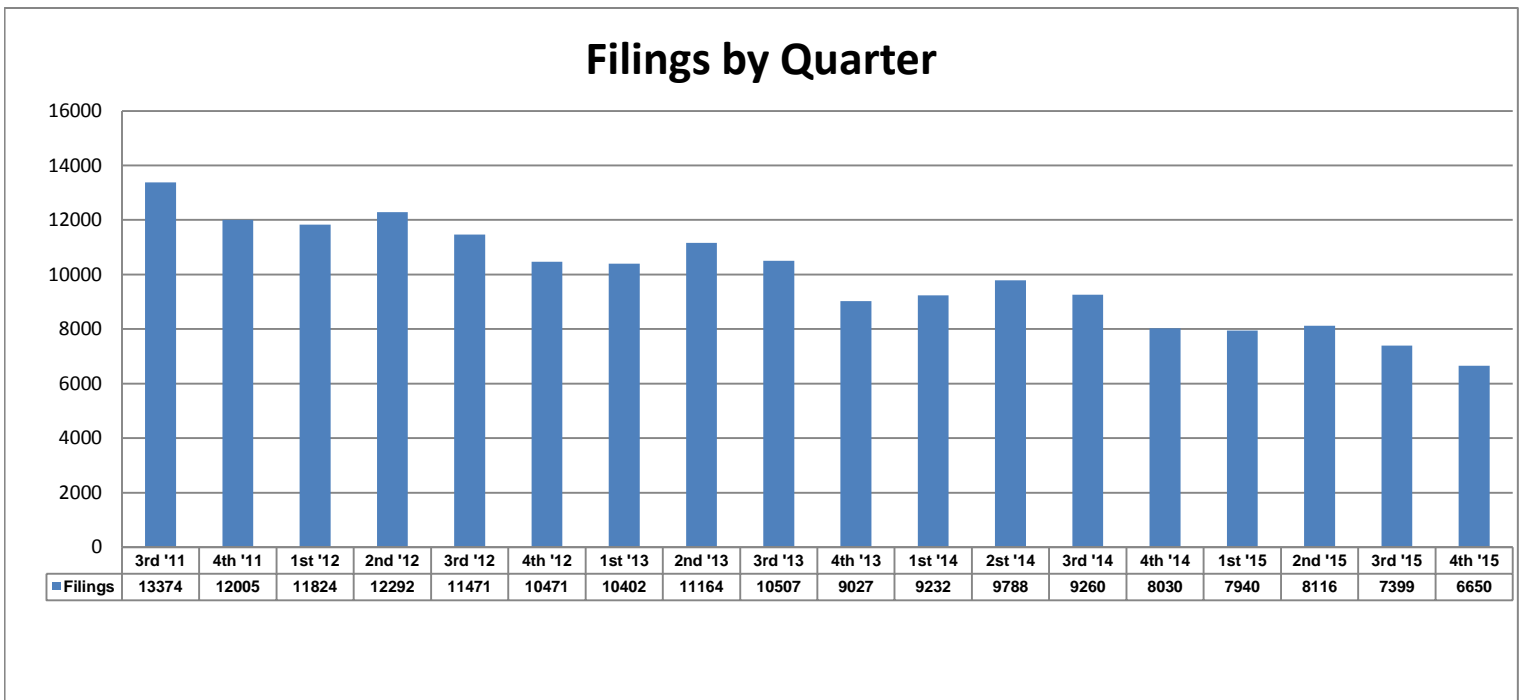
### **Court Makes it Easier to Refinance or Modify a Mortgage on Homestead Property.**

On November 16, 2015, the Court issued a new administrative order (FLMB-2015-9) that grants relief from the discharge injunction to allow a secured creditor to enter into a refinance or modification agreement with a debtor. That new administrative order applies when the *debtor* initiates a request to refinance or modify a debt secured by a lien on homestead property only. Importantly, if the debtor refinances or modifies an existing debt secured by a lien on homestead property, the debtor may become liable for the entire amount owed under the new (refinanced or modified) loan.

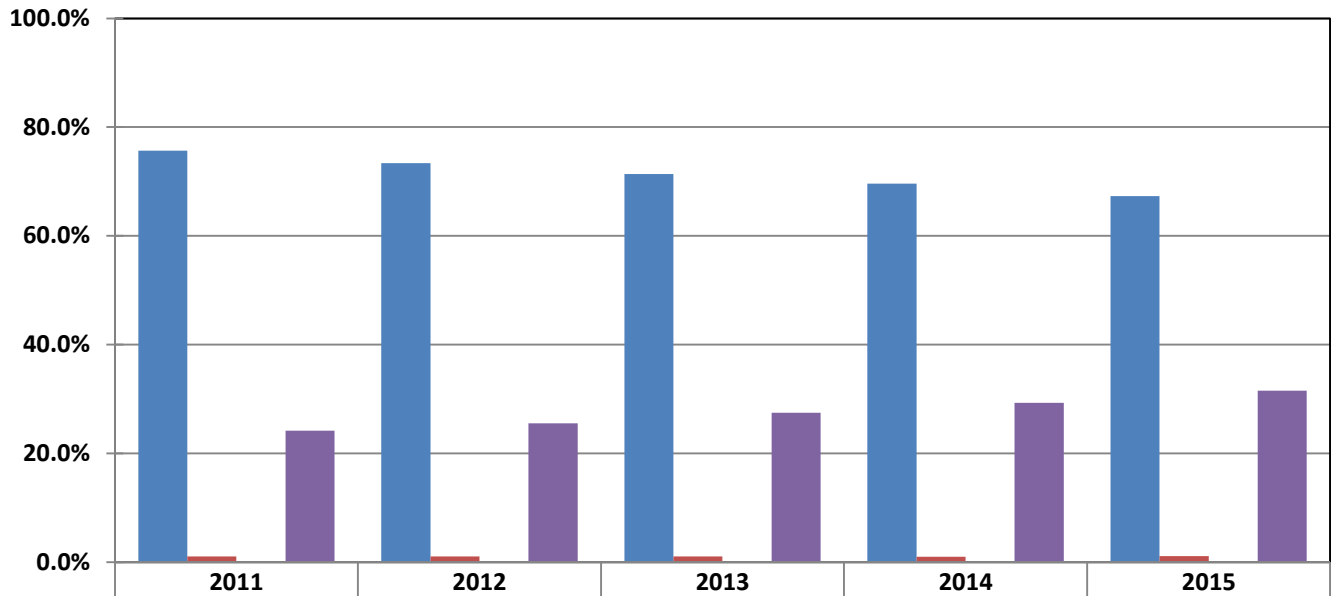
**United States Bankruptcy Court - Middle District of Florida**  
**Updated January 20, 2015 Meeting Data and Information**  
**Statistics as of December 31, 2015**



Year	Annual Filings	vs. 2011	vs. Prior Yr.
2011	53503		
2012	45898	-14%	-14%
2013	41100	-23%	-10%
2014	36305	-32%	-12%
2015	30112	-44%	-17%

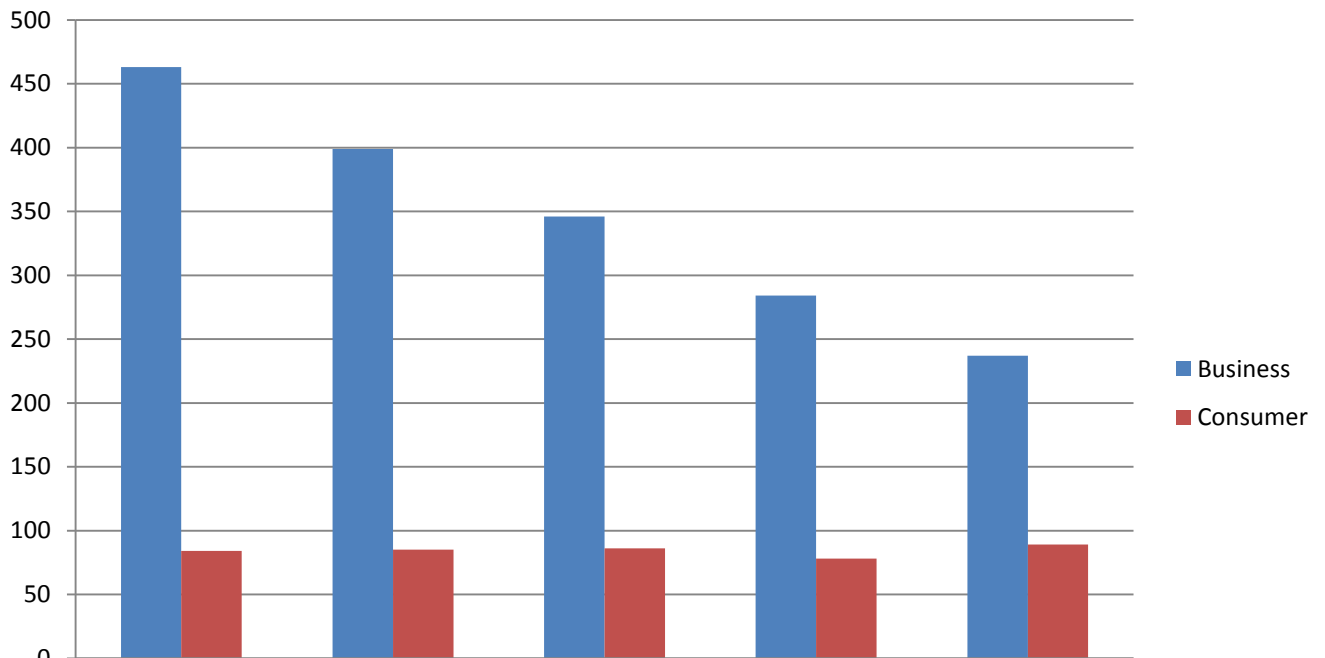


## Filings by % of Chapter Type



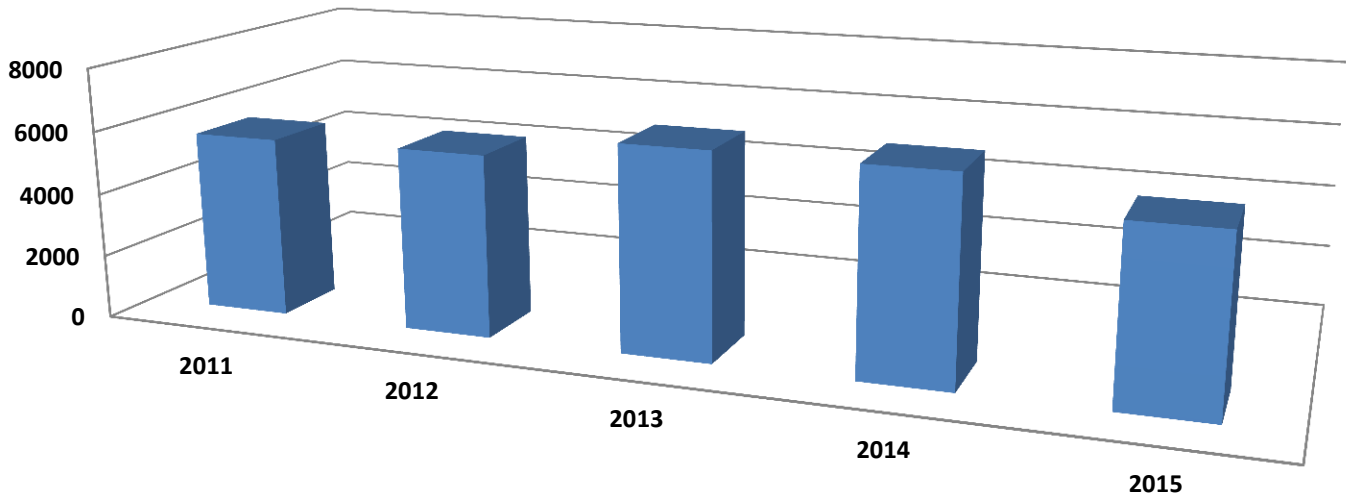
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Chapter 7	75.7%	73.4%	71.4%	69.6%	67.3%
Chapter 11	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.1%
Chapter 12	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Chapter 13	24.2%	25.5%	27.5%	29.3%	31.5%

## Chapter 11 Filings



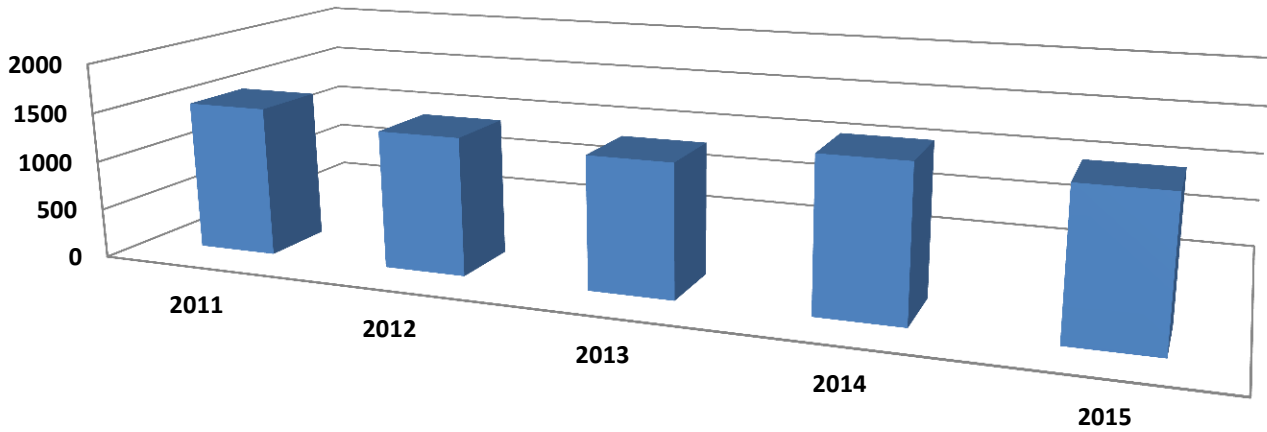
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Business	463	399	346	284	237
Consumer	84	85	86	78	89

## Pro Se Filings

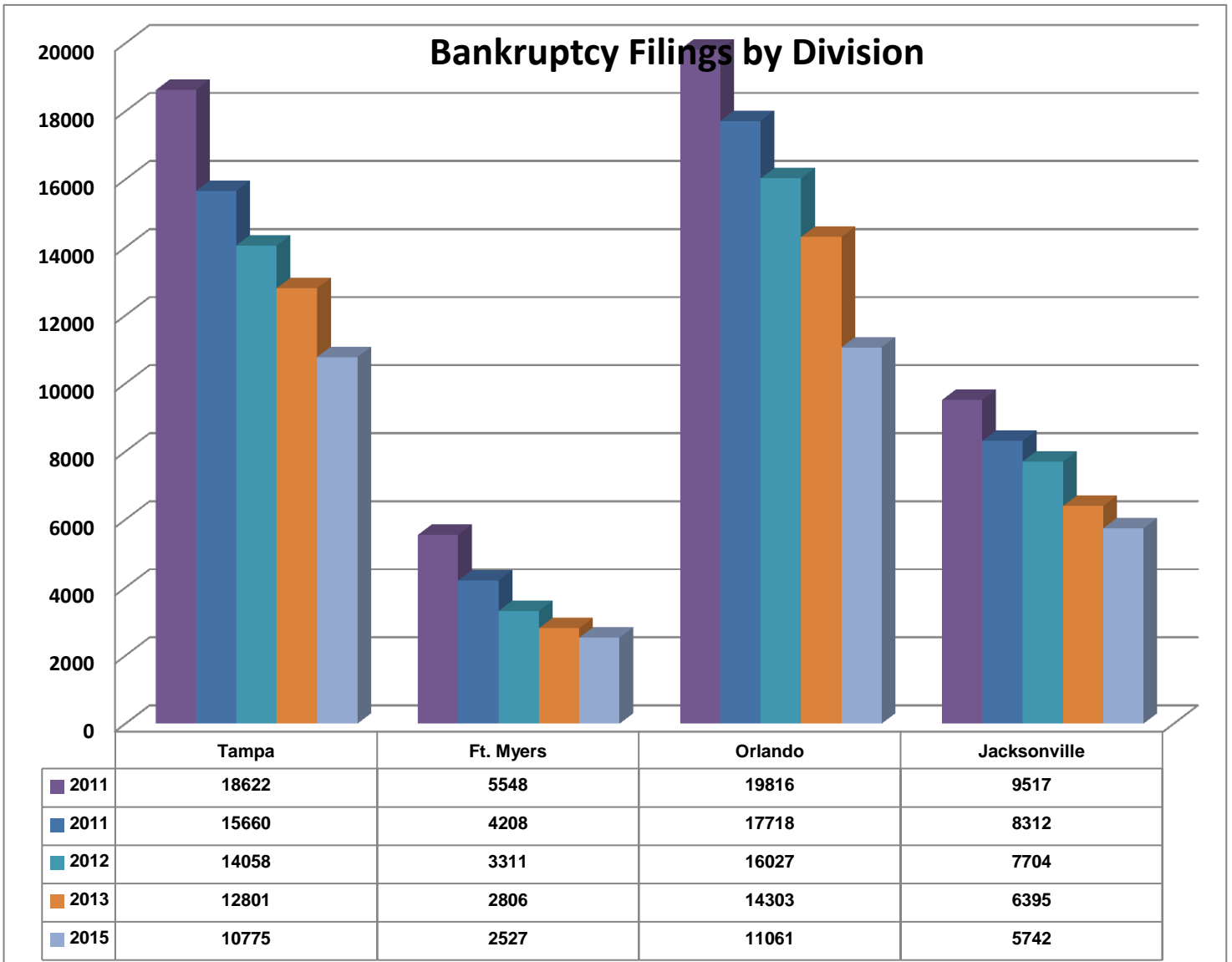


	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
■ Pro Se	5682	5737	6435	6387	5416
% of All Filings	11%	12%	16%	18%	18%

## In Forma Pauperis Filings



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
■ IFP Granted	1524	1396	1334	1529	1456
% of All Filings	3%	3%	3%	4%	5%



Note: Previous quarterly reports incorrectly reflected total cases filed by including adversary proceedings. Order Granting IFP counts have been corrected to include approving language.

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**CASE LAW UPDATE FOR Q1 2016**  
**ISSUE OF THE COURT CONNECTION**

**Editors:**

Bradley M. Saxton  
C. Andrew Roy

**Supreme Court Cases**

[\*Husky Int'l Electronics v. Ritz\*](#), No. [15-145](#) [Argument set for March 1, 2016]

Case concerns section 523(a)(2)(A) and whether “actual fraud” contemplates only a false representation or also includes monies obtained through a fraudulent transfer scheme intended to defraud a creditor.

**Eleventh Circuit Cases**

***Wallace v. McFarland (In re McFarland)***

619 F. App'x 962 (11th Cir. 2015)

Trustee sought to avoid a transfer of real property from the debtor to his wife which occurred after a personal injury lawsuit had been filed against the debtor. The debtor and wife contended that the wife in fact was the equitable owner of one-half of the property which the debtor and his wife together had owned for approximately forty years and the deed was simply to correct the legal title and reflect the wife's existing ownership. The bankruptcy court rejected this argument and the district court affirmed. The Eleventh Circuit thoroughly analyzed the defendants' arguments, concluding that they failed to establish the existence of either a purchase money resulting trust or a constructive trust under Georgia law, and found that the bankruptcy court did not err in avoiding the transfer.

***Mantiplay v. Horne (In re Horne)***

--- F. App'x ----, 2015 WL 6500754 (11th Cir. Oct. 28, 2015)

The Eleventh Circuit addressed the federal judge recusal statute, 28 U.S.C. § 455(a). The case involved a motion seeking damages against a creditor for violating the automatic stay and the discharge injunction. The bankruptcy court awarded damages to the debtor. The creditor later learned that a witness, a paralegal for the debtor's bankruptcy attorney who offered testimony by affidavit which contradicted the creditor's testimony, was the sister of the judge's courtroom deputy. Apparently, the creditor believed the judge credited the paralegal's testimony over that of the creditor. The Eleventh Circuit affirmed the district court's finding that recusal was not

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warranted where there was no evidence in the record that the courtroom deputy had a role in the judge's substantive decision-making process. A mere connection or relationship to chambers is not enough to invoke recusal.

**Bankruptcy Court Cases**

***Hanson v. Brown (In re Brown)***

541 B.R. 906 (Bankr. M.D. Fla. 2015) (Jennemann, J.)

Bankruptcy court found that debt owed from debtor to her minor child, which arose from the debtor's unilateral closing of the child's college savings account and retaining the funds in the account, is non-dischargeable under both sections 523(a)(6) and 523(a)(15). Section 523(a)(15) applies to a debt owed to a child and should be construed broadly and liberally to this case where the child obtained a pre-petition judgment against the mother for the improper use of the funds.

***In re Mullen***

2015 WL 8252928 (Bankr. M.D. Fla. Nov. 16, 2015) (Glenn, J.)

In debtors' Chapter 13 case, bank did not timely file a proof of claim as to bank's first mortgage on debtors' property. The debtors filed a proof of claim on behalf of the bank, but the proof of claim was not timely under Rule 3004. Thereafter, the debtors amended their plan and provided for the bank's claim based on the amounts set forth in the claim filed by the debtors. Several months after the plan was confirmed, the bank filed its own proof of claim and moved the bankruptcy court to allow its claim as timely. The bankruptcy court held that, although a secured creditor is not required to file a proof of claim, the proof of claim "affects its right to receive payment under a Chapter 13 plan[.]" and equity demanded that the bank's untimely claim be disallowed, even as an amendment. The court did not discuss the effect, if any, on the bank's lien after the completion of the Chapter 13 plan.

***In re HWA Properties, Inc.***

2016 WL 67786 (Bankr. M.D. Fla. Jan. 6, 2016) (Delano, J.)

Bankruptcy court denied Chapter 11 debtor's request for bar order in conjunction with compromise and plan of reorganization. Among the many disputes with creditors, the debtor had made a number of pre-petition transfers, and its largest unsecured creditor contended that those transfers were avoidable under section 548. The debtor eventually reached a global compromise with the largest unsecured creditor and its primary secured creditors, which settlement included



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the pre-petition transferees, the debtor's principals, and certain entities owned by the debtor's principals. The compromise afforded certain treatment to the debtor's creditors and also included non-debtor releases and a bar order in favor of the debtor's principals and their related entities. Based on the compromise, the plan proposed that the debtor would transfer its assets to another entity, leaving the reorganized debtor with no assets. The U.S. Trustee objected, as did creditors of the debtor's principals and their entities. The bankruptcy court thoroughly analyzed the *Dow Corning* factors as required by *Munford* and *Seaside Engineering*. Among the factors weighing against the releases and bar order, the court found that: (1) if the reorganized debtor was left with no assets, then the bar orders were not necessary for the reorganization, and (2) the released non-debtors contributed no substantial assets to the reorganization. Notably, the primary objectors were not creditors of the debtor, but the court found they were most affected by the plan – for the debtor's principals to try to resolve their issues with their own creditors in the context of the debtor's bankruptcy case was “a step too far.”

**News from the Jacksonville Bankruptcy Bar Association**

A silent auction and other donations at the December 16, 2015 JBBA Holiday party raised over \$2,000 for BLES.

The Pro Se Legal Clinic hosted by JALA (Jacksonville Area Legal Aid) is fully staffed by two attorneys each month for 2016.

## **News from the Central Florida Bankruptcy Law Association**

CFBLA is now accepting applications for Membership! If you have not already done so, be certain to renew your membership by February 15, 2016 to take advantage of the \$25 discount. Go to [www.cfbla.org](http://www.cfbla.org) and click the membership application link. If you're new to CFBLA check out our website for some great information, including how to become a member.

CFBLA finished up 2015 with a flourish! Holland and Knight provided a super venue for the group and their guests to experience a fun filled Holiday Extravaganza. Foodie Catering served up fabulous party cuisine and libations. It was a relaxing and cheerful time to catch up with each other and to get to better know our local Judges, as well as our new Chief Judge Michael Williamson.



**December** was election month. The new officers for CFBLA are: Cynthia Lewis – President; Ryan Davis – Vice President; Michael Nardella – Treasurer; and Esther McKean – Secretary. New members of the Board of Directors are Jack Brennan and Jonathan Sykes.

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**November** programming brought together an informational panel discussion on the recent *Caulkett* decision from the US Supreme Court. The lively panel, comprised of Alexis Leventhal, Jonathan Sykes, Cynthia Lewis and Robert Branson, was moderated by Andrew Roy.



**January** started off big with an event on January 21, 2016 jointly hosted with the Federal Bar Association: Fifty Years of Justice: A History of the U.S. District Court for The Middle District of Florida, featuring Professor James M. Denham, who penned the book. Other presenters included: Jim Leusner, Investigator & former Orlando Sentinel Reporter, and Jules S. Cohen; Senior U.S. District Judge Patricia Fawsett, U.S. District Judge Paul G. Byron, and Mark L. Horwitz were special panelists along with U.S. Magistrate Judge Anthony E. Porcelli as Master of Ceremonies.

**February** continues the momentum with the State of the District Presentation given by Chief Judge Michael Williamson on February 18, 2016 in the main entry hall of the George C. Young Federal Courthouse. CFBLA continues its support of Junior Achievement and the Orange County School Board bringing Credit Abuse Resistance Education “CARE” training to our high school students. We have three dates in February to volunteer, for those interested in volunteering please check the CFBLA website for contact information.

**March** brings in our annual case law update, which always creates a few laughs while we earn our CLE’s and update ourselves on the latest legal issues. The update(s) will be presented by Brad Saxton and Andrew Roy

**April** 29th is the Annual Seminar. This year promises to be a great program! Save the Date!

CFBLA is moving and shaking for 2016!! Be sure you are a part of the events!

## **News from the Southwest Florida Bankruptcy Professional Association**

The Southwest Florida Bankruptcy Professional Association's Annual Alexander L. Paskay Memorial Bankruptcy Professionals Dinner was held on Thursday, October 15, 2015.

Honored at the event were our esteemed judiciary, including the Honorable Michael G. Williamson, Chief United States Bankruptcy Judge, and the Honorable Caryl E. Delano, United States Bankruptcy Judge.

Also honored at the event were the Honorable Sherri Polster Chappell, United States District Judge, and the Honorable Mac R. McCoy, United States Magistrate Judge.

Also recognized at the event were Paul A. Giordano, who was recognized for his distinguished service to the Association, and Luis E. Rivera, who was presented with the Alexander L. Paskay Professionalism Award.

## **Upcoming Bar Events**

### **Fort Myers**

- January 28 @ 12:00 pm      Monthly Luncheon  
Location: Jury Assembly Room, United States Courthouse &  
Federal Building, Fort Myers
- February 25 @ 12:00 pm      Monthly Luncheon: State of the District by Chief Judge Michael G.  
Williamson  
Location: Jury Assembly Room, United States Courthouse &  
Federal Building, Fort Myers
- March 24 @ 12:00 pm      Monthly Luncheon  
Location: Jury Assembly Room, United States Courthouse &  
Federal Building, Fort Myers

### **Jacksonville**

- February 3 @ 12:00 pm      Monthly Luncheon: State of the District by Chief Judge Michael G.  
Williamson  
Location: The River Club
- March 9 @ 12:00 pm      Monthly Luncheon: JBBA sponsored Clerk's Appreciation Luncheon  
Location: The River Club

### **Orlando**

- January 28 @ 11:45 am      OCBA Monthly Luncheon  
Location: Church Street Ballroom
- January 29 @ 12:00 pm      OCBA Bankruptcy Law Committee Meeting  
Location: OCBA Center
- February 6 @ 11:00 am      OCBA 4th Annual Diversity Picnic  
Location: FAMU School of Law
- February 18 @ 12:00 pm      Monthly Luncheon: State of the District by Chief Judge Michael G.  
Williamson  
Location: George C. Young Courthouse Atrium
- February 25 @ 11:45 am      OCBA Monthly Luncheon  
Location: Church Street Ballroom

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- February 25 @ 5:30 pm      OCBA Evening with the Judiciary - Suits and Stegosauruses  
Location: Orlando Science Center
- March 17 @ 12:00 pm      Monthly Luncheon: Case Law Update by Brad Saxton and Andrew  
Roy of Winderweedle, Haines, Ward and Woodman, P.A.  
Location: GrayRobinson
- April 29                      CFBLA Annual Bankruptcy Seminar – Location: Embassy Suites

**Tampa**

- January 25 @ 5:30 pm      Chapter 13 Judicial Liaison Meeting  
Location: The Floridian Palace Hotel, 905 N. Florida Ave., Tampa
- February 2 @ 12:00 pm      Consumer Lunch: 10 Practice Pointers for Consumer Cases  
by Judge K. Rodney May  
Location: 5th Floor training room, Sam Gibbons Courthouse  
*Pizza and Drinks Provided!*
- February 4 @ 5:00 pm      Happy Hour to benefit TBBBA's pro bono program  
Location: TBA
- February 9 @ 12:00 pm      CLE Luncheon: State of the District by Chief Judge Michael G.  
Williamson  
Location: The University Club
- March 8 @ 12:00 pm      CLE Luncheon  
Location: The University Club
- March 17 @ 12:00 pm      Judge McEwen's Brown Bag Mentoring Session - Topic: TBA  
Location: 5th Floor training room, Sam Gibbons Courthouse
- March 21 @ 5:30 pm      Chapter 7 Judicial Liaison Meeting  
Location: The Floridian Palace Hotel, 905 N. Florida Ave., Tampa
- April 5 @ 12:00 pm      Consumer Lunch: Proposed New and Amended Local Rules  
by Judge Caryl E. Delano  
Location: 5th Floor training room, Sam Gibbons Courthouse  
*Pizza and Drinks Provided!*
- April 8 @ 12:00 pm      TBBBA's 18th Annual Golf Tournament  
Location: Bay Palms Golf Club, MacDill AFB, Tampa
- April 12 @ 12:00 pm      CLE Luncheon  
Location: The University Club

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We are seeking suggestions, ideas, articles, photos, news – and anything you'd like to share.

Please submit all items to be considered for the April edition by March 31, 2016 to:  
[newsletter@flmb.uscourts.gov](mailto:newsletter@flmb.uscourts.gov)