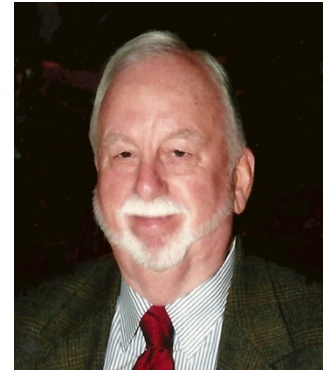


## **TRUSTEE'S CORNER**

### **Meet Leigh R. Meininger, Chapter 7 Panel Trustee, Orlando**

By: Jill Kelso, Orlando Office of the U.S. Trustee



Leigh R. Meininger is a Chapter 7 Panel Trustee for the Middle District of Florida, Orlando Division. Leigh, who was born in Buffalo, New York, is a second career attorney. Before graduating from the University of Florida with Masters of Accounting and Juris Doctor degrees in 1988, Leigh worked in various businesses and held accounting positions with Arthur Andersen & Co., Associates Corporation of North America, Aristar, Inc., and John Alden Life Insurance Company.

Leigh received his appointment to the panel in 1988, right after graduating from law school. He had no prior bankruptcy experience. In addition to serving as a chapter 7 trustee, Leigh has also represented debtors, creditors, and other interested parties in chapter 7, 11, and 13 bankruptcy cases and other bankruptcy matters.

In speaking about his position as a chapter 7 trustee, Leigh stated that, “[w]hat I like about being a trustee is that it involves numerous areas of law (i.e., family, contracts, real estate, personal injury, etc.), and it allows me to utilize my experiences in accounting and business. Each case is a new and a separate experience. Although many cases are routine, I am frequently assigned cases that challenge my legal and business knowledge.”

On a personal note, bankruptcy is a family matter for the Meiningers. Leigh has been married to his wife, Joni, for 59 years. Joni has worked as his case manager throughout the duration of Leigh’s appointment as a chapter 7 trustee. Leigh and Joni have six children, two of whom are bankruptcy lawyers, 17 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren. Leigh’s son, John, practices bankruptcy law in Orlando, and his son, Stephen, is a bankruptcy lawyer and chapter 7 panel trustee in Tampa. In addition, Leigh’s son-in-law, Robert Ewald, is the president of Ewald Auctions, Inc., which has handled numerous bankruptcy auctions.

For fun, Leigh is somewhat of a technology enthusiast, especially in the area of audio/video. As a result, his home systems include various high-tech electronic gadgets, such as a music server (for which he is still working out the kinks) and satellite, cable, and over-the-air receivers. Leigh's components are all linked together with a Denon A/V receiver. Leigh realizes that the satellite (DIRECTV), cable and over-the-air services are redundant since they all get the same programming. But he just could not resist getting all three!

### **LEIGH'S PRACTICE POINTER FOR ATTORNEYS:**

Many debtors come to Section 341 Meetings of Creditors not knowing what to expect. As a result, many debtors are nervous and even fearful of the experience. Trustees are required to ask a number of specific questions mandated by the U.S. Trustee's Manual. In addition, other questions by the trustee can be anticipated based on information set forth in the debtors' bankruptcy schedules and statements. If debtors' attorneys would take the time to inform their clients as to what questions will be asked and why the trustee is asking these questions, it would go a long way to reduce debtors' stress at Section 341 Meetings.