

## **TRUSTEE SPOTLIGHT**

### **Meet Aaron Cohen, Chapter 7 Trustee, Jacksonville Division**

**By: Miriam G. Suarez, Orlando Office of the U.S. Trustee**



Aaron R. Cohen is a Chapter 7 panel trustee in the Jacksonville Division of the Middle District of Florida. He has served in that capacity since his appointment in 1997. Aaron is originally from Cleveland, Ohio and moved to Florida when he was six years old. He graduated from the University of South Florida with a B.A. in History, attended law school at “THE” University of Florida and graduated from UF in December 1985. Aaron met his wife, Lisa, while at law school; their meeting was prompted by their law school professors when they sat them alphabetically. Soon after learning that Lisa was only 20 years old and already in law school, he realized she was also way smarter than he was, so he married her. Lisa practices bankruptcy law in Gainesville and Jacksonville, Florida.

After graduating law school, Aaron was an Assistant County Attorney for Marion County, Florida. In 1987, he joined the law firm of Lansing Roy, P.A. and later became a partner in Pinkston & Cohen where he worked with the late Julian Pinkston from 1992 - 2000. In 2000, he opened his own firm, Aaron R. Cohen, P.A.

Before becoming a panel trustee, Aaron practiced under all chapters of the Bankruptcy Code, representing both debtors and creditors and an occasional creditor’s committee. He continues to maintain his private practice. In his spare time, Aaron fosters his “deep and abiding interest in all things motorcycle,” listens to electric guitar driven blues music - especially live as he tries to

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see three or four shows a year, and studies early religious texts (from about 500 B.C.E. to 400 C.E.) as an amateur historian.

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

- Debtor attorneys need to spend more time with potential clients. Sometimes the best answer is not to file bankruptcy, or at least not immediately.
- Debtor attorneys need to be more actively involved in the preparation of the debtor's schedules. Sending a pre-printed packet home with the debtor to fill out should not form the basis of the schedules. Each and every question needs to be asked to a debtor by the attorney.
- Ask appropriate follow-up questions and use examples. Spending the time upfront with a client avoids most non-disclosure problems that come up later.
- Finally, use common sense. If a debtor has a \$450,000 house and brings you a list of household goods that only total \$850, there is usually something wrong. If there really is only \$850 worth of household goods, putting an explanatory note into the schedules or statement of financial affairs will at least put the trustee on notice that there may be a reasonable explanation for the low values.