



**By: Hon. Caryl E. Delano, Chief Judge**

One of the joys of sitting on the bankruptcy bench in the Middle District of Florida is working with my colleagues towards a common goal: to enable each of the constituencies with whom we work—lawyers, Clerk’s Office staff, our chambers staff, and pro se parties—to work efficiently and effectively so that we judges are able to rule on the merits on the issues and disputes before us. I am excited to serve as the Middle District’s seventh chief bankruptcy judge and look forward to assisting our Court to further this goal as we move into the next decade. I am grateful to our District Court judges—who are tasked by statute with appointing the bankruptcy chief judge—and to my colleagues for their support.

You all know that when Judge Karen Jennemann became chief judge in 2011, she started the District on the road to uniformity. What you may not know is that her successor as chief, Judge Michael Williamson, had worked towards uniform procedures in the Tampa Division starting with his appointment in 2000. When I came on the bench in 2008, I joined four other Tampa judges (Judge Paskay, Judge Williamson, Judge May, and Judge McEwen) at monthly meetings in which we reviewed our procedures and came to a consensus on most of them. Our experiences working together, with Judge Williamson’s guidance, proved to be invaluable when we started the same process with the four other judges in our District (Judges Glenn and Funk in Jacksonville and Judges Jennemann and Briskman in Orlando).

As chief judge, Judge Jennemann launched The Source – one-stop shopping on the Court’s website for the Bankruptcy Code and Rules, Local Rules and Administrative Orders, Negative Notice and Accompanying Orders Lists, Chapter 7 Trustee Pages, our Style Guide, CLE programs, our judges’ judicial opinions, and the View from the Bench Case Digest. When Judge Williamson was appointed chief judge in October 2015, he vowed to continue on with Judge Jennemann’s vision for uniform procedures. One of his goals was to implement a Procedure Manual with instructions and forms for attorneys and pro se parties. With Judge Jennemann’s continued assistance, in September 2017, we added our Procedure Manual & Forms to The Source.

CM/ECF users were recently sent a survey asking what they like about the Procedure Manual and what they would like to see in it. The good news is that those who use the Manual like it. You've asked for more procedures and forms. My first goal for 2020 is to work with the judges of all Divisions to expand and improve upon the Procedure Manual and to provide more sample motions and orders. We want The Source and the Procedure Manual to be the first place that attorneys and their assistants look when figuring how or what to file and before drafting a motion or an order. Stay tuned over the coming months for announcements regarding additions and revisions to the Procedure Manual.

On another note, I am proud of our Court's judges for so many reasons, not only for the work they do in our District, but also for the work they do to improve the bankruptcy system nationwide (and in at least one judge's case—guess who?—worldwide). Here is a quick rundown on our judges' recent activities:

In November, **Judges Karen Jennemann, Jerry Funk, and Arthur Briskman** will celebrate the 26th anniversary of their appointment to the Middle District's bankruptcy bench.

**Judge Michael Williamson** was recently appointed by Chief Justice John Roberts to a three-year term on the Space and Facilities Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States (JCUS). This past summer, Judge Williamson traveled again to Afghanistan, this time to teach the Afghani bankruptcy code—that he drafted—to judges, attorneys, and bankers. How many of us can say we drafted a bankruptcy code?

**Judge Catherine Peek McEwen** has just completed her three-year term as the sole bankruptcy judge "Observer" to JCUS (this means she didn't vote and couldn't talk). She continues work in Washington, D.C., representing the bankruptcy courts, including working on the 2019 Bankruptcy Venue Reform Act. The Act would require businesses to file in the jurisdiction where the business actually operates—and not in Delaware or New York. And this month, Judge McEwen started a three-year term as the Governor for the Eleventh Circuit for the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges.

**Judge Roberta Colton** is one of five court-appointed judicial mediators endeavoring to bring the Puerto Rico PROMESA bankruptcy case to a consensual resolution. Judge Colton is frequently asked how she likes spending so much time in Puerto Rico. The answer: she hasn't been there yet. Because the lawyers and bankers are located in or adjacent to New York City, all of the mediation sessions take place in Manhattan.

Effective February 3, 2020, **Judge Cynthia Jackson's** duty station will move from Orlando to Jacksonville to fill the vacancy created by Judge Glenn's passing. Although we are all saddened at the loss of Judge Glenn, we are delighted that Judge Jackson is able to return to her hometown. We expect the replacement for Judge Glenn's position, with an Orlando duty station, to be filled by the Eleventh Circuit's appointment in early 2020.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention how sad all the judges are by Judge Glenn's untimely passing. Judge Glenn was an incredibly thoughtful, intelligent, and positive person. He is very much missed by our entire staff.

Finally, I would like to thank Judge Williamson for his four years of service as our chief judge. The Middle District and the State of Florida have benefited from Judge Williamson's leadership—as a leading bankruptcy practitioner, as the founder of the View from the Bench annual seminar (coming up on its 36th year), as a moving force behind The Florida Bar's Business Law Section and UCC/Bankruptcy Committee, as an active member of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, as a bankruptcy professor at Stetson University College of Law, and as a mentor to many. I am honored to succeed Judge Williamson as chief judge and grateful for his support.