



Hon. Catherine Peek McEwen
Receives NCBJ Public Outreach Award
By: Chief Judge Caryl E. Delano

One of the things I enjoy most about being the chief bankruptcy judge in the Middle District is the opportunity to brag about the incredible work being done by our judges. Today, I am delighted to shine the spotlight on our own Judge Catherine Peek McEwen.

Last summer, the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges announced its solicitation for nominations for the NCBJ's 2021 Public Outreach Award. Almost immediately, our judges decided to nominate Judge McEwen, and before we could make the nomination, Chief Judge Laurel Isicoff of the Southern District and Chief Judge Karen Specie of the Northern District contacted me with the same suggestion.

In choosing a recipient of the Public Outreach Award, the selection committee considered the extent to which the nominee's public outreach activities have had a significant impact in the community; have involved, increased the profile of, or positively affected the bankruptcy courts and the federal courts generally; and have demonstrated a commitment to volunteerism and community service. Those of you

who know Judge McEwen know that she is the personification of these considerations.

Judge Isicoff, Judge Specie, and I, on behalf of the judges of the Middle District, drafted a letter nominating Judge McEwen in which we described her many public service and public outreach activities. To *very* briefly summarize, Judge McEwen:

- Helped establish the C.A.R.E. program in the Tampa Division of our Court and has served on C.A.R.E.'s National Advisory Board for many years;
- Personally wrote, directed, and promoted a professionally produced *Bankruptcy Basics* video (featuring Tampa judges, court staff, and attorneys, and narrated by a local television news anchor). *Bankruptcy Basics* has been translated into multiple languages and is endorsed by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. By October 2008, over 92,000 people had watched the video on the AO's website;
- Currently serves as the Co-Chair of The Florida Bar's Standing *Pro Bono* Legal Services Committee;
- Started the Tampa Division's *Pro Bono* Bankruptcy Clinic;
- Has sponsored numerous judicial education summits to educate her state and federal judicial colleagues on how they can encourage and contribute to public service;
- Obtained a Diversity Grant from the Federal Bar Association's Foundation and organized a program titled *Pathway to the Bankruptcy Bench: Building a Pipeline*. The program mirrored a program offered by the Judicial Conference of the United States' Committee on the Administration of the Bankruptcy System;
- Currently serves as the Judicial Chair of the Business Law Section of the Florida Bar's Bankruptcy/UCC Committee and on the Section's Diversity Fellowship Program;
- Served, from 2017 to 2019, as the Observer at the Judicial Conference of the United States (appointed by Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.);
- Currently serves on the Judicial Conference's Advisory Committee on Bankruptcy Rules (again appointed by Chief Justice Roberts);
- Teaches Sunday School classes at her parish church and regularly volunteers her time at several charities that provide assistance to the underprivileged; and

- Serves as a softball coach for seven- and eight-year-old girls at Bayshore Little League (her favorite extracurricular activity).

Many organizations—too many to mention here—have recognized Judge McEwen’s years of extraordinary service to the local Tampa community, to the State of Florida, and to the legal profession. Perhaps no award is more prestigious than the Florida Supreme Court’s inaugural *Chief Justice’s Distinguished Federal Judicial Service Award*, which was awarded to Judge McEwen in 2016 in recognition of her tireless commitment to *pro bono* service.

Judge McEwen’s colleagues—Judge Karen Jennemann, Judge Michael Williamson, Judge Lori Vaughan, Chief Judge Laurel Isicoff, and Father C. Timothy Corcoran, III (U.S. Bankruptcy Judge, Ret.)—and I were delighted to be in attendance when she was named as the recipient of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges’ 2021 Public Outreach award at its annual conference on October 6, in Indianapolis.

Please join me in congratulating Judge Catherine Peek McEwen on this well-deserved recognition for her many years of public service.