



Roadways to the Bench Seminar held Nationwide

**By: Hon. Roberta A. Colton and
Hon. Grace E. Robson**

On April 3, 2023, Roadways to the Bench was presented to a national audience in 38 cities. Roadways is an event sponsored by the Judicial Conference of the United States. It is intended to expand and attract a diverse pool of applicants for Bankruptcy and Magistrate

judge positions by making the process more transparent. More than 620 federal judges and over 2,400 attorneys and law students participated in this year's event. Two cities in the Middle District of Florida hosted the programs: Orlando and Tampa. The National Program was livestreamed to all of the host cities, and then each city conducted an in-person roundtable experience.

Orlando —

The Orlando program was co-chaired by Magistrate Judge Embry Kidd and Bankruptcy Judge Grace E. Robson. The attorney co-chairs were Jeremy Bloor, Stephanie Alcalde, Jonathan Sykes, and Annie Blanc, who assisted to get the word out about the event to the law students and attorneys.

The Orlando program took place at the jury assembly room at the George C. Young Federal Annex Courthouse. We had 11 judges in attendance, including District Judges Antoon, Dalton, and Howard, Magistrate Judges Kidd, Irick, Hoffman-Price, Norway, and Barksdale, and Bankruptcy Judges Vaughan, Robson, and Geyer. Jennifer Harrington and Ali Kamalzadeh of the Orlando chapter of the Federal Bar Association assisted with the check-in for the event.

Over 70 people registered for the event. After the livestream was broadcast, the attendees rotated to a different table at least three times and were able to have discussions with at least three types of judges, getting different perspectives on the many and varying pathways to the bench. The attendees had varied interests, were engaging, and asked thoughtful questions. We asked the attendees to complete exit questionnaires, and the responses were all positive.

I would like to acknowledge and give special thanks to Richard Banke, Israel Barreto, Chris Brubaker, Luis Vega, Mia Mom, and Lauren Reese, as well as Sharon Adelhelm (who retired shortly before the event), who worked so hard to make the program seem effortless! They assisted with the use and configuration of the jury assembly room

Court Connection
Volume No. 12 – Issue No. 2
April 2023

(including moving all of the furniture around), coordinated our IT needs, worked with the food/beverage vendors, and so much more – thank you!!!



Orlando participants, including Bankruptcy Judges Geyer and Robson



Orlando participants watching the nationwide livestream

Tampa —

The Tampa program was headed up by its judicial co-chairs and its attorney co-chair. Magistrate Judge Julie Sneed and Bankruptcy Judge Roberta Colton were the judicial co-chairs. Stephanie Lieb and Dana Robbins were the attorney co-chairs. The event took place at the Chester Ferguson Bar Building.

Circuit Judge Charles Wilson of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit kicked off the event with a talk about the importance of diversity in the judiciary and an explanation of the process for the selection of Bankruptcy Judges. District Judge Mary Scriven offered the Tampa participants insight to her own road to the bench with valuable advice and encouragement.

Following the National Program, Tampa participants spent time in three round table discussions. The judges participating in the roundtables included Eleventh Circuit Court Judge Wilson, District Court Judges Scriven and Sneed, Magistrate Judges Porcelli, Flynn, and Sansone, as well as Chief Bankruptcy Judge Delano, Bankruptcy Judges Colton and McEwen, a special guest, Bankruptcy Judge Barnett from the Western District of Tennessee.

After spirited discussion, the participants shared a glass of wine and appetizers at a reception sponsored by the Bench Bar Fund and the Federal Bar Association.



Tampa participants, including Bankruptcy Judges Delano, McEwen, and Colton



Tampa participants watching the nationwide livestream