

## **Investiture of Bankruptcy Judge Denise Barnett**

By: Chief Judge Caryl E. Delano



*Hon. Denise E. Barnett*  
*United States Bankruptcy Judge, Western District of Tennessee*

On July 14, 2023, in Memphis, Tennessee, Sixth Circuit Judge Bernice Donald (ret.) formally administered the oath of office to United States Bankruptcy Judge Denise Barnett. Chief District Judge Sheryl Lipman presided at the ceremony and was joined on the bench by Chief Bankruptcy Judge Jennie Latta, Bankruptcy Judges Jimmy Croom and Ruthie Hagan, and the District and Magistrate Judges of the Western District of Tennessee.

I was honored that Judge Barnett asked me to speak at the ceremony. And I was delighted that that so many of my Florida colleagues—Bankruptcy Judges Catherine McEwen, Roberta Colton, Lori Vaughan, Jacob Brown, and Jason Burgess and Magistrate Judge Julie Sneed—and attorneys from throughout the State of Florida traveled to Memphis to celebrate Judge Barnett’s many accomplishments.

Judge Barnett’s career has demonstrated her willingness to travel. Born in Jamaica, Judge Barnett earned her bachelor’s degree from the City University of New York. After graduating from college, Judge Barnett moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, to attend the William Mitchell College of Law. And after she graduated from law school, Judge Barnett moved once again, this time to Jacksonville, Florida, to serve as a judicial law clerk to Bankruptcy Judge George Proctor.

At the conclusion of her two-year clerkship term, Judge Barnett worked in private practice, primarily with the prominent Jacksonville law firm of Smith, Hulsey &

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Busey. During this time, she represented consumer debtors, Chapter 11 business debtors, creditors, and bankruptcy trustees. In other words, Judge Barnett handled the full gamut of bankruptcy issues.

In 2002, the Office of the United States Trustee advertised an opening for a Trial Attorney in Tampa, and, once again, Judge Barnett was prepared to move. During her 19 years with the U.S. Trustee's Office, Judge Barnett earned a reputation for always being prepared, always being poised, and always being collegial. As an attorney, Judge Barnett embodied all the qualities that judges love to see in the lawyers who appear before them. Although she vigorously represented the interests of the United States Trustee, she was always a consummate professional. Judge Barnett was also active in the legal community and served on the board of the Tampa Bay Bankruptcy Bar Association.

Please join me in congratulating Judge Barnett on her appointment to the bankruptcy bench!



*L to R: Judge Lori Vaughan, Judge Catherine McEwen, Judge Barnett, Judge Caryl Delano, and Judge Roberta Colton at Judge Barnett's investiture*