

Pro Bono Week 2025: Celebrating Service Across the Middle District of Florida By: Hon. Grace E. Robson

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Florida marked Pro Bono Week 2025 with a robust slate of events designed to honor volunteer attorneys, promote expanded participation in pro bono representation, and strengthen pro bono engagement across all divisions. Held October 19–25, this year’s celebration highlighted both recognition and education, reflecting the Court’s ongoing commitment to expanding access to justice.

Our pro bono week began in Tampa on Monday, October 20, where Judge McEwen delivered a presentation to the Hillsborough County Bar Association Senior Counsel Section titled “*How to Become an Emeritus Pro Bono Attorney.*” The program was hosted at the Chester H. Ferguson Law Center and provided practical guidance for senior practitioners interested in leveraging their experience to support underserved clients in bankruptcy matters. That same evening,



Judge Colton hosted a reception in her chambers recognizing Tampa’s pro bono volunteers and expressing gratitude for their continued service.

On Wednesday, October 22, Jacksonville attorneys gathered at Pour Taproom for a Pro Bono Week gratitude event. The informal setting provided an opportunity for volunteers, bar leaders, and Court staff to celebrate local accomplishments and reinforce the importance of continued community involvement.



Orlando’s celebration was in two parts. The first was on Thursday, October 23, with a Pro Bono Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast hosted in the Judges’ chambers. The event honored practitioners who have devoted their time and expertise to pro bono bankruptcy representation throughout the year.

On Friday, October 24, the Court hosted a district-wide virtual program called “*Overcoming Barriers to Taking on Bankruptcy Cases Pro Bono.*” There were about 40 registrants who attended this Zoom presentation. We heard from Courtney Jones, the manager of pro bono development for Community Legal Services, Kathleen DiSanto of Bush Ross in Tampa, and Michael Paasch of Dinsmore’s Orlando office. These speakers provided practical strategies, resources, and considerations for attorneys interested in taking on cases on a pro bono basis. I was pleased to have several attorneys approach me after the program to indicate that they registered and volunteered their time with the Middle District’s online pro se clinic.



The final event was on October 28 in Orlando, where the Kevin E. Mangum Memorial Pro Bono Excellence Award was presented to Robert Branson during the Central Florida Bankruptcy Law Association Happy Hour hosted by BakerHostetler. The award recognized Mr. Branson’s exceptional and long-standing pro bono service to those in need.

I am proud of the practitioners in the Middle District of Florida! This year’s events highlight the Middle District’s strong culture of volunteerism and its commitment to broadening access to justice. Pro Bono Week 2025 celebrated not only the contributions of dedicated attorneys but also the collaborative effort among the Court, the bar, and community partners to serve those in need. As the filings continue to rise, so does the need for pro bono assistance. I look forward to Pro Bono Week celebrations becoming an annual event in the Middle District.