

**Report to the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges
Third Circuit
September 30, 2024**

Please find, below, reports from districts within the Circuit as reported out by the district.

United States Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania

- Overall, new case filings are up 10.5% during the first six months of 2024, compared with the same timeframe in 2023. New case filings are showing strong gains in 2024 and have been rising every month starting in January with only the June number dropping off slightly from the trend. Of note, the Court's chapter 11 filings through the first six months of 2024 already exceed the total number of chapter 11 filings received in all of 2023.
- Under the leadership of Judge Carlota Bohm, our outreach program is completing a video on "bankruptcy basics" for distribution to students. It will be released in advance of the new school year.
- In April, we hosted over 60 high school students to learn about bankruptcy law, consumer credit, and careers in the judiciary. They also witnessed a mock trial involving a student loan dischargeability action. Invitations for our next program, scheduled for October 28, 2024, have already been circulated to neighboring high schools.
- Our Court recently initiated the second installment of its Judicial Outreach Initiative Encouraging Diversity (JOINED) Program which intends to foster and develop age, disability, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the federal court system. This summer, the JOINED Program welcomed 15 interns and staff in both paid and unpaid positions.
- As previously noted, our Pittsburgh operations are slated to move from the U.S. Steel Tower (a commercial office tower) to the Joseph F. Weis, Jr. U.S. Courthouse. Construction on new space for the clerk's office has already begun, but due to problems with the courthouse's fire suppression system, progress has been slowed. Our projected move to the courthouse is now expected to occur in September 2025.

United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

- Judge Chan became Chief Judge on 6/14/24.
- Judge Coleman will retire on 7/31/24.

- The Third Circuit will appoint a judge to replace Judge Coleman’s vacancy and the application period for such position ended 6/27/24.
- Judge Mayer is now a member of the FJC Education Advisory Committee.
- The Local Rules Committee was reconstituted and the first set of recommendations are out for comment.
- Our Clerk of Court, Tim McGrath, continues to serve on the Case Management Modernization Board, along with Judge Martin Glenn, providing input from the bankruptcy community on the replacement for CM/ECF.

United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of New Jersey

- Currently has 8 sitting judges, soon to be back to 9 – 4 in Newark, 3 in Trenton and 2 in Camden.
- The Circuit has approved Mark E. Hall, Esq., a partner at Fox Rothschild, to fill the Trenton seat that was left vacant when Kathryn C. Ferguson retired in August 2023.
- Michael B. Kaplan continues to serve as Chief Judge. Judge Kaplan also serves currently on the FJC Committee undertaking revisions to the Manual for Complex Litigation.
- Through the end of May, 2024, our District’s filings are up 18% over the same period from the previous year.
- Our Lawyers Advisory Committee created a Complex Chapter 11 Guidelines subcommittee, pursuant to Judge Kaplan’s direction to update Local Rules. Our Clerk, Jeanne Naughton, will be overseeing a full review and update of our Local Rules soon.
- In December 2023, in conjunction with The Historical Society, we dedicated a permanent, museum-quality display addressing the history of the Bankruptcy Code and of our Court. The display occupies the first-floor corridor outside of our Clerk’s office in the Trenton Courthouse.
- All our Judges participate in an annual Bench Bar meeting, which was held on May 3, 2024. In addition, several of our judges participate in periodic town hall and brown bag lunch program organized by the Association of the Federal Bar of NJ and our bankruptcy Court Lawyers Advisory Committee.
- Clerk, Jeanne Naughton serves as the Third Circuit representative for BCAG, which continues efforts to illustrate and meet the day to day operational and administrative challenges bankruptcy courts are facing resulting from year over year decreasing salary and other allotments.

- Judge Gravelle is the 3rd Circuit representative on the BJAG.
- Judge Poslusny is the Bankruptcy Court representative to the AO's Space and Facilities Committee and is also on the Third Circuit's Space & Facilities Committee. Judge Poslusny also serves as the Judicial Co-chair for the ABI Mid-Atlantic Conference.
- Judge Stacey Meisel is an At-Large Governor on the NCBJ Board and serves on several Committees; Judge Vincent Papalia serves on the Legislative and Rules Committees.
- Our Clerk, Jeanne Naughton, and staff joined district court staff in participating in the annual celebrity read event at the Hawthorne School in Newark, NJ, serving an underprivileged population of young readers, striving to attain grade level reading abilities, K through 8.
- Our two Camden judges (Andrew Altenburg and Jerrold Poslusny) participate with students in Constitution Center related programs in the greater Philadelphia PA area, as well as schools from as far as Baltimore, DC, and Long Island.
- Judge Gravelle is active in the public education forum, serving on the Third Circuit's Community Outreach Committee.
- Judge Gambardella served on the Planning Committee and as a Panelist along with other Judges and Attorneys for the New Jersey Chapter of the National Association of Women Judges "Color of Justice Program" in June 2024, hosting students from Willingboro High School. The National Association of Women Judges created the "Color of Justice Program" to advance diverse students' interests and pursuit of a career in the law.

United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware

Our news since the September 30, 2024 report follows.

- The District Court designated John T. Dorsey as the Chief Judge for a term commencing July 1, 2024 and ending on June 30, 2027. Good luck John!
- The Court welcomed two interns this summer. The Delaware Bankruptcy American Inns of Court awarded the Honorable Thomas L. Ambro Fellowship to Michaela Balboni, a rising third year at St. John's University Law School. The Court also participated in a program sponsored by the Delaware State Bar Association (DSBA) which places summer interns in federal and state courts in Delaware. Nabin Adhikari is a rising second year at the Beasley School of Law, Temple University. Each intern receives a stipend from the sponsoring organization and has a two-week stint in each of four judges' chambers.

- The Court hosted all of the interns in the DSBA internship program. Judge Brendan Shannon discussed chapter 13 and they observed his calendar for the day. The DSBA provided pizza for lunch and other judges stopped in to meet the interns.
- Judge Goldblatt and Judge Silverstein are hosting an intern from Wilmington University Law School, which opened this past year. Aviv Maarabi is a part-time first year.
- The Court is planning for its annual law clerk orientation program to be held this year on September 9 and 10. While not finalized, typical topics include an overview of terminology/concepts, ethics (including conflicts), first day motions, sales and DIP financing.
- Along with the District Court, the Bankruptcy Court participated in the Federal Bar Association annual luncheon and gave remarks on the state of the Bankruptcy Court— declaring it to be excellent! Our year-over-year increase in cases as of March 31, 2024 is 55%.
- Third Circuit Judge Kent A. Jordan, who previously sat on the Delaware District Court, has submitted a letter to the President announcing his retirement as of January 15, 2025.
- The Court recently entered a General order Governing Debtor’s Counsel and Creditor Fees in Chapter 13 Cases for cases filed on or after July 1, 2024.

Finally, we have sad news to report. Our former colleague Judge Kevin J. Carey passed away on April 11, 2024. At the request of his wife, Denise, Judge Brendan Shannon gave the eulogy at the mass held at St. Thomas of Villanova Church. The service was attended by hundreds of insolvency professionals from all over the country. We will miss Kevin.