

BANKRUPTCY WORKSHOP A HUGE SUCCESS!

On the mornings of June 2nd and 4th, the University of Miami School of Law teamed up with the Bankruptcy Bar Association of the Southern District of Florida and Dade Legal Aid & Put Something Back to host the 31st annual Bankruptcy Skills Workshop. Responsible for organizing the event were the members of the Steering Committee, the Hon. A. Jay Cristol, Chief United States Bankruptcy Judge Emeritus of the Southern District of Florida, Daniel N. Gonzalez, Esq., Jerry M. Markowitz, Esq., Barbara L. Phillips, Esq., and Kelly K. Roberts, Esq. The two-day, six-hour event covered a variety of topics related to bankruptcy law.

The first session, a panel featuring the Hon. Paul G. Hyman of the Southern District of Florida on recall, Professor Andrew Dawson, the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and Judge A. Jay Cristol Professor of Bankruptcy Law at the University of Miami School of Law as well as of counsel at Sequor Law, and Steven D. Schneiderman, Esq., trial counsel for the Office of the United States Trustee, concerned problems in consumer fee arrangements, specifically fee bifurcation agreements, neglect and lack of diligence, and consideration to judges during electronic proceedings, among other issues. The second panel regarded how to protect against cybersecurity threats, with Jerry Markowitz, Esq. of Markowitz Ringel Trusty & Hartog, P.A., Ido Alexander, Esq., Partner at Leiderman Shelomith Alexander + Somodevilla, PLLC, and Kelly Roberts, Esq. of Roberts Law, PLLC discussing practical ways for firms to protect sensitive data from hackers along with questions of ethics and liability. The final session on the workshop's first day, titled "Chapter 13 Practice: Changes That are Coming or Here To Stay," attended to updates to local rules, mortgage loan forbearance and the Mortgage Modification Program in the wake of COVID-19, courtroom technology, and the bankruptcy court's new Student Loan Program. Jeffrey Fraser, Partner at Albertelli Law, served as moderator for this conversation with panelists Nancy K. Neidich, Esq., Standing Chapter 13 Trustee for the Monroe and Miami-Dade County Division, and

Robin R. Weiner, Esq., Standing Chapter 13 Trustee for the Broward and West Palm Beach County Division.

Day two of the workshop kicked off with a panel on the Small Business Reorganization Act. Aleida Martinez Molina, Partner at Weiss Serota Helfman Cole & Bierman and a Subchapter V Trustee, Linda Leali, founder of Linda Leali P.A. and a Subchapter V Trustee, and Michael S. Hoffman of Hoffman, Larin & Agnetti, P.A., with moderator Alan R. Rosenberg, Esq., Attorney at Markowitz Ringel Trusty & Hartog, P.A., examined the role and costs of the Subchapter V Trustee and best practices for a Subchapter V debtor attorney. The final two sessions provided the perspective of members of the court. In the penultimate conversation, Joe Falzone, the Clerk of Court and Courtroom Deputies for the United States Bankruptcy Court of the Southern District of Florida, reviewed a multitude of topics such as updates on bankruptcy statistics, recent administrative orders, common e-filing mistakes, and clerk's office initiatives. Concluding the workshop was a panel discussion featuring five United States Bankruptcy Court Judges for the Southern District of Florida: The Hon. Laurel M. Isicoff, Chief Judge, the Hon. A. Jay Cristol, the Hon. Erik P. Kimball, the Hon. Scott M. Grossman, and the Hon. Mindy A. Mora. Patricia A. Redmond, Esq. moderated as the judges spoke about emerging issues in consumer bankruptcy.

As morning turned to afternoon on Friday, yet another successful Bankruptcy Skills Workshop was in the books. This year's virtual format did not prevent an impressive turnout, as both days of the workshop had close to 200 participants, and even allowed some panelists and participants to join from locations far from Coral Gables. The South Florida law community will surely look forward to the next iteration of the event as it returns to being in-person in 2022.