December 2011 Issue II



October All Fellows Lunch Program Highlights College Efforts and Afghani Developments

Grant T. Stein, Co-Editor



▲ Judge Williamson with the village elders in Afghanistan.

NCBJ's Honorable Cornelius Blackshear Presidential Fellowship

The Chair of the College, Paul Singer, began the October 12, 2011, All Fellows Lunch Program by introducing the NCBJ's Honorable Cornelius Blackshear Presidential Fellowship Recipients. The Blackshear Presidential Fellowship is discussed in detail in Judge Hopkins' article on page 5.

ACB Foundation and Pro Bono

Paul Singer and Jan Baker, the Chair and President of the College, discussed the tremendous increase in the number and amount of requests to the College for Pro Bono grants, and the effort made to respond to the requests by increasing the amounts being awarded. The percentage of Fellows giving to the Foundation is 31%, with 100% participation in the First Circuit. The College is trying to materially increase the number of donors in an effort to better be able to respond to the numerous and important requests it receives for grants to provide for Pro Bono legal services to those with such needs.

Judge Michael G. Williamson: Commercial Law Developments in Afghanistan

Stephen D. Busey introduced Judge Michael G. Williamson of the Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Florida who has worked on the development of commercial laws in Azerbaijan, Macedonia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and most recently, Afghanistan. Judge Williamson spoke about his experiences in Afghanistan spanning four trips to the country from 2007-2010.

As related by Judge Williamson, in February of 2007 he was part of a team of commercial law technical experts who conducted an assessment of Afghanistan's legal framework for conducting business. Based upon recommendations made by the team, the United States Agency for International Development has tailored their development efforts to fit the situation in Afghanistan. Included within the work undertaken has been establishing laws dealing with secured transactions, leases, mortgages and bankruptcy.

After his initial work in 2007, Judge Williamson returned to conduct training

classes for bankers on these new laws as well as to provide technical assistance on micro-finance and small and medium enterprise lending. Judge Williamson discussed the micro finance loans being made to small businesses which average \$652. These loans have an 89% repayment level. The lender's field staff is 95% Afghan, as are 50% of the senior managers.

Of particular note were the practical difficulties encountered in developing a commercial law system in a Sharia law country that that is widely viewed as "post-devastation" and "still in conflict." During the course of his presentation, Judge Williamson discussed one of the impacts of the long period of strife in Afghanistan is that a significant portion of the country's real estate records have been destroyed. One of the more successful projects undertaken in Afghanistan was the re-creation of these real estate records in order to provide real estate titles to families that have lived in villages for generations with no legal documents to establish their ownership rights.

In 2010, Judge Williamson returned to Afghanistan with Judge Charles G. Case, II, to conduct an assessment of how a new bankruptcy law might be drafted

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Chair's Column

Paul M. Singer, Chair



▲ Paul M. Singer

Gather Together, as Often as Possible

Lately I have been thinking about the many things that make the College special. We of course don't have bricks and mortar like most colleges, but we do have a certain bond

that connects us. That connectivity, which we refer to as "collegiality," is nowhere more evident than in our regional meetings. Several weeks ago I attended the Sixth Circuit meeting that was held in Detroit. That Circuit extends over an area from Michigan all the way through Kentucky to Tennessee and east to Ohio. It is not the largest of our Circuits, but not the smallest either. Under Regent Steve Lerner's excellent leadership, the Sixth Circuit has established a format for its annual gathering that is a perfect combination of events. This year the Circuit had a welcome dinner Friday night that was followed by an excellent educational program Saturday morning, arranged by Greg Schaaf, where two heady subjects, lack of uniformity in the application of bankruptcy law and the interaction of the UCC and real estate transfers, were addressed by Professors Dan Austin from Northeastern and James White from Michigan, respectively. On Saturday afternoon, thanks to Richardo Kilpatrick, we toured a Ford factory to watch the initial production of the 2012 Ford F-150 truck. It is a tour that ought not to be missed, as it reflects the best in America, from the ingenuity of the engineers to the productivity of the work force. On Saturday evening we had a delightful mid-eastern dinner at Judy O'Neill's house in suburban Detroit. It was a spectacular weekend; no wonder Fellows from each state in the Circuit attended. In the same light, I am looking forward to attending the Third Circuit's get-together in Philadelphia in the middle of December.

These regional meetings have become an important part of the fabric of the College. Unfortunately, as we have grown we have overscheduled ourselves, so that our annual meeting in Washington, and our time at the NCBJ, have become loaded with Committee meetings and educational programs. There is virtually no time for a good old-fashioned visit where we meet each other's spouses, learn about each other's kids, and importantly, about each

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President's Column

D.J. (Jan) Baker, President



Induction Approaches for New Fellows

We had a great turnout for the College in Washington at the end of October. For those Fellows who were unable to attend, your presence was

missed! As indicated in Mike Cook's report on behalf of the Board of Regents, an outstanding group of new Fellows was selected this year, and they will be formally inducted at the annual meeting in March of 2012. Their collective experience and accomplishments make them an extremely impressive addition to the College, and they will contribute immeasurably to the life of the College going forward.

The process that culminated in their selection, by the way, occurs every year and represents the culmination of nearly six months worth of work by innumerable Fellows, the Circuit Admissions Councils, the Judicial Nominating Committee, the International Fellows Committee, and the Board of Regents. It is a time-intensive and difficult process - the nomination forms call for a great deal of information that is rarely easy to compile. Nevertheless, over the years, the Fellows of the College collectively have done an incredible job every year in identifying potential new members who would bring distinction to the College. After a potential nominee has been identified, the Fellows working on a nomination must prepare an admittedly rather painstaking application and submit it to the appropriate Council or Committee. Nominations are typically due by mid-August or so, after which Council and Committee members begin the process of reviewing and evaluating the nominations that have been submitted. Each of the 12 Circuit Admissions Councils, along with the Judicial Nominating Committee and the International Fellows Committee, then submits approved nominations to the Board of Regents.

Under the by-laws of the College, the Board of Regents is vested with authority to select new members from the nominees submitted to it. All of the Regents receive the nomination forms early in the fall, in order to allow them to review the rather voluminous documentation that

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Editor's Column

Cecily A. Dumas, Co-Editor

Musings on Stern



've read between fifteen and twenty post-Stern published trial court decisions. According to the counts I have heard, almost 130 decisions have been published since the Supreme Court handed down

▲ Cecily A. Dumas Court handed down its opinion in June. So, I have over a hundred more cases to read to become fully versed in the debate.

As we are all aware, the courts have reached inconsistent conclusions with respect to the impact of Stern on the power of the bankruptcy courts to enter final judgments in core proceedings. Some courts have concluded that the bankruptcy courts do not have authority to enter final judgments on fraudulent transfer claims under sections 544 and 548, preference claims under section 547, the debtor's counterclaims against creditors, actions to avoid post-petition transfers under section 549, or actions to determine that a debt is nondischargeable. If these courts have correctly construed the Supreme Court's decision in Stern, the landscape of bankruptcy practice has been altered dramatically.

Other courts have urged a more conservative reading of *Stern*, emphasizing the narrowness of its holding under the specific facts presented. And some courts, while acknowledging the Constitutional underpinnings of the Supreme Court's holding, have called for a practical solution through *ad hoc* re-designation of matters currently defined in 28 U.S.C. Section 157 as core proceedings to noncore status, thus permitting bankruptcy courts to continue to hear suspect core matters and submit findings and conclusions to the district courts.

Most bankruptcy practitioners with whom I have spoken recently have either filed or responded to a *Stern* motion in the past few months. The prevalence of the issue has caused me to consider whether we, either individually or as members of the College, have a responsibility to apply our professional experience to helping address the problems in bankruptcy administration that have arisen since *Stern* was decided. According to the by-laws of the ACB, in order to be admitted, each of us *continued on page 8*

Board of Regents Picks 36 New Fellows for 23rd Class

Michael L. Cook, Chair, Board of Regents

The Board of Regents, on October 12, 2011, accepted 36 nominations after a day-long meeting. Previously, on August 5, Admissions Councils in each Circuit had completed their two-month vetting process of 49 nominees. In the ensuing two months, Regents conducted a further intensive review of each nomination before the final selection.

Breadth and Depth of Experience

The 23rd Class is impressive. Two judges,

three law professors, five financial advisors, and 26 lawyers constitute the group. With seven members of the new class, the Ninth Circuit had the largest representation.

Impressive Accomplishments

The nominees have an impressive record of public service, in addition to strong professional accomplishments and academic credentials. These are some of their activities:

- Provided legal services to indigent consumer debtors.
- Spent 11 years on a death penalty case, writing briefs, motions and arguing appeals.
- Spent 27 years of continuous pro-bono clinical legal work.
- Provided pro bono legal work for persons suffering from AIDS/HIV.
- Raised funds for mental and physically disabled children to attend summer camp.
- Taught high school students about credit abuse and financial management.
- ◆ Provided pro bono legal work for a low-income housing project.
- Built homes with Habitat for Humanity.
- Served as a hearing officer on State Supreme Court's Disciplinary Board.
- Conducted a pro bono civil rights jury trial for an indigent party.
- Chaired State Supreme Court's Ethics Committee.
- Provided free financial advice to indigent consumer debtors.
- ◆ Served on church or synagogue finance committees.
- Chaired a pro bono project providing legal services to Gulf War Veterans.
- Led gardening projects for town parks, schools and public buildings.
- Ran golf tournaments over a period of ten years to raise money for children with special needs and for disabled veterans.
- Singing or performing in local orchestras.
- ◆ Personality Traits Include Humor and Humility

Describing the nominees as individuals, their sponsors used the following terms: "low key", "humble";, "not flashy", "gets the job done";, "doesn't take himself [or herself] too seriously", "self deprecating", "collegial", and "adds value." Most impressively, several sponsors described the nominees as "funny" or "humorous."

Induction Ceremony Will Be Held at US Supreme Court

The College will be inducting the 23rd Class on Friday, March 16, 2012, at a ceremony in the United States Supreme Court. Before and after the ceremony, all Fellows will be engaged in a series of educational, business and social gatherings with the nominees. We are lucky to have them joining us.

October All Fellows Lunch Program Highlights College Efforts and Afghani Developments

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consistent with the Afghanistan environment. Following their initial work, Judge Williamson drafted a new law to replace the law that has been in existence since 1942. A key feature of the new insolvency law is its brevity -- 26 pages and 10,000 words. It only applies to traders and there is no discharge for individuals except in cases where the creditors accept an agreement for repayment of some or all of their debt over time. Because the judicial system does not have the capacity or experience to enforce commercial laws generally, the proposed insolvency law will rely on a non-judicial commission as the adjudicatory body to resolve disputes and implement the law.

Judge Williamson concluded by touching on the security issues and logistical problems in legal development in the country. Much remains to be done generally to develop an economy that can function in a modern world. Even after passage of the new law, substantial work will remain in the implementation of a bankruptcy system requiring training of the participants who will be involved in the process, from the commission created to oversee the law, to the supporting persons and professionals such as receivers, auctioneers, and attorneys that will be crucial to a successful system.



▲ Going to Jalalabad.



Judge Williamson on his way to a meeting with the village elders.

Chair's Column

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other's hobbies and activities outside of bankruptcy practice. The regional meetings in contrast are a way for College Fellows, who share the bond of excelling in our profession, to get to know each other.

These regional meetings also are extraordinarily valuable for Fellows who, because of geography or other commitments, are unable to attend our annual or fall meetings. For many of those Fellows, especially those who do not serve on one of our Committees, the regional meetings are the touchstone of their relationship to the College. Accordingly, we want to encourage more of these gatherings. Under our Meeting and Events Committee Chair, Judge Nancy Dreher, we have set aside a small fund to help in this regard. These

regional meetings do not have to be Circuit oriented, although the Sixth Circuit's was, and Third Circuit's will be. We are open to having regional meetings defined by proximity rather than on a Circuit basis. So there are no restrictions on geography or scope of our regional meetings. It just takes a commitment to spending time with other Fellows.

I also want to follow up on the discussion we had in Tampa concerning the financial status of the College, for those who may have missed that meeting. By all standard measures, the College is sound financially and operating on all eight cylinders. Having said that, our budget was challenged in 2011 and will be so again in 2012 by the numerous requests we have received for pro bono grants. This was not unexpected, considering the status of the economy and the increasing prominence our program

has attained through the efforts of the Fellows on the Pro Bono Committee. In 2011 we received more than twice as many requests for pro bono grants than we had budgeted. As a consequence, the Board decided to use a portion of our reserves to meet the shortfall so that we could fund the worthy pro bono programs around the country in 2011. It also required us to rethink our 2012 budget. After a lot of hard work, the Board was able to budget additional sums for our pro bono effort while maintaining our support for our educational programs, the National Bankruptcy Archives and our International Insolvency course. We have a first-class Board, without whom much of what we identify as the "College" would not be possible. We are grateful for their service.

My best wishes for a happy holiday season.

From the Bench

Hon. Jeffery P. Hopkins

Hon. Cornelius Blackshear Fellowship Brings More Young Minority Lawyers to NCBJ Conference



▲ Hon. Cornelius Blackshear

This year, as has occurred for the past several years, two freshly minted bankruptcy attorneys received Honorable Cornelius Blackshear Fellowships to attend the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges annual meeting

in Tampa, Florida.

The Blackshear Fellowship pays a stipend to cover registration, and most of the travel and lodging expenses of attending the NCBJ annual conference, for two young minority lawyers with a demonstrated record of public service, professionalism and scholarship in the area of bankruptcy jurisprudence.

This year's Fellows, Ms. Camille Bent and Ms. Kara Hardin, also were guests of the College at the annual luncheon, where they were introduced to the attendees and welcomed by the College Chairman, Paul Singer.

Ms. Hardin practices in Florida and had this to say about her NCBJ experience: "As a sole practitioner, the opportunity to participate in the Judicial Conference was encompassing. It was a wonderful experience to be able to interact with many accomplished professionals who were all willing to share their stories and provide valuable information and insight. I left the conference feeling invigorated and more compassionate about bankruptcy and helping people going through difficult financial times."

The National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges created the minority fellowships in 2004 during the Nashville annual meeting. Since then, more than a dozen minority attorneys with nascent bankruptcy practices have been the recipients of Blackshear Fellowships.

Judges attending the NCBJ annual meeting had noticed that year after year there had been a dearth of African American and other minority lawyers.

Anecdotally, many judges also had reported that within some urban communities where many of us preside there are few minority lawyers taking up the practice of bankruptcy law.

The concern was raised that many of the citizens living within these underserved communities were not always receiving the highest quality bankruptcy advice, if they were receiving any bankruptcy representation at all. The growing tide of *pro se* filings in many cities remains a major concern which the College is addressing through various pro bono projects.

The Blackshear Fellowship program has become a signature effort by the NCBJ to close the gap in communities with high concentrations of individuals who may not have access to adequate bankruptcy representation.

The judges believe that by attending the NCBJ meetings, these new bankruptcy attorneys can benefit from the education programs and networking opportunities being offered.

The judges hope that the new lawyers receiving the Blackshear Fellowship every year will be inspired by their attendance at the NCBJ annual meeting and that they will continue to develop their bankruptcy practice, perhaps filling the gaps in certain communities where there are lawyer shortages.

The judges also hope that the Blackshear Fellows will continue to strive to achieve the highest scholarship and professionalism reflected through the courage, leadership and fidelity to civic duty and public service that Judge Blackshear exhibited throughout his illustrious career.

The criterion used in the Blackshear Fellowship selection process is quite rigorous. A successful applicant must demonstrate that a substantial part of his/her practice is in bankruptcy law, that the attorney is involved in a solo, small firm or government practice, and, importantly, that he/she is not otherwise able to attend the NCBJ annual meeting because of financial constraints.

Members of the College are invited to nominate newer minority bankruptcy lawyers practicing in your region who fit these criteria by sending those nominations with contact information to Ms. Chris Molick, Executive Director, National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, 241 Aristides Drive, Irmo, SC 29063 or by checking the NCBJ website for applications.



The Fellowship program is appropriately named in honor of Judge Cornelius Blackshear (ret.).

In 1979, Judge Blackshear was one of the first lawyers appointed to the then-experimental agency called the United States Trustee program in the Southern District of New York.

Four years later, in 1983, Judge Blackshear was appointed by the then Attorney General William French Smith as the U.S. Trustee in New York City.

The capstone of Judge Blackshear's career came with his appointment as a U.S. Bankruptcy Judge on November 25, 1985, prompting Attorney General Smith to state that:

Mr. Blackshear is an example for us all. In 1951, he came to New York from his home in Florida as an unskilled laborer. He put himself through college and law school while a patrolman and, later, a detective sergeant on the New York City Police Department, where he served with distinction. During Neil's tenure as the United States Trustee for the Southern District of New York, he was responsible for the supervision of some of the largest cases before the bankruptcy court. He has received substantial recognition for his achievement of rebuilding an understaffed office, which was suffering from low-morale while, simultaneously, supervising the exceptionally complex Johns-Manville chapter 11 reorganization proceedings.

Judge Blackshear's brilliant career, both on and off the bench, centered on his penchant for promoting minority professional education.

While serving as New York City police officer, Judge Blackshear held classes during his spare time to help other minorities successfully pass NYPD's rigorous promotional exams.

During law school, Judge Blackshear served as president of the Black Law Students Association and aggressively pursued the development of programs designed to increase enrollment and retention of minority law students at his alma mater, Fordham Law School.

The National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges was delighted to honor our esteemed colleague and friend, Judge Neil Blackshear, as he is affectionately known, by naming its minority fellowship program "The Honorable Cornelius Blackshear Fellowship".

College Offers 2012 International Bankruptcy Course: Popular introduction to global issues returns for another year

Richard Broude, Academic Coordinator



▲ Richard F. Broude

The College's course on "International Bankruptcy" is designed to give students an opportunity to consider the problems and issues that characterize today's world of bankruptcy. Formerly, a company doing busi-

ness in the United States in financial distress solved its problems through a bankruptcy proceeding filed in a United States Bankruptcy Court—either Chapter 7 liquidation or Chapter 11 reorganization period. The globalization of business now means that the operations of financially distressed businesses are frequently located in more than one country, either through divisions or subsidiaries. This in turn means that one company can be in simultaneous bankruptcy proceedings in more than one country or that companies that are part of a corporate group will be the subject of individual bankruptcy cases. (Consider the Lehman Brothers group of companies with more than 70 insolvency proceedings pending in 16 countries.) In either situation, some understanding of the bankruptcy systems of other countries is essential, as is an appreciation of available tools for coordinating separate proceedings so as to maximize values.

In pursuit of these twin goals, "International Bankruptcy" is organized into two modules. Following an introductory class that describes the first halting steps in handling cross-border cases—the Maxwell case, which involved simultaneous proceedings for the same company in the United States and England—joined with a discussion of the importance of modern bankruptcy legislation from the perspective of the International Monetary Fund, the next six sessions provide a contrast in the bankruptcy legislation of the United States, Canada, the U.K., Japan, China, Western Europe and Latin America. The goal here is to show how common elements of a bankruptcy system—prerequisites for filing a case, creation of an estate, stays, how cases are administered, the treatment of claims, and the like-are dealt with in these various systems. There is no search here for the "best" insolvency law, only for an appreciation of the ways that common problems are addressed in countries with differing societal values and varying approaches to dealing with the displacements caused by financial failure.

The second module, "Managing Cross-Border Systems," addresses the two major

legislative initiatives for dealing with crossborder cases-the UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency, enacted in the United States as Chapter 15 of the Bankruptcy Code and in other countries around the world (four sessions), and the European Insolvency Regulation (two sessions). While similar, these two examples of legislation designed to coordinate simultaneous insolvency proceedings and encourage cross-border cooperation among courts and between insolvency administrators have different goals and have been implemented in different ways. The Model Law and the EU Regulation and cases that have interpreted them are explored in some detail so that the students can appreciate how they work in the modern world.

The final session of the course describes imaginative ways in which foreign debtors try to take advantage of Chapter 11 to seek relief that is unavailable under their country's statutory regime.

Course materials for the Spring 2012 International Bankruptcy course will be available on The West Education Network (TWEN). Those Fellows who wish to view materials may contact the American College of Bankruptcy at 703-934-6154 or <u>college@</u> amercol.org to request a TWEN guest password. For those Fellows who already have a password, the course may be accessed through www.lawschool. westlaw.com. Simply enter your guest password in the box on the left-hand side of the screen, select TWEN from the drop-down menu and click sign on. Select the International Bankruptcy-2012 course and click on Course Materials on the left-hand side of the screen to view course documents.

A recording system has been implemented and all archived class videos will be available the day after the scheduled class through the following link: http://uofu-tcs.uen.net. You have the option to either download or stream the videos. Classes are listed by date. Simply click on the class you would like to view and enter the password "bankruptcy" when prompted. This will bring you to the video page. Click on "class start" to begin watching the video.

If you have any general course administration questions, please contact Shari Bedker, or her assistant, Carole McNamara, at the College number or email listed above.

President's Column

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makes up the nomination forms. The Regents then meet for a full day (and sometimes into the evening) at the Fall meeting of the College and review every application that has been submitted. As a former Regent, I can attest to both the thoroughness and the integrity of the process - the Regents work enormously hard on behalf of the College to make the best decisions possible - and, as indicated by the continuing influx into the College of so many talented and dedicated Fellows, the process seems to working pretty well. In addition to the meeting of the Board of Regents, there were meetings by the various committees that carry out the myriad functions of the College, all of which are described on our website, as well as a meeting of the Board of Directors. The committee meetings were lively and productive, as was the Board meeting. Moreover, under the leadership of our chair, Paul Singer, I am pleased to report that the College accomplished something that is clearly not an easy task – it balanced its budget!

The College is in the enviable position of becoming one of the largest and most important sources of bankruptcy pro bono funding in the United States. The work done by our Pro Bono Committee is simply spectacular, but we have many more worthy grants than we can fund. Accordingly, when you look at the year-end appeal from the College Foundation, please do everything that you can to support it. Your contributions go to an absolutely wonderful cause, and are used for projects that we can all feel very proud of.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2012.



2012 Class XXIII Induction Ceremony & Related Events Schedule

Registration for this event will be available in mid-December. Please continue to check the ACB home page (www.amercol.org) under Upcoming Events for the registration link to be coming soon

Location: Renaissance Mayflower Hotel

1127 Connecticut Avenue NW Washington, D.C. 20036
Reduced block rate of \$269 until February 23, 2012, or block is full, whichever occurs first. For reservations, call 800-228-9290 or 202-347-3000 and ask for the "American College of Bankruptcy" block or rooms.

Thursday, March 15, 2012

3:00-4:30 p.m. Foundation Board Meeting

6:00-7:00 p.m.

Distinguished Bankruptcy Law Student
Reception (leadership, judicial and students only)

Friday, March 16, 2012

8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. **Board of Directors Meeting**

9:00 a.m.-3:45 p.m. Registration – Grand Ballroom Lobby

10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. ACB Pro Bono Committee Meeting

12:00-1:45 p.m. Circuit Luncheons – Offsite

(Regents to inform Circuit Members of meeting locations. Contact your Regent for details.)

2:00-3:00 p.m.

American College of Bankruptcy Current Topic Discussion

Discussion on current topics of interest affecting the Insolvency Community

2:00 p.m.

Sign-up deadline for About Town Dining Event at ACB desk (see below)

3:00-3:45 p.m.

International Insolvency Institute/College Panel Discussion

International Fellows of the College will discuss some of the most important crises and successes in which they have been involved.

4:30-9:00 p.m. **Induction Ceremony**

Location: U.S. Supreme Court, One First Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20543

4:30 p.m.

Bus for Inductees departs hotel for U.S. Supreme Court (Black Tie for Inductees), arrive at Court at 5:15 p.m., Class 23 Group Photo Session

5:00 p.m.

Buses for All Fellows and Guests depart hotel for U.S. Supreme Court (Cocktail dress for Fellows & Guests), arrive at Court at 6:00 p.m.

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Induction Ceremony and Presentation of Distinguished Service Award

U.S. Supreme Court

7:30 - 8:15 p.m.

Reception, East and West Conference Rooms, U.S. Supreme Court

8:15 p.m.

Buses depart back to Mayflower Hotel

9:00 p.m.

About Town Dining Event

Dinner reservations will be made at 10 different local restaurants within a 5-minute cab ride of the hotel. Sign up to attend the restaurant of your choice (dutch treat) when you register for the weekend or at the ACB Registration Desk no later than 2:00 p.m. on Friday, March 16. Enjoy some wonderful food, make new acquaintances and catch up with old friends!

Saturday, March 17, 2012

7:45 - 8:50 a.m. New Fellows Orientation

8:00-9:00 a.m.

Judicial Outreach Committee

Meeting (All Judges invited)

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast(Fellows Only)

Education Session

9:00-9:15 a.m. Introduction of Distinguished Law Students

9:15-10:15 a.m. **Educational Panel**

10:15-10:30 a.m. **Break**

10:30-12:30 p.m. **Educational Panels**

12:45-2:00 p.m. **Luncheon**

2:15-3:30 p.m.

ACB Educational Programs Committee Meeting

2:15-3:30 p.m.

ACB Distinguished Law Student Committee Meeting

2:15-3:30 p.m.

ACB Board of Regents Meeting

2:15-3:30 p.m.

International Insolvency Institute Meeting (III members only)

3:30-4:30 p.m.

ACB International Committee Meeting

7:00 p.m.

International Fellows Dinner (by Invitation Only-for International Fellows), Cocktails, 6:30 p.m.

Did You Know?

Your donations make a difference... and they're different!

Shari Bedker, Executive Director and Carole McNamara, Executive Assistant

There are two ways that Fellows and their firms can contribute to the College: through our annual Patrons and Sponsors Program or through a Foundation donation.

The Patrons and Sponsors Program has two levels of commitment. Firms may become a Patron of the College for \$2,500 or a Sponsor of the College for \$1,500. The College is funded solely by our Fellows, Patrons, and Sponsors and the need for support has increased commensurate with the expanded activities of the College - educational programs, meeting events, printing of the Best Practices and Circuit Review, and the College's contributions to pro bono projects, the National Bankruptcy Archives and the American College of Bankruptcy Foundation. Firms (and the Fellows within each firm) who make a Patron or Sponsor commitment will be listed in printed programs for each College event, as well as in each edition of the College Columns. It should be noted that the American College of Bankruptcy is a Section 501(c)(6) organization and contributions to the College are not tax deductible as donation, but may be deductible as a business expense (please consult your tax advisor).

Donations to the American College of Bankruptcy Foundation are usually made on an individual level, although firms may also choose to contribute to this worthy cause. The Foundation supports the bankruptcy- and debtor-creditor-related work of pro bono legal programs, as well as educational and legal research projects, throughout the United States. The Foundation is a Section 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and donations to it *are* tax deductible.

We hope that Fellows will consider participating in the Patron/Sponsor program at the firm Level AND also contribute to the Foundation at the individual level. There are many worthy projects out there waiting for our assistance. If you have not already done so, please consider making a Patron/Sponsor Pledge and/or Foundation Donation today.

Pro Bono Need Has Never Been Greater, So Fund It Up

Joel Ohlgren, Chair, ACB Foundation

Well they're doing it in Boston, In Philadelphia, PA, Deep in the heart of Texas, And out in 'Frisco Bay, All over St. Louie, And down in New Orleans, All the Fellows want to fund up Pro Bono for the ACB!

(with apologies to Chuck Berry).

ere we are at the end of another year, and our success at stimulating requests for Pro Bono project funds has been unprecedented. We have had requests from programs from every corner of the country. The volume of requests for truly good projects has exceeded our budgeted funds by significant amounts, and both the College and the Foundation Boards have voted to invade reserved endowment funds for this year to fill part of the gap. As a result, however, we must stimulate every fellow in every Circuit to make a tax-deductible gift to the Foundation. Fellows representing each Circuit will be contacting each of the Fellows in an effort to achieve 100% participation. The participation Circuit by Circuit last year was very disappointing, save for the 1st Circuit, which did well and have renewed their efforts. Please help your Circuit and the Foundation by making a year-end contribution.

Of course, we have many other ongoing projects, such as support for the National Bankruptcy Archives at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, The International Insolvency Course now being taught at 12 law schools (see the article about the course in this issue of College Columns to access the course) and a variety of educational projects including the 1st Circuit's daylong seminar and Credit Card Abuse Avoidance programs. Nonetheless, the biggest need in this current environment is encouraging and assisting debtor assistance and pro-bono projects. See the article by our esteemed Chairman of the Pro- Bono Committee for details of this year's projects, which are truly remarkable.

Our thanks go out to all of you who have contributed, to all of you who are working this year to encourage Fellows to contribute, to all of you who are working in your districts to encourage debtor assistance programs. All of these efforts reflect well on the College and its Fellows.

Editor's Column

 $continued\ from\ page\ 3$

had to have demonstrated to our peers, among other things, "significant evidence of scholarship, teaching, lecturing, and/ or distinguished published writings and bankruptcy practice, procedure, philosophy, improvements and reforms which demonstrates a consistent contribution to the enhancement of bankruptcy literature, education, bankruptcy practice and the bankruptcy process." Stern has given us the opportunity of this decade, and maybe this century, to make such contributions.

The November 29, 2011 panel presentation in Boise, Idaho, by ACB fellows The Hon. Jim D. Pappas, Ford J. Elsaesser, Larry E. Prince, Randall A. Peterman and Joseph M. Meier on the impact of *Stern* is commendable, and is the sort of

continuing contribution called for in the by-laws.

On November 4, 2011, the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued an order in the Bellingham Insurance Agency case inviting any person or entity wishing to submit a brief as an amicus curiae to do so no later than 30 days from the filed date of its order, and on November 25, 2011, at the request of the United States, extended its deadline to January 19, 2012. As of the date of submission of this column, no amicus briefs had yet been filed. When and if amicus curiae weigh in, and on behalf of whatever professional organization briefs are submitted, I hope that College Fellows had a hand in the drafting. The straight of the stra

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Legal Services of Southern Piedmont

Arthur Bartlett, Director of the LSSP Low Income Taxpayer Clinic

Southern Piedmont has assisted several clients with crippling tax liability issues file Chapter 7 bankruptcy petitions. This assistance was largely possible because of the generous grant the American College of Bankruptcy provided to our Low Income Taxpayer Clinic and Consumer Protection Program. These filings have led to the discharge of significant tax and other liabilities and provided our clients with the kind of fresh financial start that only bankruptcy is able to provide.

Our client Mona is 51 years old and recently divorced. She moved to Charlotte to be closer to her elderly father and has two children in college, to whom she provides as much support as possible. Her days are busy, working part-time and taking computer and typing classes at a local community college.

Prior to the divorce, Mona was aware that she and her husband owed the IRS over \$50,000 due to his failure to report early withdrawals of his retirement savings. In addition, during the marriage Mona had amassed a considerable amount of consumer debt. Though the divorce decree stated that the ex-husband was responsible for the tax liability, the IRS vigorously sought to collect from Mona anyway. In desperation, Mona filed a request with the IRS for Innocent Spouse relief, but it was denied. If successful, her request could have resulted in her walking away owing nothing to the IRS.

With very few options left to tackle her tax liability, Mona turned to Legal Services of Southern Piedmont for assistance. She initially wanted help filing an Offerin-Compromise, a process that allows taxpayers to settle their tax liabilities for less than the full amount owed. However, for a number of reasons an Offer was not highly favored option. A few weeks after taking Mona's case, Legal Services of Southern Piedmont received funding from the American College of Bankruptcy to file bankruptcies on behalf of tax clients. We quickly advised Mona of all of her options, including filing a Chapter 7 bankruptcy petition. Mona chose bankruptcy. This summer Mona's IRS and consumer liabilities were discharged. Now Mona is free to pursue her education, assist her family and start over without fear of having what little she has seized by the IRS. 🖀



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