



THE BANKRUPTCY ADVISOR



A Periodic Publication of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Florida

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REVISIONS TO THE PERMISSIVE USE OF NEGATIVE NOTICE LIST

Effective December 15, 2017, the Permissive Use of Negative Notice List was revised regarding **Motions for Final Decree** in Chapter 11 cases. These motions may now be filed on negative notice in both individual and business cases.

The [Permissive Use of Negative Notice List](#) includes chapter-specific motions, notices, and objections which are *preferred* be filed on negative notice in the Northern District of Florida. Please familiarize yourself with the options available to you and periodically review the List on our website for changes or additions to, or removal of items that may be filed on negative notice in this district.

CHAPTER 13 PLAN FLNB LOCAL FORM 13-21

The Chapter 13 Plan forms provided on our website (Local Form 13-21 in .pdf and .rtf formats) may appear slightly different than the plans submitted by filers who use petition preparation software to create the document. The software vendors have been authorized to conditionally “collapse” blank tables in sections of the form which are not applicable to the case (i.e., where the filer checks “None”).

Those filers who use the Word (.rtf) form on our website are also authorized to remove the blank tables in sections of the form which are not applicable (i.e., in which the “None” box is checked) in order to reduce the number of pages in the document and to save noticing costs. All other formatting, as well as the inclusion of complete sections where there is not a “None” box available, should remain standard.

When using the fillable PDF version of our local forms, they should be “flattened” prior to uploading into CM/ECF. Flattening preserves the information contained within the form and reduces file size, thus allowing for faster upload and conservation of Court resources. See the “[Tips & Tricks](#)” section of this newsletter for instructions.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE U.S. TRUSTEE**Appointment of Daniel M. McDermott as United States Trustee, Region 21**

Daniel M. McDermott was appointed as the United States Trustee for Region 21 effective January 7, 2018. Mr. McDermott will continue as U.S. Trustee for Region 9 (Michigan and Ohio), where he has served since his appointment in July 2008. Region 21 includes Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and is headquartered in Atlanta with additional offices in Miami, Orlando, Tallahassee, and Tampa, Florida; Macon and Savannah, Georgia; and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Amended Chapter 11 Quarterly Fee Schedule Effective January 18, 2018

Pursuant to the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017, (Pub L. No. 115-72), the chapter 11 quarterly fee schedule established by 28 U.S.C. § 1930(a)(6) was amended effective January 1, 2018. Please address any questions concerning this change to the Office of the United States Trustee.

WHAT'S NEW AT THE FLNB?**Paul Neely - Pensacola**

Paul Neely, IT Security Officer, was awarded the 2017 *Director's Award for Excellence in Court Technology*. The Director's Awards recognize outstanding performance in the federal courts and "represent the very best achievements of the Judiciary's exceptionally dedicated work force," said James C. Duff, Director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. "They recognize the recipients' outstanding leadership, innovation and efficiency, and their commitment to delivering the best possible service to the public."

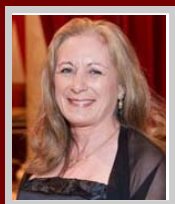
Latonia Isom - Tallahassee

Latonia Isom was promoted to Court Operations Specialist effective February 5, 2017. Latonia has been with the court for 17 years as a Case Administrator, has served as a backup Courtroom Deputy and cashier, and is always the first to volunteer for special assignments and committees. She is an honors graduate of Tallahassee Community College with an Associates Degree in Paralegal and Legal Studies, and is a member of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Clerks, Federal Court Clerks Association, Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society, and the Big Bend Paralegal Association. Currently, she is learning American Sign Language for the purpose of volunteering as an interpreter within her church organization. Her involvement in these areas demonstrates her drive for education and personal growth, and her ability to be a well-rounded and extraordinary employee.

Jestin Hawkins - Tallahassee

Our newest staff member, Jestin Hawkins, joined our staff as a Bankruptcy Generalist on October 30, 2017, in the Tallahassee office where she manages our help desk, the intake desk, and recently assumed full case management duties. Jestin completed her Bachelor of Science, Political Science and Social Science degree at FSU in 2008, and her Master of Public Administration degree in December, 2017. Her administrative experience, willingness to take on new tasks, and positive outlook makes her a great fit for our Clerk's Office team.

Please join us in congratulating Paul and Latonia, and welcoming Jestin!



Views & News from the Bench

By: Karen K. Specie
United States Bankruptcy Judge
Northern District of Florida

Energy – “the strength and vitality required for sustained physical or mental activity”¹ – is our focus for 2018. Within the Court, the Local Rules Committee is energetically working to finalize proposed rules changes for public comment, our Clerk’s office is energetically finalizing changes to our MMM procedures to add another portal for uploading documents, and Chambers staff are energetically working on ways to streamline procedures even further. While our overall filings remain down, they are slowly increasing, and our bar seems to be energetically at work filing more cases.

Outside our immediate court, other projects are sure to bring tremendous positive energy to our bench and bar. Among them are:

Attorneys’ Fee Summit – the next installment of the Attorneys’ Fee Summit will be during the meeting of the BLS (Business Law Section) Bankruptcy Judicial Liaison Committee at the Florida Bar Convention in Orlando in June. The goal of this summit, masterminded by FLMB Judge Roberta Colton, is to bring consistency on attorneys’ fees in bankruptcy within Florida’s districts. All attorneys are encouraged to participate live or by submitting comments. For additional information: <http://www.flabizlaw.org/committees-task-force/standing-committees/bankruptcy-judicial-liaison-committee/> (click link for “2017-2018 Attorneys’ Fee Summit”).

BLS Diversity Fellowship – This outstanding opportunity is available to only two applicants; the deadline to apply is March 23 2018. Those selected will receive a subsidy of \$2,500 per year for two years and mentoring by some of Florida’s most preeminent business lawyers. Recipients must attend Executive Council Meetings at the Business Law Section’s meetings in January, June, and Labor Day weekend each year; serve as an active member of one substantive committee and one of the following committees: Communications, Membership, or Mentoring & Fellowship; and serve as a mentor for Law Student Scholars at the yearly BLS Labor Day Retreat. TO APPLY: <http://www.flabizlaw.org/blog/now-accepting-applications-for-bls-fellows-class-of-2018-2020/>

Federal Court Practice Committee – meets two to three times per year and acts as a liaison between the Florida Bar and federal courts, federal bar organizations in Florida, the Eleventh Circuit Judicial Conference, and others who are interested in federal practice. The Federal Court Practice Committee circulates proposed changes to the federal rules, including local rules for the Florida federal courts, maintains the Federal Corner on the Florida Bar website, and hosts the Federal Judicial Roundtable at the Florida Bar’s annual meeting in June of each year. It may not be too late to join this excellent group: <https://www.floridabar.org/about/cmtes/cmtes-cm/cmte-cm565/>

¹ <https://www.google.com/search?q=define+energy+level&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b-1#dobs=energy>

News & Views from the Bench (continued):

NEW * NEW * NEW

Proposed Orders – continue to take up an inordinate amount of time. For that reason, Chambers will no longer modify proposed orders that are incorrect. Rather, **incorrect proposed orders will be sent back to the preparer. If, after three tries, a proposed order is not in appropriate form, the corresponding motion or application will be denied without prejudice.** Guidelines for proposed orders, which will be updated soon, are at: http://www.flnb.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/filing_requirements/4-inst.pdf

Orders Granting Stay Relief – Many creditors insert language in stay relief orders that grants them permission to contact debtors directly regarding possible loan modification. Occasionally, such language is over-broad and could appear to grant broader authority than would be appropriate with a discharge injunction. The Court will scrutinize language in proposed orders that permits a creditor to contact a debtor (or co-debtor) directly. Orders that contain language that is too broad will be sent back for corrections.

2018 HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

We will be closed in observance of the following federal holidays pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 6103:

Monday, February 19

President's Day

Monday, May 28

Memorial Day

Wednesday, July 4

Independence Day

Monday, September 3

Labor Day

Monday, October 8

Columbus Day

Monday, November 11

Veteran's Day

Thursday, November 22

Thanksgiving

Tuesday, December 25

Christmas Day

CM/ECF and PACER will be available for filing and case access.

PRO BONO HONOR ROLL

The United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Florida takes pleasure in recognizing the efforts of those attorneys who provide legal assistance, without compensation, to those who face substantial economic hardship so that they are able to navigate through the bankruptcy process. These services greatly benefit our nation's bankruptcy system and all of its components. Those volunteer efforts include *pro bono* legal representation for qualifying parties in bankruptcy cases and adversary proceedings, reaffirmation agreements, and stay relief. We recognize and thank the following *pro bono* volunteers for their current and continued support in serving the people of our district:

**Kathryn Hathaway
Hathaway Law Firm**

**India Footman
Footman Law Firm, P.A.**

**Teresa Dorr and Natasha Revell
Zalkin Revell, PLLC**

**Jodi Cooke
Stichter Riedel Blain & Postler, P.A.**

Tips & Tricks



"FLATTENING" A PDF

- 1) Create or complete the PDF document
- 2) PRINT the form to PDF.

The "printer" option may be Adobe PDF, if installed, or it may be "Save as PDF."

- 3) Name the document and save it

If you do not have the Adobe PDF or "Save as PDF" options available to you, there are pdf printers available online at no charge.

HOW DOES A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AFFECT THE FEDERAL COURTS?

In the event of a government shutdown, the federal Judiciary will be business as usual, mostly. The Northern District of Florida courts, District and Bankruptcy, will remain open and staffed.

Most court proceedings will occur as scheduled, however in cases where an attorney from an Executive Branch agency is unavailable because of the shutdown, hearing and/or deadline dates may be rescheduled as needed, to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

In the event of an extended shutdown, the Judiciary would operate under the terms of the Anti-Deficiency Act, which allows work to continue during a lapse in appropriations if it is necessary to support the exercise of Article III judicial powers.

PACER will remain operational and available for online filing and viewing of case documents.

Lisa Davis - Tallahassee 30 Years

Lisa Davis, Court Operations Specialist, retired from the Clerk's Office on January 31, 2018, after 30 years of service to the Northern District of Florida.

Lisa began her career with the bankruptcy court as the Secretary to the Clerk and was promoted through the case management ranks to the level of Specialist, during which time she worked for the Honorable Lewis M. Killian, Jr. (Ret.), and, most recently, the Honorable Karen K. Specie. Lisa was instrumental in training the staff when we moved from typewriters and hard dockets to electronic case management in NIBS, then from paper files and lots of paper to CM/ECF when we became a paperless court.

As the Court Operations Specialist, Lisa has written and helped perfect many of the operating procedures used by the Clerk's staff today. She provided daily assistance and support to the other case administrators as well as to the Director of Operations. When discussing her career and the many changes she has seen in the last 30 years, she said the most significant was converting to electronic case filing. "This conversion involved a lot of training and hard work, in the office and out, both on the part of the clerk's office and the attorneys, but in the end, was well worth it and made the operation of the daily work flow much easier and efficient for all involved."

Our staff and chambers, practitioners, and our public have benefitted greatly from Lisa's dedication, hard work, and the wealth of knowledge she possessed and shared. We will miss her greatly and wish her a very happy retirement!



ECF Essentials

ADDING NEW PARTIES WHEN FILING APPLICATIONS TO EMPLOY

An annual clean up of our professional fees database revealed that we had nineteen (yes, 19!) different person records in CM/ECF for a single accounting firm frequently used by the panel trustees and attorneys in the Northern District of Florida, as well as many other duplicate entities.

When filing an application to employ, please search for the party to be retained before adding a new one. This helps ensure that the professional fees are paid efficiently and the records are accurate.

To aid in your search:

- Enter only part of the name of the firm and click the “Search” button
- Ensure that the name you entered is spelled correctly (e.g., Thomson, Brock, et al, is frequently misspelled as “Thompson”)

Search for a party	
SSN / ITIN	<input type="text"/>
Tax ID / EIN	<input type="text"/>
Last/Business name	<input type="text" value="Thom"/>
First Name	<input type="text"/>
Middle Name	<input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="Search"/>	<input type="button" value="Clear"/>

- Scroll through the list to locate the person or firm

Party search results
Thomson, Lisa Marie, 300 Cabana Blvd, Panama City Beach, FL
Thomson, Nicolette, 1400 Turbine Dr Suite 200, Rapid City, SD
Thomson, Sandra Rowena, 5526-A Peace Street, Gulf Breeze, FL
Thomson Brock Luger & Company, 3375-G Capital Circle N.E., Tallahassee, FL
Thomson, Brock, Cherry & Company, 3375-G Capital Circle NE, Tallahassee, FL
Thomspson, Kay
<input type="button" value="Select name from list"/> <input type="button" value="Create new party"/>

- Click the “Select name from list” button to confirm and select the person or firm.

There are many other entities for which there are duplicates and we are working diligently to resolve this issue. Your assistance in maintaining the integrity of our database would be greatly appreciated.

GETTING TO KNOW STEVE M. WATKINS, III

What would you be doing if you weren't an attorney? Dancing in the grass near an interstate highway off ramp; vagabond

How do you recharge/what do you like to do in your spare time? Meditate, listen to music, and drive my Tesla Model X.

What characteristic do you most admire in others? Respect and love for others.

If you ruled the world, what you would change on day 1? Money would be abolished.

What one thing in your life are you most proud of? My daughters.

What job have you had in the past that would be a surprise to us? Land surveyor assistant for Leon County.

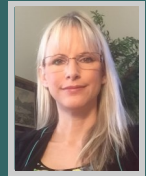
What is the last really good book you read, and why? The Gold Finch. Tremendously engaging, awesome imagery, and profound style.

What is your favorite sports team? Atlanta Falcons

What one tidbit of advice would you give to others? Meditate every day.

THE CLERK'S CORNER

By: Traci Abrams, Clerk of Court

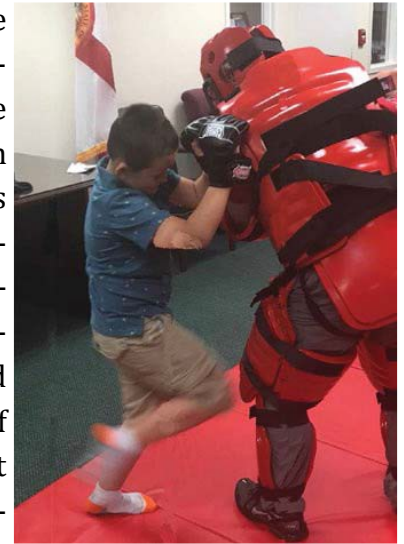


FLORIDA NORTHERN CELEBRATES TAKE YOUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS TO WORK DAY 2017

The tenth annual *Take Your Daughters and Sons to Work Day* was held in the Northern District of Florida's Tallahassee Division on April 27, 2017, and was a smashing success! A total of 59 students of all ages plus several parent chaperones participated in a fun and education-filled day of presentations hosted by court units, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Tallahassee Fire Department, and Gulf Winds Federal Credit Union. The planning committee, consisting of U.S. Bankruptcy Court, U.S. Probation, U.S. District Court, and U.S. Marshals Service representatives, did an excellent job of making sure the students remained entertained while still learning about the judiciary and related agencies. Bankruptcy Clerk of Court, Traci Abrams, provided a tour of the historic bankruptcy courthouse built in the late 1930s as a Post Office. She also shared stories about our resident "ghost," and pointed out the building's early twentieth century surveillance system consisting of "hidey holes" from which Post Office employees and customers could be observed.

In the courtroom, Chief Bankruptcy Judge Karen K. Specie's law clerks provided a brief introduction to bankruptcy using the purchase of a bicycle as an example. Judge Specie continued the discussion with an interactive question and answer session. She explained that bankruptcy is often caused by circumstances out of a person's control, such as illness or loss of employment, and discussed how bankruptcy laws can help people who find themselves in these very difficult circumstances. Following

the bankruptcy tour, participants were taught basic defensive tactics by U.S. Probation officers; learned about the oldest law enforcement agency in the United States with the U.S. Marshals Service; received advice on proper money management, including saving and budgeting from Gulf Winds Federal Credit Union; watched Federal Protective Services K9 "Rexo" work (and then play); and wrapped up the day with a fire safety presentation from the Tallahassee Fire Department, and being permitted to climb through an actual fire engine.



Activities from past years included a mock trial presided over by Magistrate Judge Charles A. Stampelos and a mock grand jury indictment, both of which actively engaged the students.

Judge Specie summed up the event: "It was gratifying to see so many students and family members participate this year. I am thankful for the work done by everyone who helped with the activities and presentations, and am impressed with how much the students learned from the Federal and local agencies and business that participated."



FLNB RESOURCES

Rev. 01/18

Cases in the Northern District of Florida are randomly assigned to Case Administrators throughout the district shortly after filing. The name of the Case Administrator to whom a case is assigned is located at the top of the docket report in CM/ECF.

Ann Laritz
(850) 470-3060

Latonia Isom
(850) 521-5012

Janet Weems
Courtroom Deputy &
Calendar Clerk
(850) 521-5009

Help Desk &
CM/ECF Access
(850) 521-5001
(866) 765-1752

Carolyn Romine
(850) 470-3062

Libby Deroche
(850) 470-3061

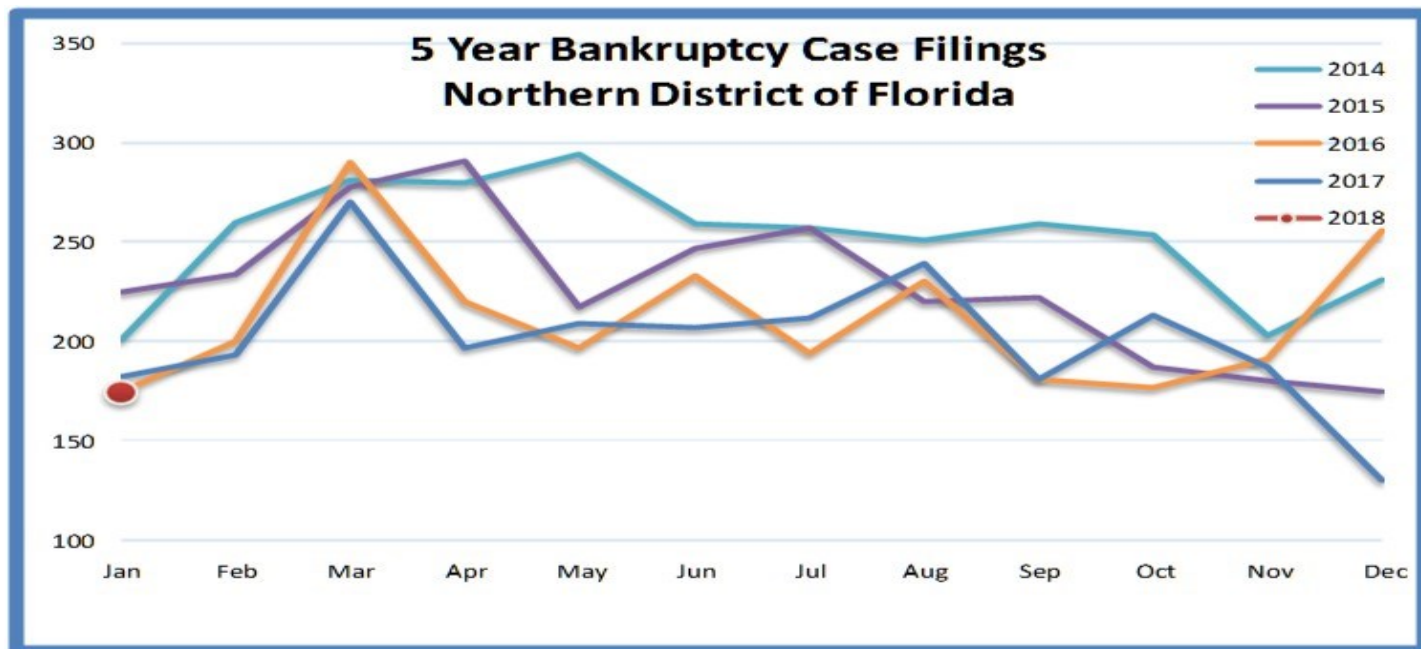
Jestin Hawkins
(850) 521-5002

Melanie Lawrence
(407) 237-8021
For cases assigned to Judge Jennemann

Tammi Boswell
Director of Operations
(850) 521-5011

The Clerk's Office phones are answered from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays. Please feel free to call or email the Case Administrators with your procedural questions. The Clerk's Office is not permitted to answer legal questions nor can they provide guidance as to the content or types of documents that may be required.

CM/ECF Help Desk
(850) 521-5001 or (866) 765-1752
CMECF_HelpDesk@flnb.uscourts.gov
Please visit us on the web at www.flnb.uscourts.gov



The monthly filing and closing statistics for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Florida are posted to the Court Resources page of our website at www.flnb.uscourts.gov/court-filing-statistics. Statistical information will be available by the 15th of each month.

Questions, Comments, or Corrections

For questions, comments, or corrections regarding this newsletter, please contact Julie Gibson at (850) 521-5014 or by email at Julie_Gibson@flnb.uscourts.gov.