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Office of the Circuit Executive · 95 7th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 · (415) 355-8800 · (415) 355-8901 Fax

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: David Madden, (415) 355-8800

New Bankruptcy Judge Appointed in Central District of California

SAN FRANCISCO — Chief Judge Alex Kozinski of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit announced today the appointment of attorney Mark D. Houle to serve as a judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California.

Mr. Houle, 45, will fill a judgeship to be vacated by Bankruptcy Judge Ellen Carroll, who plans to retire on February 16, 2012. He will be sworn into office on February 17, 2012, and will maintain chambers in Riverside.

“Mr. Houle is an experienced practitioner who comes to the bench with a thorough understanding of bankruptcy court operations,” Judge Kozinski said in announcing the appointment.

Since 2000, Mr. Houle has been of counsel with the law firm of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman, LLP, maintaining offices in Costa Mesa and Los Angeles. He practices exclusively in the areas of bankruptcy and insolvency in the firm’s Insolvency and Restructuring Practice Section. He primarily represents secured and unsecured creditors, asset purchasers, and other parties in bankruptcy cases, adversary proceedings, pre-bankruptcy workouts, and related state and federal litigation.

From 1998 to 2000, he was an associate with the law firm of Winthrop Couchot, PC, where he represented corporate Chapter 11 debtors, creditors’ committees, and Chapter 7 trustees. From 1996 to 1998, Mr. Houle clerked for the Santa Ana bankruptcy judges analyzing a wide variety of legal pleadings and preparing bench memoranda and memorandum decisions for hearings and trials in Chapter 7, 11 and 13 bankruptcy cases and adversary pleadings.

A native of Lowell, Massachusetts, Mr. Houle received his B.S. in 1993 from Salem State College, where he graduated *summa cum laude*. During college, he was part of the

Undergraduate Honors Program and was awarded a Silver Key for academic excellence in community service. He received his J.D. in 1996 from Boston College Law School, where he was a member of the Jessup International Moot Court Team from 1995 to 1996.

Mr. Houle is an active participant in the Orange County Bar Association, the Bankruptcy Forum and the American Bankruptcy Institute. Mr. Houle is a veteran of the Air Force and Massachusetts Air National Guard.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California, which is authorized 24 bankruptcy judges, is one of the nation's busiest with 139,882 filings in fiscal year 2011. Concurrent with Mr. Houle's appointment, the court plans to reorganize, transferring Judge Robert N. Kwan from the Santa Ana division to the Los Angeles division, and Judge Catherine Bauer from the Riverside division to Santa Ana division.

Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit have statutory responsibility for selecting and appointing bankruptcy judges in the nine western states that comprise the Ninth Circuit. The court uses a comprehensive merit selection process for the initial appointment and for reappointments. Bankruptcy judges serve a 14-year, renewable term, at a salary of \$160,080, and handle all bankruptcy-related matters under the Bankruptcy Code.

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