

United States Bankruptcy Court
Central District of California

Theodor C. Albert, Chief Judge
Kathleen J. Campbell, Executive Officer / Clerk of Court



CHIEF JUDGE THEODOR C. ALBERT SUCCEEDS JUDGE MAUREEN A. TIGHE AT PASSING OF THE GAVEL CEREMONY

On April 28, the change of Bankruptcy Court Chief Judge from Judge Maureen A. Tighe to Judge Theodor C. Albert was commemorated at the Passing of the Gavel ceremony in Pasadena. The ceremony took place at the Richard H. Chambers United States Court of Appeals. Nearly 80 people were in attendance to celebrate the occasion and a live stream of the event was made available for additional guests.



Senior Circuit Judge Richard A. Paez provided greetings on behalf of Chief Circuit Judge Mary H. Murguia. Judge Paez noted Judge Tighe “led with grace and a guiding hand” and Chief Judge Albert is “well poised to lead the Court at this time.” Recalled Bankruptcy Judge Geraldine Mund, also a former Chief Judge of the Court, noted the numerous accomplishments of Judge Tighe. This included leading the effort to create the Court’s 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, introducing the electronic self-represented module for use by chapter 13 debtors, and spearheading the Small Business Reorganization Act (SBRA) Task Force in the issuance of its report. Judge Mund concluded her remarks with congratulations to Chief Judge Albert in taking on this pivotal role.



Lawyer Representatives Misty Perry Isaacson, Esq. and David Guess, Esq. revealed a beautiful portrait of Judge Tighe taken by photographer, Elfego Omar Casasola. Judge Tighe thanked and formally introduced Mr. Casasola to the assembly. Judge Tighe also thanked Ms. Isaacson and Mr. Guess for their heartfelt remarks. Judge Tighe noted the impact Judge Mund’s mentorship has had on her stating, “I would never have become the judge that I became, if it weren’t for you.” Judge Tighe continued her remarks by thanking Clerk of Court, Kathy Campbell and her staff, along with her law clerk, Hilda Montes de Oca. In closing, Judge Tighe gave special thanks to her family, specifically her wife and daughter, for being a stabilizing presence in her life.

Michael Weiland, Esq. of Weiland Golden Goodrich, LLP provided congratulatory remarks to Chief Judge Albert and cited the numerous contributions he has made to the attorneys and colleagues that he has mentored over the years. Mr. Weiland noted that Chief Judge Albert’s “deep love of history forms the bedrock

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of his devotion to the law.” District Judge Fitzgerald provided congratulatory remarks to both Judge Tighe and Chief Judge Albert on behalf of Chief District Judge Philip S. Gutierrez. The ceremony ended with a response from Chief Judge Albert, who thanked his wife, son, sister, and all in attendance for this display of confidence in him. He thanked Mr. Weiland for his very kind remarks and confirmed that he is determined to do his very best for the Court. Following the conclusion of the Passing of the Gavel ceremony, a reception was held in the beautiful outdoor courtyard of the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CONSIDER FREE SPEECH RIGHTS IN ANNUAL CIVICS CONTEST

On June 2, the U.S. District Court and U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California hosted a civics contest for high school students in grades nine through twelve (Local Contest), which was held in conjunction with a civics contest sponsored by the Ninth Circuit for high school students in the Western United States (Ninth Circuit Contest).

The theme of this year’s Ninth Circuit Contest focused on students’ free speech rights. The contest challenged students to address “What are students’ free speech rights – and responsibilities – on and off campus?” Participants were asked to consider what rights the First Amendment provides to students engaging in free speech, both inside and outside of school.

The Central District received a high volume of entries this year, with approximately 200 essays and 37 videos. The first-, second-, and third-place winners received cash prizes. Each year, the top essays and videos in the Central District’s contest advance to the Ninth Circuit Civics Contest to compete with the essay and video winners from all of the other districts in the Ninth Circuit. In addition to cash prizes, first-place winners of the Local Contest and a parent/guardian are invited to attend the 2022 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference in Big Sky, Montana.

The Ninth Circuit Contest is sponsored by the Ninth Circuit’s Public Information and Community Outreach (PICO) Committee, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and the U.S. District and Bankruptcy Courts in the 15 judicial districts that comprise the Ninth Circuit. In all, the Ninth Circuit Contest received 800 essays and 112 videos this year. For more information, please visit <https://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest>.

LABF PAYS TRIBUTE TO JUDGE SMITH, JUDGE TIGHE, AND JUDGE WALLACE AT NIGHT WITH THE JUDGES

On June 13, the Los Angeles Bankruptcy Forum (LABF) honored Hon. Erithe A. Smith, Hon. Maureen A. Tighe, and Hon. Mark S. Wallace during the “Annual Night with the Judges 2022” program. The three judges have all announced retirement dates in 2022. Members of the local bankruptcy community, including some bankruptcy judges from the Central District of California gathered at The Griffin Club in Los Angeles to pay tribute to the three judges. Chief Judge Theodor C. Albert presented a “State of the Court” immediately before commencement of the tributes and the Hon. Sheri Bluebond emceed the event.

Judge Klein celebrated Judge Smith, along with a former colleague and former law clerks. Judge Yun and former colleagues paid tribute to the Hon. Mark S. Wallace, who stepped down from the bench on March 1. Kind words were spoken by current and former law clerks of Judge Tighe about working under her leadership. Judge Bluebond brought the evening to a close by singing a light-hearted melody highlighting the three judges.

THE CENTRAL GUIDE INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS – ADDITIONAL DATES

In December 2021, the Court announced the release of The Central Guide, a new digital tool to replace the Court Manual. The Central Guide allows users to look up a specific Local Bankruptcy Rule (“LBR”) and links to forms and instructions that match that LBR. Pertinent information found on the websites of the U.S. Trustee, U.S. District Court, Bankruptcy Appellate Panel, and Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals is also linked to The Central Guide. Join us for an informational session on the new features of the Central Guide, how to navigate the new tool, and more. Court staff will be available to answer any questions.

Questions may also be submitted ahead of time to bkcomments@cacb.uscourts.gov.

Free Information Sessions: The Central Guide		
August 1, 2022	October 3, 2022	December 5, 2022
2:00pm-3:30pm	2:00pm-3:30pm	2:00pm-3:30pm
ZoomGov	ZoomGov	ZoomGov
Registration information will be provided prior to each session		

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Monday, September 5 - Labor Day

To view the 2022 Federal Holiday Public Notice on the Court's website click [here](#).

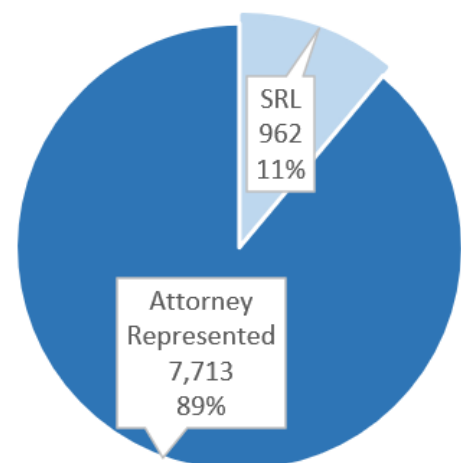
BANKRUPTCY STATISTICS

The data below represents filings year to date thru June 30, 2022. Statistics based on internal filings data.

Divisional Filings YTD	Ch 7	Ch 11	Ch 13	Total	% change from previous YTD
Los Angeles	3035	56	605	3696	-33.75%
Northern	432	8	59	499	-31.45%
Riverside	2119	11	425	2555	-31.65%
San Fernando Valley	641	15	148	804	-33.00%
Santa Ana	938	27	156	1121	-34.44%
Total	7165	117	1393	8675	-33.04%

Business Filings	Ch 7	Ch 11	Ch 13	Total
2022 YTD	358	88	24	470
2021 YTD	511	143	17	671

Central District of CA - Filings YTD



The interactive Statistics Dashboard is a feature on the Court’s website that provides up-to-date filing and closing data for chapter 7, 11, and 13 cases, as well as adversary proceedings. Users can view data sorted by division or from the entire Central District, or they can choose to view only pro se (SRL) or business cases. The Statistics Dashboard also displays year-by-year and month-by-month comparisons; another option compares each month of the current year to the corresponding month of the prior year. Access the “Interactive Statistics” through the link: <https://ecf.cacb.uscourts.gov/ecfstatsdash>

TOP 10 CASES OF INTEREST*

Debtor	Case Number	Chapter	Filed	Assets	Liabilities
Airport Van Rental, Inc.	LA-20-20876-BB	11	12/11/20	\$10 - \$50 million	\$10 - \$50 million
Elite Aerospace Group, Inc.	SA-21-12231-TA	11	09/13/21	\$10 - \$50 million	\$10 - \$50 million
Thomas Vincent Girardi	LA 20-21020-BR	7	12/18/20	\$50 - \$100 million	\$50 - \$100 million
Glenroy Coachella, LLC	LA-21-11188-BB	11	02/15/21	\$50 - \$100 million	\$10 - \$50 million
Alex A. Khadavi	LA-21-14449-BB	11	05/27/21	\$50 - \$100 million	\$50 - \$100 million
Plamex Investment, LLC	SA-21-10958-ES	11	04/14/21	\$100 - \$500 million	\$100 - \$500 million
PS On Tap, LLC	SV-21-10757-MB	11	04/28/21	\$1 - \$10 million	\$10 - \$50 million
The Source Hotel, LLC	SA-21-10525-ES	11	02/26/21	\$50 - \$100 million	\$50 - \$100 million
TRX Holdco, LLC	SA-22-10948-SC	11	06/08/22	\$10 - \$50 million	\$10 - \$50 million
Western Community Energy	RS-21-12821-SY	9	05/24/21	\$50 - \$100 million	\$50 - \$100 million

*Based on a combination of asset and liability levels, and/or name recognition.

BANKRUPTCY FRAUD PROSECUTIONS

The following information has been provided by the Office of the United States Trustee:

USA v. Donald Woo Lee

On April 28, 2022, defendant Donald Woo Lee was sentenced to 93 months of imprisonment followed by three years of supervised release. In addition, Lee was ordered to pay \$4,587,533.79 in restitution to Medicare. On June 6, 2016, Donald Woo Lee, 55, of Temecula, California, was charged with seven counts of health care fraud in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury in the Central District of California. Lee was additionally charged with one count of adulteration of a medical device and one count of false statements in bankruptcy in a subsequent superseding indictment filed on June 7, 2018. On October 16, 2019, following a jury trial, Lee was found guilty on the health care fraud and adulteration counts. On March 2, 2020, Lee pleaded guilty to the false statements in bankruptcy count. Lee was an internal medicine doctor who owned, operated, and oversaw several medical clinics in the greater Los Angeles and Riverside areas. [DOJ Press Release](#)

USA v. Ernesto Diaz

On November 16, 2021, Ernesto Diaz was sentenced to 3 years in federal prison and 3 years probation upon release. Diaz was found guilty of six counts of mail fraud, and five counts of aiding and abetting mail fraud that affected a financial institution, and ordered to pay \$3,061,159 in restitution. Diaz was a realtor who managed a sales staff for a “mortgage elimination program” in Montebello known as Crown Point Education Inc. Diaz would advertise and hold seminars for distressed homeowners to convince them that Crown Point could eliminate all or part of their mortgage debt. After collecting a fee, usually \$15,000 per property, Diaz and others would engage in a scheme to hinder, delay and defraud the lenders with false documents and quitclaim deeds, some notarized using a stolen notary stamp, and by filing numerous bankruptcy proceedings without the homeowner’s knowledge or approval. Evidence showed that Crown Point obtained nearly \$5M from approximately 400 clients and that numerous victims lost their properties in foreclosure. [FBI Press Release](#)