

United States Bankruptcy Court  
Central District of California

Julia W. Brand, Chief Judge  
Kathleen J. Campbell, Executive Officer / Clerk of Court



## COURT MOURNS THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE THEODOR C. ALBERT, JR.

Surrounded by his family and closest friends, Chief Bankruptcy Judge Theodor Charles Albert, Jr., Central District of California, died on May 5, 2025, from complications of esophageal cancer. He will be long remembered for his keen intellect, kindness, inclusiveness, passion for the law and profound commitment to public service.

Judge Albert was born in 1953 at the Fort Sill Army base in Oklahoma. He spent his childhood in Massachusetts before moving with his family to California. The family settled down in Walnut, a city in Los Angeles County, where Judge Albert graduated from J.A. Rowland High School before receiving his Bachelor of Arts Degree in History from Stanford University in 1975, and his Juris Doctorate Degree from the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law in 1978.

As noted in a recent Insolvency Law Committee (ILC) Judicial Profile, Judge Albert's first job after law school was with a small mid-Wilshire firm. But he soon moved to Orange County to work at Corbett, Steelman & Davidson. Early in his career, a major client sought representation in a bankruptcy proceeding and Judge Albert was assigned to handle the client's needs. He learned that he enjoyed the bankruptcy practice where no two cases are alike and where legal issues are drawn from different disciplines. The experience led Judge Albert to specialize in insolvency law. His early years in practice coincided with the adoption of the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1978, which went into effect in October 1979.

In 1983, Judge Albert relocated his growing practice to Buchalter, Nemer, Fields & Younger, where he eventually headed the insolvency practice at the firm's Newport Beach office. A few years later, he was appointed as the special examiner of a music store in Costa Mesa where he identified and documented a fraud racket. Harry L. Gastley, assistant U.S. trustee with the Office of the United States Trustee, was impressed with the report and suggested that he apply for a position as a Chapter 7 trustee. Judge Albert applied and was selected for the panel.

In addition to his time as a bankruptcy trustee and examiner, Judge Albert also served on the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Central District of California's panel of trained mediators. Judge Albert was a frequent lecturer and author on numerous bankruptcy topics and was an adjunct faculty member of the University of California at Irvine Extension Program, teaching a course on trustee practice. He was a founding director and President of the Orange County Bankruptcy Forum.

In 1995, Judge Albert co-founded Albert, Weiland & Golden, a boutique bankruptcy firm where he practiced until his appointment to the bench. Judge Albert was a Master and past treasurer of the Peter M. Elliott Inn of Court. In 2000, Judge Albert was awarded the Peter M. Elliott Award for maintaining the highest standard of ethics, scholarship and service.

On June 1, 2005, Judge Albert was appointed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit as a U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the Central District of California. Judge Albert spent one year in Los Angeles, before being transferred to the Santa Ana courthouse. He was re-appointed to a second 14-year term effective June 1, 2019. Over the years, Judge Albert contributed greatly to the Central District community, and, rather than retire, he chose to step up and serve the Court as Chief Judge, to lead the Court out of the pandemic years.

Judge Albert was named Chief Bankruptcy Judge for the Central District of California Bankruptcy Court on January 1, 2022, for a four-year term. He sat on many important committees, including the Rules Committee and Executive Committee. He led robust discussions amongst his colleagues and always kept the rule of law and service to the American people at the forefront of his work. During his time on the bench, Judge Albert also taught insolvency related courses at Chapman University's Fowler School of Law for 14 years.



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Court News is published by the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California as an informational service for the practitioners and public of our Court.

Suggestions and comments are always welcome. Please email us at [editor@cacb.uscourts.gov](mailto:editor@cacb.uscourts.gov).

This issue and back issues of the Court News are available on the Court's website at <http://www.cacb.uscourts.gov/publications>

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Upon Judge Albert's appointment as Chief Bankruptcy Judge, his former law partner attorney Michael Weiland shared that Judge Albert was "intelligent, a gifted writer, witty, open minded, fair, patient, humble and loyal." Weiland praised Chief Judge Albert as a highly respected jurist and noted the myriad contributions that he has made to the attorneys and colleagues that he mentored over the years. He said the Chief Judge's "deep love of history forms the bedrock of his devotion to the law." Among other things, Chief Judge Albert had a deep interest in Roman law, as evidenced by his having published a well-researched treatise on the early Roman origins of bankruptcy law, and in the American Civil War, as evidenced by his enthusiastic participation, dressed in the period correct uniform of a Union Army private, in numerous events including a full-scale three-day reenactment of the Battle of Gettysburg, replete with batteries of cannon, held on the 135 Year Anniversary of the Battle.

Notable cases during Chief Judge Albert's tenure as bankruptcy judge include: *In re Trigem America Corporation*, 8:05-bk-13972-TA; *In re StarRibs North, LP, et al*, 8:08-bk-17182-TA; *In re North Valley Mall, LLC*, 8:09-bk-19346-TA; *In re Rafik Youssef Kamell*, 8:10-bk-15501; *In re Point Center Financial, Inc.*, 8:13-bk-11495-TA; *In re Anna's Linens, Inc.*, 8:15-bk-13008; *In re Bridgemark Corporation*, 8:20-bk-10143-TA; and *In re Five Rivers Land Company*, 8:23-bk-11167-TA.

Chief Judge Albert was buried in a private ceremony. There was a celebration of his life on June 8, 2025. He is survived by his wife, Deborah Gaskell Albert, and his sons Brendan Albert, Brian Albert, Sean Van Braden, and Casey Braden.

Contributions in memory of Chief Judge Albert can be sent to the Stanford Cancer Institute, and to the City of Hope which has established a dedicated donation page in tribute to Judge Albert.

City of Hope Online Donations: <https://ourhope.cityofhope.org/TheodorCAAlbert>. Donations may also be mailed to the following address: City of Hope, Attn: Annual Giving, 1500 E. Duarte Road, Duarte, CA 91010. Please add "Hon. Theodor C. Albert" to the memo line of the check.

Stanford Cancer Institute Online Donations: [https://give.stanford.edu/med/cancer\\_discovery?olc=42250](https://give.stanford.edu/med/cancer_discovery?olc=42250).

Donations can also be mailed to the following address along with the donation form: Stanford Medical Center Development, 485 Broadway, 4th Floor, Redwood City, CA 94063, Fax: 650.723.0020

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## JUDGE SCOTT CLARKSON (CACB - SANTA ANA) – DISTRICT OF DELAWARE BANKRUPTCY ASSIGNMENT

On June 24, 2025, Bankruptcy Judge Scott C. Clarkson, Central District of California, was appointed by the Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware to serve as a Judicial Settlement Officer in the international Chapter 11 involuntary bankruptcy matter *In re Mawson Infrastructure Group, Inc.*, Case No. 24-12726 (District of Delaware), involving a national United States-based company and petitioning creditor parties based in the Commonwealth of Australia. The Intercircuit request, utilizing the established Judiciary Policy process for Intercircuit Assignments, was approved by the Third and Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Chief Bankruptcy Judges of the District of Delaware and Central District of California, and Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts in Washington, D.C.



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## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CONSIDER "WHY EXERCISING THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP IS IMPORTANT TO ME"

The U.S. District Court and U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California recently 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 Civics Contest). This year's Ninth Circuit Civics Contest "When Duty Calls: Why Exercising the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship is Important to Me" challenged students to write an essay or produce a video to address the theme and discuss the rights and responsibilities of being a U.S. citizen.

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 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 2025 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference. 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 885 essays and 126 videos this year. For more information, please visit <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest>.

## MULTIFACTOR AUTHENTICATION FOR CM/ECF AND PACER

On May 11, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AO) began implementing multifactor authentication (MFA) to enhance system security for CM/ECF and PACER. MFA provides an added layer of security to accounts by helping protect against cyberattacks that steal passwords and significantly reducing the risk of unauthorized access.

CM/ECF and PACER users are now able to enroll in MFA. Users with filing and all other types of CM/ECF-level access will be required to enroll in MFA, while users with PACER-only access will have the option to enroll. Users with CM/ECF-level access who do not voluntarily enroll will be randomly selected to do so beginning in August. By the end of 2025, everyone with CM/ECF-level access will be required to use MFA when logging in.

Users can download any authentication application (app) that supports a time-based one-time password (TOTP). The AO does not endorse specific apps, however, some options include Authy, DUO Mobile, FreeOTP, Google Authenticator, and Microsoft Authenticator. Before enrolling in MFA, the AO recommends that users research available authentication apps to decide which one will work best for them and then download their preferred app.

Additionally, users who are unable to download an authentication app will be able to save one-time use backup codes. Once users have used all their backup codes, they will need to request a new batch. For MFA-related questions for CM/ECF or PACER, please visit the [PACER website](#) or contact the PACER Service Center at [pacer@psc.uscourts.gov](mailto:pacer@psc.uscourts.gov) or (800) 676-6856. The PACER Service Center hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. PT.

## HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Friday, July 4 - Independence Day

Monday, September 1 - Labor Day

To view the 2025 Federal Holiday Public Notice on the Court's website click [here](#).

## BANKRUPTCY FRAUD PROSECUTIONS

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

### USA v. Girardi

Disbarred attorney, Thomas Vincent Girardi, who turned 86 on June 3, 2025, was sentenced to 87 months in federal prison for his decades-long swindling of his personal injury clients trust accounts. Girardi was also ordered to pay a \$35,000 fine and \$2,310,247 in restitution. The Ponzi-like scheme was revealed during a trial in Chicago related to settlement funds owed to clients whose relatives had perished in a 2018 Indonesian plane crash. Shortly after that, Girardi and his law firm Girardi Keese were forced into involuntary chapter 7 bankruptcy proceedings. Girardi was found guilty of four counts of wire fraud by a jury in August 2024. Since that time, Girardi has claimed to suffer from dementia and underwent a six-week psychological evaluation earlier this year at FMC, a federal prison in North Carolina for male inmates who have special health needs, in order to determine his level of cognitive impairment. U.S. District Judge Josephine Staton ordered that despite Girardi's age-related dementia, he be sentenced to prison rather than placement in a long-term care facility. [Press Release](#)

### USA v. Kamon

Christopher Kazuo Kamon, the former Accounting Chief at Girardi Keese Law Firm, was sentenced to 121 months in federal prison for enabling the embezzlement of millions of dollars from the firm's injured clients, and for embezzling money from the law firm in his personal "side-hustle." Kamon was arrested at his home in the Bahamas in November 2022. In October 2024 he pleaded guilty to two counts of wire fraud. On April 11, 2025, Kamon was sentenced to 121 months in custody and ordered to pay \$8,903,324 in restitution. Kamon has agreed to plead guilty to federal fraud charges in Chicago where he is charged along with Girardi's son-in-law David R. Lira. Girardi was dismissed from the Chicago case because of his conviction and sentencing in the above referenced case. David Lira pleaded guilty to one criminal contempt charge on Thursday June 5th. Sentencing is set in October 2025. [Kamon Press Release](#) and [Lira Press Release](#)

## TOP 10 CASES OF INTEREST\*

Debtor	Case Number	Chapter	Filed	Assets	Liabilities
Beverly Community Hospital Asso.	LA-23-12359-VZ	11	04/19/23	\$1 - \$10 million	\$100 - \$500 million
Frisco Baking Company, Inc.	LA-25-11395-NB	11	02/24/25	\$1 - \$10 million	\$10 - \$50 million
Heycart Inc.	SA-24-10483-TA	11	02/28/24	\$1 - \$10 million	\$10 - \$50 million
Ittella International LLC	LA-23-14154-SK	11	07/02/23	\$10 - \$50 million	\$10 - \$50 million
K3B Enterprises, LLC	SV-24-10406-VK	11	03/14/24	\$10 - \$50 million	\$1 - \$10 million
The Litigation Practice Group P.C.	SA-23-10571-SC	11	03/20/23	\$1 - \$10 million	\$10 - \$50 million
Manning Land Company, LLC	LA:24-16757-VZ	11	08/22/24	\$10 - \$50 million	\$10 - \$50 million
Synapse Financial Technologies, Inc.	SV-24-10646-MB	11	04/22/24	\$10 - \$50 million	\$10 - \$50 million
Thomas Vincent Girardi	LA 20-21020-BR	7	12/18/20	\$50 - \$100 million	\$50 - \$100 million
Windsor Terrace Healthcare, LLC	SV-23-11200-VK	11	08/23/23	\$1 - \$10 million	\$1 - \$10 million

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

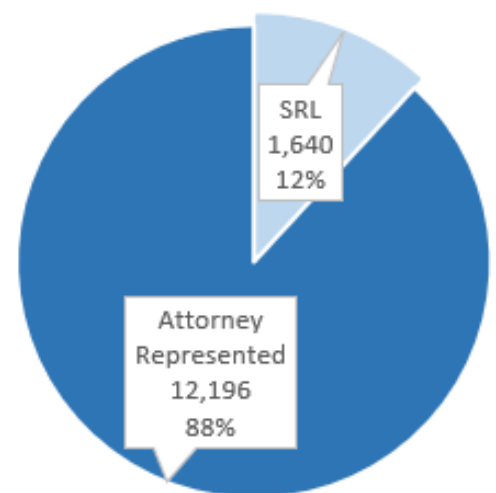
## BANKRUPTCY STATISTICS

The data below represents filings year to date thru June 30, 2025. Statistics based on internal filings data.

Divisional Filings YTD	Ch 7	Ch 11	Ch 13	Total	% change from previous YTD
Los Angeles	4,655	109	815	5,579	5.66%
Northern	756	13	117	886	17.82%
Riverside	3,757	18	636	4,411	15.32%
San Fernando Valley	948	29	182	1,159	5.26%
Santa Ana	1,544	44	213	1,801	5.75%
Total	11,660	213	1,963	13,836	9.28%

Business Filings	Ch 7	Ch 11	Ch 13	Total
2025 YTD	651	184	29	864
2024 YTD	623	166	31	820

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/ecfststatsdash/ecfststatsdash-new.html>