

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

MAUREEN A. TIGHE, Chief Judge  
KATHLEEN J. CAMPBELL, Executive Officer / Clerk of Court



## CHIEF JUDGE TIGHE RECEIVES ACCESS TO JUSTICE AWARD FROM NLSLA

On June 26, the Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLSLA) honored Chief Judge Maureen Tighe during the "10th Anniversary Celebration Central District's Woodland Hills Bankruptcy Self-Help Center" program.

Over 50 members of the bankruptcy community gathered at Ca Del Sol restaurant in Toluca Lake to witness Chief Judge Tighe receive the NLSLA Access to Justice award. Ten Years ago, Chief Judge Tighe had the idea to offer pro bono services and self-help in bankruptcy in the San Fernando Valley community. "It's about the people, and thanks to the people in this room, we kept it going", said Chief Judge Tighe.



## JUDGE KLEIN ADMINISTERS OATH TO NEW CITIZENS AT DODGER STADIUM

On September 3, before a Los Angeles Dodgers v. Colorado Rockies baseball game at Dodger Stadium, Judge Sandra R. Klein presided over a naturalization ceremony, administering the oath of allegiance to 15 new citizens. This ceremony was part of a nationwide outreach initiative by the U.S. Courts to highlight Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, which celebrates the signing of the Constitution in 1787. After the ceremony, Judge Klein stated, "I always get choked up when administering the oath of allegiance because I think of two of my grandparents, who were naturalized many years ago and who were so incredibly proud to be U.S. citizens."



Generally, the naturalization ceremonies over which judges in the Central District of California preside are held at the Los Angeles Convention Center and other large venues and involve thousands of new citizens. Judge Klein commented that although the ceremony at Dodger Stadium included only 15 citizenship applicants, it felt extra special, because, "not only was the crowd enthusiastically cheering in the background and the ceremony displayed on the Jumbotron, but I had the good fortune to meet and spend time with all the new citizens and their families, take photos with them, and hear a bit about their journeys to citizenship."

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>

## JUDGE MARTIN BARASH PROFILED IN DAILY JOURNAL

On July 10, the *Daily Journal* published a profile of Judge Martin Barash. The article, by Blaise Scemama, describes Judge Barash's immigrant ancestry, local roots, and his dedication to the bankruptcy legal community and community at large.

The profile briefly follows Judge Barash's path to judgeship, including practicing as a corporate Chapter 11 attorney before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals appointed him to the bench. Barash notes the bankruptcy system has enabled the United States to be one of the most successful nations, as it facilitates the idea of a "second chance" for both individuals and businesses. "I've come to appreciate bankruptcy law and our bankruptcy system as part of the secret sauce for our country's success," Barash said.

Barash facilitates an environment of open dialogue in the courtroom and is willing to listen to all input. "When you leave your hearing, win or lose, you know you got to say what you wanted to say" notes bankruptcy attorney Ron Bender. Bankruptcy attorney Yi Sun Kim states that Barash "...provides ample opportunity for discussion, but he will frequently pause counsel during oral arguments to pose questions, challenge assumptions and delve into the evidence."



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## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CONSIDER FOURTH AMENDMENT IN ANNUAL CIVICS CONTEST

On June 28, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California hosted an award ceremony and reception for the winners of the Central District's Civic Contest in the Edward R. Roybal Federal Building. The theme of this year's contest for high school students was "The Fourth Amendment in the 21st Century: What Is an 'Unreasonable Search and Seizure' in the Digital Age?"

The Central District received 272 essays and 37 videos entries for this year's contest. The first-, second-, and third-place winners were recognized during the reception and received cash prizes. These winners were automatically entered to compete in the Ninth Circuit Civics Contest. The Central District Lawyers Representatives provided invaluable assistance in driving the high number of submissions for this year's contest.

Judge Sandra Klein kicked off the ceremony with opening remarks and would later announce the winners of the essay and video competition. Chief Judge Maureen Tighe introduced the various judges and special guests at the ceremony. The theme for the 2020 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest will be "The Right to Vote: Milestone Anniversaries."



## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FEDERAL RULES PUBLISHED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

On June 25, 2019, the Judicial Conference Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure approved publication of proposed amendments to the following:

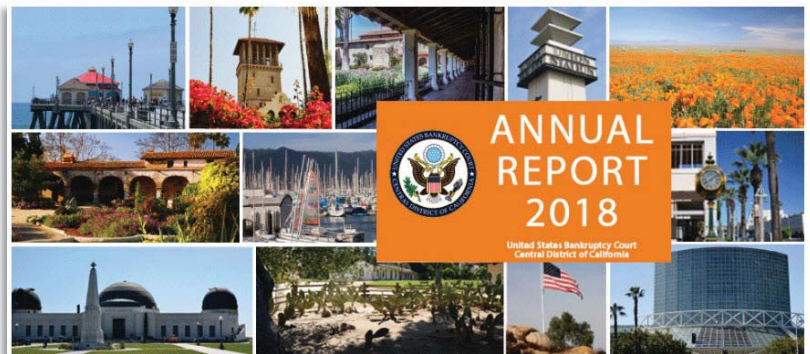
- Appellate Rules 3, 6, 42, and Forms 1 and 2;
- Bankruptcy Rules 2005, 3007, 7007.1, and 9036; and
- Civil Rule 7.1

To read the text of the proposed amendments and supporting materials, visit the [Preliminary Draft of Proposed Amendments to the Federal Rules of Appellate, Bankruptcy, and Civil Procedure](http://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/preliminary_draft_proposed_amendments_to_the_federal_rules_of_appellate_bankruptcy_and_civil_procedure_0.pdf) at [www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/preliminary\\_draft\\_proposed\\_amendments\\_to\\_the\\_federal\\_rules\\_of\\_appellate\\_bankruptcy\\_and\\_civil\\_procedure\\_0.pdf](http://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/preliminary_draft_proposed_amendments_to_the_federal_rules_of_appellate_bankruptcy_and_civil_procedure_0.pdf)

The comment period is open from August 19, 2019 to February 19, 2020.

## COURT PUBLISHES 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

The Court marks each year with the publication of its annual report, which records the year’s achievements and challenges. In August, the Court published the 2018 Annual Report. The report details the Court’s ongoing efforts to improve service and extend access to justice through technological innovation, participation in national and regional initiatives, and community outreach. A PDF of the 2018 Annual Report is posted on the Court’s [website](#), and hard copies are available by request from Clerk of Court Kathleen J. Campbell at (213) 894-6244.



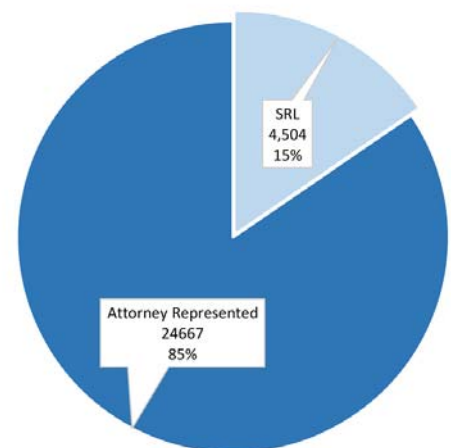
## BANKRUPTCY STATISTICS

The data below represents filings year to date thru September 30, 2019. Statistics based on internal filings data.

Divisional Filings YTD	Ch 7	Ch 11	Ch 13	Total	% change from previous YTD
Los Angeles	9,054	135	2,815	12,004	+0.4%
Northern	1,408	21	279	1,708	+3.6%
Riverside	7,146	30	1,762	8,938	+4.7%
San Fernando Valley	1,957	66	562	2,585	+1.1%
Santa Ana	3,235	72	629	3,936	+4.9%
Total	22,800	324	6,0	29,171	+2.6%

Business Filings	Ch 7	Ch 11	Ch 13	Total
2019 YTD	891	202	86	1179
2018 YTD	871	258	77	1206

Central District of CA - Filings YTD



The interactive Statistics Dashboard is a new feature of 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 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/ecfstatsdash-new.html>

## TOP 10 CASES OF INTEREST\*

Debtor	Case Number	Chapter	Filed	Assets	Liabilities
Banner Mattress Inc.	RS-19-13381-SC	11	04/22/19	\$1 - \$10 million	\$1 - \$10 million
Eagan Avenatti, LLP	SA-19-13560-CB	7	09/13/19	\$0 - \$50K	\$500K - \$1 million
Friar LLC	SV-19-11843-VK	11	07/22/19	\$1 - \$10 million	\$1 - \$10 million
Hawkeye Entertainment LLC	SV-19-12102-MT	11	08/21/19	\$1 - \$10 million	\$1 - \$10 million
HVI Cat Canyon, Inc.	ND-19-11573-MB	11	07/25/19	\$100K - \$500K	\$500K - \$1 million
Kendall Frozen Fruits, Inc.	SA-18-14052-SC	11	11/05/18	\$1 - \$10 million	\$1 - \$10 million
Ruby's Diner, Inc. a California Corp	SA-18-13311-CB	11	09/05/18	\$1 - \$10 million	\$1 - \$10 million
Technology Solutions & Services Inc.	RS-18-18339-MH	11	10/02/18	\$1 - \$10 million	\$50 - \$100 million
Verity Health Systems of CA, Inc.	LA-18-20151-ER	11	08/31/18	\$500K - \$1 million	\$100 - \$500 million
Zacky & Sons Poultry, LLC	LA-18-23361-RK	11	11/13/18	\$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:

### Mark Allen Bellinger

- On June 5, 2019, Mark Bellinger plead guilty in state court to 171 felony counts of counts of conspiracy, procuring or offering a false or forged instrument, grand theft and ID theft relating to a foreclosure and eviction delay scheme, which included the filing of false bankruptcies and other court documents under fictitious names.
- On July 29, 2019, Mark Bellinger was sentenced to 8 years in state prison and ordered to pay \$198,059.51 in victim restitution.

### Prakashumar ("Kash") Bhakta

- On November 28, 2018, defendant plead guilty to 113 felony counts, including conspiracy, grand theft, and filing false or forged documents.
- The fraud scheme stretched through San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles counties. Bhakta and co-defendants convinced distressed homeowners that they could provide legal assistance to help save their home. The defendants filed and recorded numerous fraudulent documents, including false bankruptcies and false court filings.
- The scam defrauded lenders and other owners of their rightful possession of the residential properties.
- On February 13, 2019, Prakashumar Bhakta was sentenced to 7 years and 8 months in state prison and ordered to pay restitution of \$256,000.

### Andrew Valles / Arnold Millman

- Operating a \$2 million mortgage fraud scheme throughout Southern California.
- Defendants would delay foreclosures and eviction actions by filing false bankruptcy and other court documents under fictitious names.
- On May 16, 2019, Mr. Valles was sentenced to 13 years in state prison.
- Restitution was ordered in the amount of \$2,342,957.
- Co-defendant Arnold Millman was previously sentenced to a state prison term of three years and four months.