

President's Column

In this column, I begin a series of interviews with some of our vice presidents as to the roles they play and the roles that the committees they lead play in providing service to our members. This month I begin with **Christopher A. Ward** (Polsinelli; Wilmington, Del.), ABI's Vice President-Development.

Reynolds: Chris, you have served as Vice President-Development since April 2020. What are your duties?

Ward: I head the Development Committee, which oversees the ABI Endowment.

Reynolds: Who are the other ABI Board members who serve with you on the Development Committee?

Ward: I have the pleasure of working with great restructuring attorneys: **Steven M. Berman** (Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP; Tampa, Fla.), **Dawn M. Cica** (Carlyon Cica Chtd.; Las Vegas), **Eric J. Fromme** (Pacheco & Neach, PC; Irvine, Calif.), **Bradley D. Sharp** (Development Specialists, Inc.; Los Angeles) and **Donald A. Workman** (BakerHostetler; Washington, D.C.).

Reynolds: I understand that you have regional committees as well; what are their activities?

Ward: The regional committee serves the important role of fundraising in the particular region, mainly at the many regional conferences hosted by ABI and judicial retirement events.

Reynolds: I understand that your primary goal is to raise funds for our Endowment and to fund grant projects approved by our Grant Committee, chaired by Hon. **Michelle M. Harner** (U.S. Bankruptcy Court (D. Md.); Baltimore). What are some of the major projects that have been funded by the Endowment?

Ward: A few examples of funded research grants would be the ABI Commission to Study the Reform of Chapter 11, the ABI Commission on Consumer Bankruptcy, the Veterans and Servicemembers Affairs Task Force, the Professional Compensation Study and the Ethics Task Force, among many others.

Reynolds: What are the primary methods by which the Development Committee raises funds for the Endowment?

Ward: The Endowment's most successful fundraising endeavors have been wine dinners, silent auctions at national and regional conferences, direct contributions from members, and gifts received as residual assets under confirmed bankruptcy plans or contributions from litigation trusts.

Reynolds: I understand that the Development Committee kicked off a Founder's Society pro-

gram. What does that program entail, and who has pledged at that level?



Christopher A. Ward

Ward: The ABI Founders Society is ABI's planned-giving program. It provides the ability to include the ABI Endowment in your will or otherwise as a beneficiary of your estate, which provides a future benefit at no current cost to our members. The inaugural member of the

Founders Society was **Richard P. Carmody** (Adams and Reese LLP; Birmingham, Ala.). Since then, **Don Workman** and **Richard S. Lauter** (Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith LLP; Chicago) have directed future beneficiary distributions to the Endowment.

Reynolds: I understand that you publish a monthly Developments e-newsletter, which is distributed to all of our members. What information is provided through the newsletter?

Ward: Each month, we publish a newsletter to keep our members up to date on upcoming Endowment events, such as a wine dinner, silent auction or tequila-tasting, but also to recognize our donors, who are the cornerstone of the success of the Endowment.

Reynolds: I know at your request, ABI will be retaining an Endowment Manager next year. What will be the responsibilities of that person as it relates to the Development Committee?

Ward: The Endowment has been incredibly successful; however, there is a lot of competition for fundraising dollars. Currently, our volunteer members like myself and the members of the Development Committee are leading the fundraising charge. As we all see, our former undergrad and post-grad schools, as well as our children's schools and other nonprofit charities, are continually asking for support. While the Endowment has traditionally succeeded at the direction of its membership, in this new digital age, a dedicated individual with specific experience with an endowment is a must. Not only will this person oversee fundraising, they will also provide our members with real-time details on their own contributions and provide a game plan for how to better use our member resources to take the Endowment to the next level.

Reynolds: How can our members donate to the Endowment? Are there levels recognized by your committee?



**ABI President
Robert P. Reynolds**
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Robert Reynolds is a senior partner with Reynolds, Reynolds & Little, LLC in its Tuscaloosa, Ala., office. He previously served as ABI's Vice President-Development.

Ward: The easiest way to donate is at abi.org/endowment/giving/ways-to-give. I am always available by phone or email to assist with a donation, provide sample language for a chapter 11 bankruptcy plan to include the Endowment, or discuss a potential Endowment event. Our incredible ABI staff is always available to assist as well.

Reynolds: Having previously served as Vice President-Development, I know how critical this position is to achieving the goals of our organization and to better serve our members. I hope everyone will become a donor and that many will consider donating at the various recognition levels. Thanks for your time, Chris. **abi**

Event Roundup

ABI's Views from the Bench Back in D.C.

ABI's popular Bankruptcy 2021: Views from the Bench program took place on Sept. 24 at the JW Marriott Downtown Washington, D.C. The program featured the views of more than 20 sitting and retired bankruptcy judges during a full day of high-quality CLE and networking opportunities. Over 100 attended the program in person, with an equal number attending virtually via ABI's innovative online platform.

The program also featured ABI's popular Great Debates session, with **Norman N. Kinel** of Squire Patton Boggs (New York) serving as moderator for both discussions. The first debate, between two U.S. Bankruptcy Judges for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), Hon. **Ashely M. Chan** and Hon. **Eric L. Frank**, examined whether the Bankruptcy Code impliedly repeals the Federal Arbitration Act with respect to disputes regarding the allowance of claims against a bankruptcy estate. The second debate, featuring two U.S. Bankruptcy Judges for the District of Massachusetts (Boston), Hon. **Janet E. Bostwick** and Hon. **Frank J. Bailey**, considered whether a chapter 11 plan of reorganization may lawfully release the liability of a third party for its own tortious conduct without the consent of the creditor whose claim is being released. Other panel sessions at the Views from the Bench program included Confirmation: Brave New World?, Confirmation: The Rest of the Story, The Changing Real Estate Landscape, Small Business Reorganization, and Ethics: The Game-Changing Benefits of Diversity & Elimination of Bias.

ABI thanks judicial chair Bankruptcy Judge **Michelle M. Harner** (D. Md.; Baltimore), and Program Chair **Donald A. Workman** (BakerHostetler; Washington, D.C.), as well as the entire Views from the Bench Advisory Board, for putting together this much-anticipated program. In addition, ABI appreciates the financial support from the

more than 40 sponsors who helped make this program great. Look for the schedule for next year's Views from the Bench program soon on ABI's calendar at abi.org/events.

Midwestern Bankruptcy Institute Returns in a Virtual Format

The Midwestern Bankruptcy Institute, co-sponsored by ABI and the University of Missouri-Kansas City, returned this year as an online program that ran over two days, Sept. 30-Oct. 1. More than 200 enjoyed business and consumer insolvency sessions that included a case law update; ABI Talks on bad-faith filings, PPP loans and industry trends; subchapter V cases; fraudulent transfers; ethical dilemmas in chapter 11; ethics and the duty to perform; chapter 11 feasibility

and related confirmation topics; and hot topics in chapter 13, plus a judicial round-and-round and an ethics session on mindfulness and curtailing implicit bias. This year's Koger Lecture, named after Frank W. Koger, a 1953 graduate of the Kansas City University School of Law and prominent U.S. Bankruptcy Judge, featured a discussion on the wall of debt and other legacies of COVID-19. Lee J. Viorel received the annual Michael R. Roser Excellence in Bankruptcy Award, named in honor of the late Michael R. Roser, a prominent Kansas City bankruptcy lawyer. The program was eligible for up to 8 hours of CLE credit, including 1 hour each of ethics and elimination of bias.

Attendees were able to network during a virtual mix-and-mingle event following the first day's sessions. In addition, to get each day started, MorrisAnderson & Associates, Ltd. and B. Riley Advisory Services sponsored Uber Eats vouchers so attendees could fuel up ahead of the sessions.

ABI thanks UMKC and the Midwestern Bankruptcy Institute Advisory Board for pulling the well-received sessions together, particularly Judicial Chair Hon. **Dennis R. Dow** (U.S. Bankruptcy Court (W.D. Mo.); Kansas City) and Co-Chairs **Andrea Chase** (Spencer



Hon. Dennis R. Dow (U.S. Bankruptcy Court (W.D. Mo.; Kansas City) moderated a chapter 13 panel at the Midwestern Bankruptcy Institute that featured panelists Joyce Bradley Babin (Chapter 13 Standing Trustee; Little Rock, Ark.), January M. Bailey (Prelle Eron & Bailey; Wichita, Kan.) and Jeffrey S. Fraser (James E. Albertelli PA; Lake Worth, Fla.) (l-r).



At the Views from the Bench program in Washington, D.C., Norman N. Kinel (Squire Patton Boggs; New York) (c) moderated a debate between Judges Janet E. Bostwick (l) and Frank J. Bailey of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court (D. Mass.) in Boston over whether a chapter 11 plan of reorganization may lawfully release the liability of a third party for its own tortious conduct without the consent of the creditor whose claim is being released.