

To: Members of the FBA Bankruptcy Law Section

From: Judge Craig A. Gargotta, Chair

Re: FBA Young Lawyers in Court Initiative

Dear Members: the FBA Bankruptcy Law Section is seeking support for an initiative that allows junior lawyers to argue matters to the bankruptcy court. Judge Harlin D. Hale, N.D. Texas, and Alan S. Trust, E.D.N.Y. have implemented a program that encourages senior lawyers to allow junior lawyers to argue matters to the court, even if uncontested. The Bankruptcy Section encourages bankruptcy judges and experienced lawyers to participate in the program. Like my colleagues, I will be implementing this program in my court and will encourage that less experienced lawyers be afforded the opportunity to have meaningful court time. Further, to the extent that time permits, I will hear uncontested matters and provide a critique of the lawyer's presentation. A suggested announcement on a bankruptcy court's web site is provided below. Should you have any questions, please contact Judges Hale, Trust, or myself.

The Bankruptcy Court for the _____ District of _____ recognizes the importance of providing opportunities for junior lawyers to gain experience and training in courtroom skills. Accordingly, it is the policy of this Court that, where junior lawyers are familiar with the matter before the court, but are not experienced in arguing in court, they should be encouraged to attend and participate. In such circumstances, where it creates an opportunity for a junior lawyer to argue, this Court is amenable to permitting more than one lawyer to argue for a party.

Other opportunities for junior lawyers include attending and participating in first day matters in chapter 11 cases and presenting some of the motions before the court, going over the agenda with the court for cases in which more than one hearing is scheduled, and attending to other uncontested matters. On the latter point, this Court does not consider it a waste of judicial time for a junior lawyer to handle in an efficient manner an uncontested matter.