

# Faculty Biographies

**Amy A. Aronson** is a partner and founder of Aronson & Walsh, PC in Vernon Hills, Ill., where she practices in the area of creditors' rights in consumer bankruptcy cases. She is also an associate with Pierce & Associates in Chicago. Ms. Aronson received her Bachelor's degree from Lawrence University and her J.D. from Drake University Law School in May 1991.

**Hon. Janet S. Baer** is a U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the Northern District of Illinois in Chicago, appointed on March 5, 2012. Previously, she was a restructuring lawyer for more than 25 years and was involved in some of the most significant chapter 11 bankruptcy cases in the country. The majority of her practice focused on the representation of large, publicly held debtors in both restructuring and chapter 11 matters, and she also represented companies in commercial litigation matters, including lender liability, fraud, breach of contract and breach of fiduciary duty. Prior to forming her own firm in 2009, Judge Baer was a partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP, Winston & Strawn and Schwartz, Cooper, Greenberger & Krauss. She is currently the judicial chair of ABI's Chicago Consumer Bankruptcy Conference, a board member of the Chicago chapter of the International Women's Insolvency & Restructuring Confederation and a member of the Chicago Bench/Bar Liaison Committee. Judge Baer earned her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin - Madison and her J.D. from DePaul College of Law.

**Joseph A. Baldi** is the principal shareholder of the Chicago bankruptcy boutique firm of Baldi Berg, Ltd. (formerly Joseph A. Baldi & Associates, P.C.). Prior to establishing the firm in 2000, he was a partner in the Chicago law firms of Schwartz & Freeman and Rosenthal and Schanfield, P.C., and chaired their bankruptcy and reorganization practice groups. He also spent five years as a staff attorney with the Office of the U.S. Trustee. Mr. Baldi has specialized in insolvency law for more than 25 years and has extensive experience in a variety of settings, including bankruptcies, workouts, receiverships and assignments for the benefit of creditors. He has represented clients in all sectors of the bankruptcy arena, including debtors, bankruptcy trustees, lenders, claimholders and creditor committees. He has also counseled both individual and corporate debtors in chapter 7, chapter 13 and chapter 11 cases, as well as in complex commercial bankruptcies. Mr. Baldi has been a chapter 7 trustee for more than 20 years and has liquidated a broad range of business entities, including law firms, real estate ventures, distributorships, retail firms and financial service providers. He is licensed to practice law in Illinois and is admitted to practice before the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals and many federal bankruptcy courts in the Midwest. Mr. Baldi is a member of the Chicago Bar Association, the National Association of Bankruptcy Trustees and ABI, for which he is a frequent lecturer on a variety of bankruptcy topics. He received his B.A. in psychology from Western Illinois University and his J.D. *cum laude* from DePaul University College of Law.

**Hon. Donald R. Cassling** is a U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the Northern District of Illinois in Chicago, sworn in on Jan. 18, 2012. Prior to his appointment, he was a partner at Jenner & Block and at Quarles & Brady in Chicago, where he had a national practice in commercial and patent-infringement law, as well as bankruptcy litigation. Upon graduation from law school, he clerked for Chief Judge John R. Brown of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit before returning to Chicago to practice law. Judge Cassling has written and lectured extensively on the UCC, banking law and commercial litigation and has testified as an expert witness on the Illinois UCC. He is a co-author of *Illinois Practice: Uniform Commercial Code with Illinois Code Comments* (Thomson/West 2007) and *Illinois Practice: Uniform Commercial Code Forms Annotated* (Thomson/West 2006),

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and is the author of the “Joinder, Consolidation, and Severance” chapter of *Business and Commercial Litigation in Federal Courts, 3rd Edition* (ABA Section of Litigation/West 2011). From 2003-11, Judge Cassling wrote “Banking Briefs,” a banking litigation column for *The Banking Law Journal*, and served as a member of its board of editors. He has participated as a faculty member for the National Institute of Trial Advocacy and was selected as an *Illinois Super Lawyer* from 2009-12. Judge Cassling earned his A.B. from Duke University and his J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School, where he was an editor of the *University of Chicago Law Review*.

**Monette W. Cope** is a junior partner in the Chicago office of Weltman, Weinberg & Reis Co., LPA, where she focuses on students loans and consumer and commercial bankruptcy. She is a member of the Chicago Bar Association, is licensed in Illinois and Ohio and is admitted to practice before the Northern, Central and Southern District Courts of Illinois, the Southern District Court of Ohio and the Western District Court of Michigan. Ms. Cope is an ABI member and a former board member and president of the Credit Education Coalition. She currently serves on the Chicago Financial Women’s board of directors. Ms. Cope received her both her B.A. *cum laude* in English in 1979 and her J.D. from Ohio State University.

**Nathan E. Curtis** is a supervising attorney at Geraci Law L.L.C. in Chicago, where his duties include performing detailed reviews of complicated chapter 7 and 13 matters. He has filed or reviewed more than 10,000 consumer bankruptcy cases, including appeals. Mr. Curtis is a member of ABI and the Illinois State Bar Association, and is an associate member of the National Association of Chapter 13 Trustees. He is also a former member of the Northern District of Illinois Bankruptcy Court’s Liaison Committee and currently serves as chair of the executive committee of the Chicago Bar Association’s Bankruptcy and Reorganization Committee, and he is a member of the advisory board of ABI’s Chicago Consumer Bankruptcy Conference. Mr. Curtis is a graduate of the University of Illinois and the John Marshall Law School.

**William J. Factor** is principal of The Law Office of William J. Factor, Ltd. in Northbrook, Ill., where he concentrates on representing businesses and individuals in bankruptcy and commercial litigation matters (debtors and creditors). He frequently represents small businesses, including sole proprietors, in chapter 11 proceedings, as well as in out-of-court restructurings. He also represents owners of businesses who have had business-related claims asserted against them. Previously, Mr. Factor was an equity partner in the national law firm of Seyfarth Shaw LLP, concentrating his practice in bankruptcy and commercial litigation, counseling and transactions. Before joining Seyfarth Shaw in 1995, he was an associate in the bankruptcy practice group at Sidley Austin LLP in Chicago. In commercial litigation matters, Mr. Factor regularly represents individuals and corporations, including 501(c)(3) entities and financial institutions. His practice includes state and federal court proceedings, arbitrations and mediations. Mr. Factor is a member of ABI, the Turnaround Management Association, the American Bar Association, the Illinois State Bar Association and the Chicago Bar Association, for which he served from 1997-2001 as an investigator on the Judicial Evaluation Committee and in 1995 as the co-chair for the Committee on Client Development and Firm Economics for the Young Lawyers Division. Mr. Factor is a contributing author to the *HICLE Contract Law Handbook* and the *Annual Survey of Bankruptcy Law*, and is a speaker on various commercial law topics. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Chicago in

1983 and graduated with high honors from DePaul College of Law in 1990, where he was a member of Order of the Coif and the *DePaul Law Review*.

**Hon. Catherine J. Furay** is Chief Bankruptcy Judge for the Western District of Wisconsin in Eau Claire. Prior to her appointment, she practiced bankruptcy, commercial law and business litigation in Madison, Wis. Judge Furay has served on various Wisconsin State Bar committees, including its executive committee. She has also been a member of ABI, ABA and CLLA committees. Judge Furay is a member of the Technology and Next Gen Committees of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges. She is a frequent author and lecturer on bankruptcy, commercial law, ethics, marital property and litigation skills and an adjunct faculty member of the University of Wisconsin Law School. Judge Furay received her J.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School.

**James J. Haller** is a partner at the Law Offices of Mueller & Haller LLC in Belleville, Ill. He also sits on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys and serves on the Standing Rules Committee for the Bankruptcy Court of Southern District of Illinois. Mr. Haller co-founded the U.S. Bankruptcy Association of Southern Illinois (BASIL) in 2004 and has also served as a panelist for several organizations, including ABI, NACBA, the National Association of Chapter 13 Trustees (NACTT), BASIL, the Illinois State Bar Association, Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education, Illinois Housing in Action, Illinois Attorney General's office and Land of Lincoln Legal Services. His published works include "What *Till v. SCS Credit Corp.* Means for Your Chapter 13 Clients," 92 *Ill. B. J.* 9, 478-482 (2004); "The New Bankruptcy Law: A Consumer Lawyer's Guide," 93 *Ill. B. J.* 9, 454-460 (2005); "Chapter One: Getting a Consumer Bankruptcy Started in Consumer Bankruptcy Practice," 1-1 to 1-36 (IICLE, 2011); and "Creativity Alive in Chapter 13 Plans after *Espinosa*," *ABI Journal* 40, 94 (April 2011). Mr. Haller received his B.A. from Carleton College in Northfield, Minn., and his J.D. from Washington University in St. Louis.

**Cari A. Kauffman** is an attorney with Sorman & Frankel, Ltd. in Chicago, where she concentrates on secured creditors' rights in bankruptcy. She has represented creditors in consumer chapter 7 and 13 cases, as well as individual chapter 11 cases, and has experience handling court foreclosure actions. Ms. Kauffman is a member of the Chicago Bar Association and is currently serving a two-year term as a member of the Northern District of Illinois Bankruptcy Court Liaison Committee. She received her B.S. and B.A. from the University of Evansville and her J.D. from DePaul University College of Law.

**Jerome E. Larkin** is an administrator of the Illinois Attorney Registration & Disciplinary Commission in Chicago, where he oversees the agency that registers Illinois lawyers and investigates and prosecutes allegations of ethical violations. He has investigated, litigated and appealed many attorney disciplinary cases and, in 2003, received the ARDC's 25-year leadership achievement and service award. A past president of the National Organization & Bar Council (NOBC), he won the NOBC President's Award in 2006 for lifetime achievement in the field of lawyer regulation, and in 2009 he received an ABA CoLAP Meritorious Service Award. He received both his Bachelor's and J.D. from Loyola University and received the Robert Bellarmine Award for distinguished service to the Loyola Law Alumni Association in 1992.

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**David P. Leibowitz** is a managing member of Lakelaw in Chicago, where he represents people and businesses in bankruptcy and foreclosure defense. He is admitted to practice in Illinois, Wisconsin and Arizona. Mr. Leibowitz is a coordinating editor for the *ABI Journal's* Consumer Corner column and a former co-chair of ABI's Consumer Bankruptcy and Commercial Fraud Committees. He is a frequent author and speaker, having contributed to ABI's *Creditors Committee Manual*, now in its 5th Edition, as well as to *Chapter 13 - What You Need to Know*. He has been recognized as a "Super Lawyer" and as a member of the "Leading Lawyers Network." In 2010, Mr. Leibowitz received the Liberty Bell Award from the Judges of the 19th Judicial Circuit in Illinois for "Outstanding Commitment and Service." He received his B.A. in economics from Northwestern University and his J.D. *cum laude* from Loyola University School of Law.

**Hon. Thomas M. Lynch** is a U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the Northern District of Illinois in Rockford, appointed in January 2013. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Lynch practiced law in Chicago, counseling and representing entities ranging from Fortune 500 corporations to private companies and individuals. His practice focused primarily on contract/UCC, bankruptcy, business torts, securities, intellectual property, antitrust and professional responsibility/liability matters. Judge Lynch has been frequently selected to be an "Illinois Leading Lawyer" for commercial litigation and has represented professionals in disciplinary matters and negligence litigation. He has also served as U.S. counsel for court-appointed liquidators of international investment funds in domestic and international bankruptcy proceedings and in related federal securities fraud litigation. Judge Lynch received his undergraduate degree from the University of Dayton, his M.A. from the University of Chicago and his J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law.

**Berton J. "B.J." Maley** is vice president and a managing attorney at Codilis & Associates, P.C. in Burr Ridge, Ill., where he focuses his practice on secured creditors' rights in bankruptcy, mortgage foreclosure and related matters. Mr. Maley currently serves as vice chair of the DuPage County Bar Association's Bankruptcy Committee and as secretary of the Chicago Bar Association's Bankruptcy and Reorganization Committee. He is a member of the Illinois State Bar Association, ABI, the National Association of Chapter 13 Trustees (associate member) and Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, International. Mr. Maley co-authored "Trial of the Foreclosure Case" in *Illinois Foreclosure Practice* (Illinois Institute of Continuing Legal Education, 2003) and authored "Oh, Won't You Stay Just a Little Bit Longer: Duration and Extension of the Automatic Stay in Bankruptcy" and "Avoiding the Auctioneer's Gavel: Saving Homes from Foreclosure," which appeared in the *DCBA Brief: The Journal of the DuPage County Bar Association*; "Chapters & Verse: Real Estate Professionals and the Bankruptcy Process" and "No Vacancies," which appeared in *REO Magazine*; and "Saving Your House Through Bankruptcy," which appeared in the *Loyola Consumer Law Journal*. He is also a frequent lecturer on bankruptcy, mortgage foreclosure and related topics. Mr. Maley received his undergraduate degree from Loyola University College of Arts and Sciences and his J.D. from Loyola University School of Law.

**Hon. Robert D. Martin** is the Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the Western District of Wisconsin in Madison, first appointed in 1978. Prior to his appointment, he was an attorney with the Madison firm of Ross & Stevens, S.C. He is a former president of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, a charter Fellow of the American College of Bankruptcy, a conferee in the National Bankruptcy Conference and a national director of the Turnaround Management Association. He was the

2011 recipient of the Judge Norton Judicial Excellence Award in recognition of his dedication and outstanding contributions to the insolvency community. Judge Martin is a co-author of *Ginsberg & Martin on Bankruptcy* (3 vols.) and *Secured Transactions Handbook for Wisconsin Lawyers and Lenders*, and is a contributing author to *Norton Bankruptcy Law and Practice* and *Norton Bankruptcy Law Adviser*. He has taught debtor/creditor, general practice, farm credit and advanced bankruptcy courses at the University of Wisconsin Law School, and has been a faculty member of the Federal Judicial Center School for Newly Appointed Judges. Judge Martin frequently lectures on bankruptcy and commercial law topics. He received his A.B. from Cornell College in 1966 and his J.D. from the University of Chicago in 1969.

**Nicholas R. Perino** is a senior associate with Swanson & Desai, LLC in Chicago, where he represents consumer and small business debtors and creditors. He is licensed to practice in Illinois and Pennsylvania, and before the Northern District of Illinois and the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Perino received his Bachelor's degree from Penn State University and his J.D. from Duquesne University School of Law.

**Christopher H. Purcell** is a partner with Sherman & Purcell LLP in Chicago, where he represents creditors. He received his B.A. *cum laude* in economics from Western Illinois University and his J.D. from DePaul College of Law.

**Brian L. Shaw** is a member of Shaw Fishman Glantz & Towbin LLC in Chicago and has 20 years of experience representing debtors, secured and unsecured creditors, creditor and equity committees, chapter 7 and 11 trustees, and plaintiffs and defendants in bankruptcy-related litigation. He is ABI's President and previously served two terms as ABI's Vice President-Membership. Mr. Shaw is a past chair of the Chicago Bar Association's Bankruptcy and Reorganization Committee and has authored and co-authored numerous articles for the *ABI Journal*, *Norton Bankruptcy Law Letter*, *The Bankruptcy Strategist*, *Business Credit* and *Credit Today*, as well as for the Illinois Institute of Continuing Legal Education. He also chaired ABI's inaugural Professional Development Program and regularly serves on the faculty of ABI's Litigation Skills Symposium. Mr. Shaw is admitted to practice in Illinois, the U.S. District Courts for the Northern and Central Districts of Illinois, the Eastern District of Wisconsin and Northern District of Indiana, the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Seventh and Eighth Circuits, and the U.S. Supreme Court. He received his J.D. *magna cum laude* from the University of Illinois College of Law.

**M. Gretchen Silver** is a trial attorney with the Office of the U.S. Trustee in Chicago. Prior to joining the U.S. Trustee's Office in August 2002, she was an enforcement attorney with the Midwest regional office of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Before joining the SEC, Ms. Silver practiced bankruptcy law at Rudnick & Wolfe, where she represented debtors, creditors' committees, secured lenders and chapter 7 trustees. She also clerked for Hon. Sarah Sharer Curley in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Arizona in Phoenix from 1987-90. Ms. Silver received both her B.S. and J.D. from the University of Illinois - Champaign/Urbana.

**Jeffrey S. Snell** is a trial attorney with the Office of the U.S. Trustee in Chicago. He previously clerked for Hon. Walter Shapero of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Michigan.

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He is a member of the general bar of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and the State Bar of New York. Mr. Snell received his B.A. in history from the Ohio State University and his J.D. from Ohio Northern University.

**Glenn B. Stearns** is a chapter 13 trustee in Lisle, Ill., and administers all chapter 13 cases filed within his jurisdiction. Prior to being appointed a trustee, he spent 16 years in credit management, primarily in the wholesale distribution of electrical apparatus and industrial automation products. He is a member of the National Association of Chapter Thirteen Trustees (NACTT) and is a regular speaker at bankruptcy seminars. Mr. Stearns received his B.B.A. from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1983 and his M.B.A. from DePaul University in 1992.

**Justin R. Storer** is an attorney with Lakelaw in Chicago, where he represents debtors in chapter 7, 11 and 13 proceedings as well as Cook County chapter 7 panel trustee David Leibowitz. He was named a 2014 “Rising Star” by *Illinois Super Lawyers* magazine and has been board certified in Consumer Bankruptcy Law by the American Board of Certification. Mr. Storer received his bachelor’s degree from Southern Illinois University and his J.D. from DePaul University College of Law.

**Deborah L. Thorne** is a partner in the Chicago office of Barnes & Thornburg LLP, where she concentrates her practice on corporate restructuring, bankruptcy and insolvency law. She has represented debtors, lenders, committees, trustees, asset-purchasers, lessors and other parties in interest in some of the country’s largest and most complex restructuring matters, including United Airlines, Kmart, Delphi, Meridian and Plastech. She also serves as receiver for the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois in cases brought by the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission. Ms. Thorne is a frequent writer and speaker on bankruptcy issues and other commercial issues. She is a member of ABI’s Board of Directors and is a former co-chair of ABI’s Unsecured Trade Creditors’ Committee. She serves on the Governmental Affairs committee for NACM and previously chaired the Bankruptcy Committees for the Seventh Circuit and Chicago Bar Associations. Ms. Thorne was selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* in 2011 and 2012 in the areas of Bankruptcy and Creditor-Debtor Rights Law, and was recognized as a 2011 “Leading Lawyer” in Illinois. She has also been recognized in *Illinois Super Lawyers* every year since 2005. Ms. Thorne received her M.A.T. from Duke University in 1976 and her J.D. from the Illinois Institute of Technology Chicago-Kent School of Law.

**Hon. Eugene R. Wedoff** has served as a U.S. Bankruptcy Judge in the Northern District of Illinois in Chicago since 1987 and as Chief Judge from 2002-07. After graduating from law school, Judge Wedoff became a partner and member of the executive committee at the Chicago law firm of Jenner & Block. As co-chair of ABI’s Consumer Bankruptcy Committee, he prepared analyses of bankruptcy reform legislation and testified before the House Subcommittee on Commercial & Administrative Law. For his work in this area, Judge Wedoff received a special award from ABI. He is chair of the Advisory Committee on Bankruptcy Rules and was a member of the working group that drafted the means test forms adopted by the Judicial Conference for the implementation of BAPCPA. He also drafted the model chapter 13 plan currently used in the Northern District of Illinois. Judge Wedoff is the author of the chapter on professional employment in Queenan, Hendel and Hillinger, *Chapter 11 Theory and Practice* (LRP Publications, 1994), and has been an associate editor of the *American Bankruptcy Law Journal*. He has served on ABI’s Executive Committee

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and as a governor and secretary of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, the presidency of which he assumed for 2013. He is also a Fellow of the American College of Bankruptcy and a member of the National Bankruptcy Conference, and presided over the United Air Lines chapter 11 reorganization. Judge Wedoff received the Excellence in Education Award from the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges in 1995. He graduated from the college and law school of the University of Chicago.

**Barbara L. Yong** is a partner with Golan & Christie, LLP in Chicago, where she focuses her practice on commercial litigation reorganization and bankruptcy. She represents both debtors and creditors in chapter 7, 11 and 13 proceedings. She has also tried cases in state and federal courts and handled appeals before the Illinois Supreme Court and the Fifth and Seventh Circuit Courts of Appeals. Ms. Yong is a member of the American, Illinois, Chicago, DuPage County and Women's Bar Associations, as well as ABI, the Illinois CPA Society, TMA and the International Women's Insolvency and Restructuring Confederation. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois in 1979, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa, and her J.D. from Loyola University School of Law in 1982.