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NEWS RELEASE

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New Federal Bankruptcy Judges Appointed in California

SAN FRANCISCO — Chief Judge Alex Kozinski of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit announced today the appointment of new judges for three federal bankruptcy courts in California.

Attorney Mark D. Houle, 45, was appointed to serve as a judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California. He will fill a judgeship to be vacated by Bankruptcy Judge Ellen Carroll, who plans to retire on February 16, 2012. He will be sworn into office on February 17, 2012, and will maintain chambers in Riverside.

Attorney Mary Elaine Hammond, 41, was appointed to serve as a judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of California. She will fill a judgeship to be vacated by Bankruptcy Judge Edward D. Jellen, who plans to retire on January 31, 2012. She will be sworn into office on February 2, 2012, and will maintain chambers in Oakland.

Attorney Fredrick E. Clement, 51, was appointed to serve as a judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of California. He will fill a judgeship to be vacated by Bankruptcy Judge Whitney Rimel, who plans to retire on March 15, 2012. He will officially take office on March 16, 2012, and plans to maintain chambers in Fresno.

Since 2000, Mr. Houle has been of counsel with the law firm of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman, LLP, maintaining offices in Costa Mesa and Los Angeles. He practices exclusively in the areas of bankruptcy and insolvency in the firm's Insolvency and Restructuring Practice Section. He primarily represents secured and unsecured creditors, asset purchasers, and other parties in bankruptcy cases, adversary proceedings, pre-bankruptcy workouts, and related state and federal litigation.

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From 1998 to 2000, he was an associate with the law firm of Winthrop Couchot, PC, where he represented corporate Chapter 11 debtors, creditors' committees, and Chapter 7 trustees. From 1996 to 1998, Mr. Houle clerked for the Santa Ana bankruptcy judges analyzing a wide variety of legal pleadings and preparing bench memoranda and memorandum decisions for hearings and trials in Chapter 7, 11 and 13 bankruptcy cases and adversary pleadings.

A native of Lowell, Massachusetts, Mr. Houle received his B.S. in 1993 from Salem State College, where he graduated *summa cum laude*. During college, he was part of the Undergraduate Honors Program and was awarded a Silver Key for academic excellence in community service. He received his J.D. in 1996 from Boston College Law School, where he was a member of the Jessup International Moot Court Team from 1995 to 1996.

Mr. Houle is an active participant in the Orange County Bar Association, the Bankruptcy Forum and the American Bankruptcy Institute. Mr. Houle is a veteran of the Air Force and Massachusetts Air National Guard.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California, which is authorized 24 bankruptcy judges, is one of the nation's busiest with 139,882 filings in fiscal year 2011. Concurrent with Mr. Houle's appointment, the court plans to reorganize, transferring Judge Robert N. Kwan from the Santa Ana division to the Los Angeles division, and Judge Catherine Bauer from the Riverside division to Santa Ana division.

Ms. Hammond has been with the law firm of Friedman Dumas & Springwater LLP in San Francisco since 2003 and became a partner in 2008. Her practice involves commercial and bankruptcy law with an emphasis on the representation of business debtors, trustees, and secured and unsecured creditors in bankruptcy cases. Ms. Hammond mostly represents Chapter 9 and 11 debtors, and on occasion, has been counsel to Chapter 7 debtors. She worked as an associate with the law firm of Murphy, Sheneman, Julian & Rogers (now Winston & Strawn), where she represented debtors, creditors and committees.

A native of Charlotte, North Carolina, Ms. Hammond received her undergraduate degree from Duke University in 1992 and her J.D. in 1998 from the University of North Carolina, School of Law, where she graduated with honors. During law school, Ms. Hammond was the articles editor for the North Carolina Law Review.

Following law school, Ms. Hammond clerked for Judge Jellen from 1998 to 2000. Ms. Hammond was a legal assistant to the North Carolina General Assembly, where she worked for the Senate president pro tempore and Appropriations Committee co-chair from 1996 to 1998.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of California is authorized nine bankruptcy judges and reported 36,663 filings in fiscal year 2011.

A solo practitioner in Redding, California, since 1993, Mr. Clement is a certified specialist in all areas of bankruptcy law. He previously litigated in state courts, handling business and real estate disputes, and was involved in a large number of bench trials and two multi-week jury trials.

A native of San Luis Obispo, California, Mr. Clement received his B.A. from Westmont College in 1982 and his J.D. in 1987 from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, where he graduated *cum laude*.

Mr. Clement has served as a judicial arbitrator, hearing officer and judge *pro tempore* in state and municipal proceedings. Active in the bankruptcy legal community, he serves on the Bankruptcy Court Clerk's Advisory Committee and is a member of the American Bankruptcy Institute, the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys, and the Sacramento Valley Bankruptcy Forum. He founded the Redding-Chico Bankruptcy Forum in 2003.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of California is the fifth busiest bankruptcy court in the nation with 51,481 filings in fiscal year 2011. The court is authorized seven bankruptcy judges. At the court's request, Judge Rimel will continue to serve as a recalled bankruptcy judge available to preside over cases.

Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit have statutory responsibility for selecting and appointing bankruptcy judges in the nine western states that comprise the Ninth Circuit. The court uses a comprehensive merit selection process for the initial appointment and for reappointments. Bankruptcy judges serve a 14-year, renewable term, at a salary of \$160,080, and handle all bankruptcy-related matters under the Bankruptcy Code.

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