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We are pleased to announce that on March 8, 1999, the Judicial Council of the Tenth Circuit authorized the permanent establishment of the U.S. Bankruptcy Appellate Panel of the Tenth Circuit (BAP). On June 3, 1999, in accordance with the Judicial Council's resolution, Chief Judge Seymour of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals reappointed all nine of the BAP judges and extended my service as the chief judge. The terms of the appointments were staggered to promote panel stability, with three judges each being reappointed for three-, four-, and five-year terms.

The nine judges, sitting in three-judge panels, hear appeals from the decisions of the Bankruptcy Courts in the Districts of Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, Kansas, and the three Districts of Oklahoma. At this time, bankruptcy appeals from the District of Colorado continue to be addressed by their district court. We look forward to the day that we can assist the federal bench and the Colorado bar.

The number of bankruptcy appeals in all participating BAP districts dropped by 4.3% over 1998. As a result, filings with the BAP also dropped slightly over last year, by 5.5%. The number of appellants electing to proceed before the BAP has remained essentially level, at 55%. Through the end of 1999, 33 BAP decisions have been appealed to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. Of these, 25 have been concluded. Nine were decided on the merits and affirmed the decision of the BAP; the remaining sixteen were dismissed. For the third year, the judges of the BAP have achieved their goal of disposing of most appeals within 60 days from submission, with a 1999 median "submission to disposition" time of 51.5 days. The time span from the date the notice of appeal was filed with the Bankruptcy Court to the date the BAP entered a final judgment averaged 157.7 days.

In conjunction with its Administrative Meeting in Denver, Colorado, the BAP hosted a Federal Judicial Center (FJC) Traveling Workshop on *Opinion Writing and Editing*, conducted by Timothy P. Terrell, Professor of Law at Emory University. Judges of the Colorado bankruptcy bench and their staff were invited to attend. The program applied the skills of a professional editor to the process of writing opinions. The comments we received were very favorable, and in particular complimented Mr. Terrell and his style of teaching. The FJC is to be commended for continuing to produce programs of this quality.

The Judicial Council's resolution approving the establishment of the BAP states that "The Chief Judge of the BAP, with the advice and the consent of the Chief Circuit Judge, may from time to time designate any active or recalled bankruptcy judge, not otherwise appointed to the Bankruptcy Appellate Panel, to serve on a pro tem basis." The use of pro tem judges provides the panel with additional experience and expertise, and serves to strengthen the efforts of the BAP. In 1999, two of my esteemed colleagues served as pro tem judges for the BAP: Marcia S. Krieger, Bankruptcy Judge, District of Colorado, and Roland J. Brumbaugh, Bankruptcy Judge, District of Colorado. On behalf of the BAP, I'd like to extend our sincere thanks to them for their participation.

In addition to her participation on the panel as a pro tem judge, Judge Krieger was instrumental in the development of the Court's *Oral Argument Handbook for Judges, Law Clerks, and Clerk's Office Staff* (Handbook). The Handbook was developed for use by pro tem judges and new BAP judges or other BAP staff, and provides detailed information from the setting of an oral argument calendar to the preparation of a decision. As our first pro tem judge, Judge Krieger provided the insights of a new panel member and gave us valuable suggestions and comments.

The BAP continues to explore and develop methods of disseminating information throughout the Circuit and nationally. A *Guide to the Appellate Process* (Guide) has been prepared and distributed to attorneys and to the Bankruptcy Courts to be placed at their public counters. The Guide includes practical information such as a "Quick Reference Guide" describing the "what, who, when, and where," in the life of an appeal, and a "Filing Guide" to provide guidance on filing deadlines. The panel judges and Clerk's Office staff continue to participate in continuing legal education seminars and informal educational sessions for the bankruptcy bar.

Since its inception, the many successful accomplishments of the BAP could not have been made without the considerable assistance and support of the judges of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Office of the Circuit Executive, the Tenth Circuit Clerk's Office, and the district and bankruptcy court judges and Clerk's Offices. As always, their advice and support have been very much appreciated.