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ABC Update

BY CANDACE C. CARLYON

Newest ABC-Certified Bankruptcy Judge Has 20-Year Pin

On July 12, 2013, Hon. **Laurel E. Davis** was sworn in as a bankruptcy judge for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Nevada, becoming the 21st certified attorney to be named to the bench. For more than 20 years, she has held a business bankruptcy certification from the American Board of Certification (ABC), which is accredited by the American Bar Association. Her other accomplishments include achieving an AV pre-eminent rating with *Martindale Hubbell*, *Best Lawyer* status since 2005 and recognition by *Benchmark Litigation* in 2012 and 2013 as one of the "Top 250 Women in Litigation in the Nation."

A native of Milford, Utah, Judge Davis received her B.S. in hotel administration from the University of Nevada at Las Vegas in 1983 and her J.D. *magna cum laude* from the University of San Diego School of Law in 1987. She put herself through school as a legal secretary, blackjack dealer and assistant to a hotel marketing director while obtaining her undergraduate degree in hotel administration. During law school, she served as an extern to Bankruptcy Judge **Louise DeCarl Adler**. Judge Davis credits her 1987 externship with Judge Adler as the genesis for her love of bankruptcy law and her dream of becoming a bankruptcy judge.

Prior taking the bench, Judge Davis practiced law for 26 years in Nevada and Arizona. From 1987-93, she worked as an associate with Lionel Sawyer & Collins, where she remained as a partner from 1994-2007. From 2007 until she took the bench, Judge Davis was a shareholder with Fennemore Craig PC, d/b/a Fennemore Craig Jones Vargas, in Nevada, and served on the firm's management committee. At both firms, she represented chapter 11 debtors, including individuals, trustees, committees and creditors in chapter 11 cases. She also served as a chapter 11 trustee. In practice, Judge Davis also worked with individual, corporate and lender clients

to achieve out-of-court workouts and restructuring, and she often handled sensitive matters involving ethics issues, disgorgement and show-cause orders.



Hon. Laurel E. Davis

Her positive energy and enthusiasm is a great benefit to the court, as well as for those who appear before her. A card-carrying member of "Backstage with Jon Bon Jovi," she has already put her personal imprint on her chambers, including a "Robing Room of Rock" that is lined with photographs from the numerous concerts that she has attended, as well as professional-quality photographs that she has taken on her various travels throughout the world.

An ABI member since 1995, Judge Davis is active in professional, community and public-service organizations. In 2010 and 2011, she was chair of the Nevada Bankruptcy Section. She served as a Ninth Circuit Lawyer Representative from 2001-04, and in her last year, she served as co-chair of the Nevada Delegation and as a member of the Lawyer Representative Coordinating Committee. Judge Davis also served as a Nevada Transitioning into Practice Mentor, as well as on numerous bench/bar committees for the bankruptcy and district courts. She is a master with the Howard D. McKibben Inn of Court, and she regularly writes and speaks on topics that include ethics, litigation, real estate and bankruptcy. Her dedication to the community has included personal participation in events, committees and boards for the American Diabetes Association, Aid for AIDS of Nevada (AFAN) and Habitat for Humanity.

Judge Davis provided *pro bono* service to indigent clients through the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, where she served on the executive committee for the Mid Case Bankruptcy Panel.



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Her contributions have been recognized through awards received from the center, as well as an award of fees from the Nevada Supreme Court for the successful prosecution of an appeal for a *pro bono* client. It is no surprise that her favorite part of the job is being able to convert her penchant for public service into a full-time profession, providing her with the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of those who appear in her courtroom. **abi**

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