

LAWYERS JOURNAL

Bankruptcy symposium set for Dec. 8

By Brian Estadt

Organizers of the 30th Annual Western District of Pennsylvania Bankruptcy Symposium are marking the event's 30th anniversary by featuring a two-part look at one of the city's most famous bankruptcies — and by offering six CLE credits worth of programming that they think will interest attorneys both within and outside of the bankruptcy section.

Symposium Chair Luke Sizemore called attention to four programs — a session on evidence, a judicial roundtable that will cover courtroom “do's and don'ts,” a Pittsburgh Penguins bankruptcy retrospective and a panel of American Bankruptcy Institute commissioners discussing their efforts to improve the consumer bankruptcy system.

“It's a wonderful opportunity to network and learn from some of the best practitioners in the area as well as a whole slate of bankruptcy and district judges who are coming to be with us — not just from Pittsburgh but Ohio, Philadelphia, West Virginia and Wisconsin,” Sizemore said. “There aren't very many opportunities here in Pittsburgh to hear that many high-quality and varied perspectives in a single setting.”

Ronald Roteman agrees.

Roteman will moderate the roundtable, which features Chief Judge Joy Flowers Conti of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of PA and five federal bankruptcy judges — Carlota Böhm (Western District of PA), Richard Fehling (Eastern District of PA), John Hoffman Jr. (South-

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WLD “Navigating a Return to Work”

PHOTO BY MARK HIGGS

Speakers at the “Navigating a Return to Work: Surviving and Thriving Following Maternity (and Other) Leave” event gather for a group photo. Pictured, from left, are Casey Ryan, global head of legal personnel at Reed Smith; Erin Gibson Allen, attorney at Marcus & Shapira; Lauren Garraux, panel moderator; Julie Vanneman, director at Cohen & Grigsby; Nicholas Ranjan, partner at K&L Gates; and Melissa Tea, who offered opening remarks. The Oct. 26 panel discussion — which was held at K&L Gates — kicked off the Women in the Law Division's “Leaving Leave” program.

Ward, Eaton discuss their plans for their new administrative roles

By Tracy Carbasho

As Judges Christine Ward and Kim Eaton transition to their new administrative roles in the Court of Common Pleas, they are thinking about ways to improve the efficiency of their divisions.

“My objective is to have the division function in the most efficient manner possible,” Ward said. “The first order of business will be a top-down analysis to ascertain how to best accomplish this objective.”

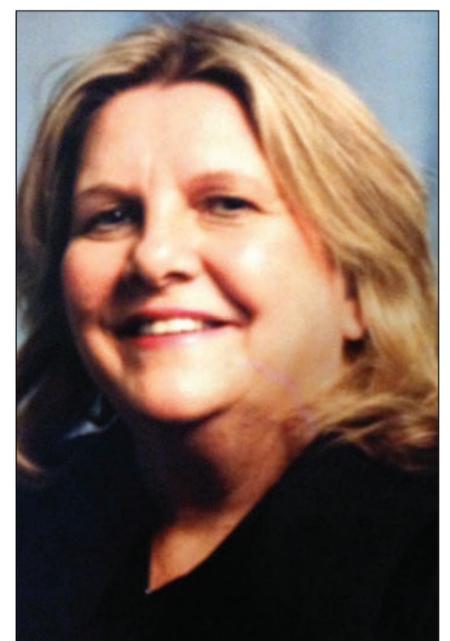
The Pennsylvania Supreme Court recently appointed Ward as the administrative judge in the Civil Division and Eaton as the administrative judge in the Family Division. Ward replaces Judge Ronald Folino, who is retiring, and Eaton replaces Judge Kim Clark, who will continue to serve in the Family Division.

Both Ward and Eaton are grateful for how well the divisions have been operated by their predecessors in the past, but each has her own ideas for making improvements going forward.

Ward said the biggest challenge facing the overall court is the lack of sufficient financial resources to fix structural problems, particularly on the seventh and eighth floors of the City-County Building. She said the heating and air conditioning systems do not work properly, water leaks cause plaster to fall from the ceiling, the jury rooms are not accessible to people with disabilities, the phone system is



Judge Christine Ward



Judge Kim Eaton

old, the computers and printers need frequent repairs and the courtrooms do not have the wiring necessary to accommodate technological advances.

“Our phones are so antiquated that it is virtually impossible to conference a lawyer, party or witness into the courtroom,” Ward said. “I spoke with President Judge Jeffrey Manning regarding several of these issues, and he indicated that additional resources may be available. Our challenge will

be to get our facility back into acceptable condition.”

Ward began serving in her new position on Nov. 1. She was elected to the court in 2003 and served in the Family Division until 2007, when she moved to the Civil Division. She will remain involved with the Commerce and Complex Litigation Center in the Civil Division.

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