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United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Alaskan Judge Selected to Serve on Ninth Circuit Bankruptcy Appellate Panel

SAN FRANCISCO – Chief Bankruptcy Judge Gary A. Spraker of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Alaska, has been appointed to the Ninth Circuit Bankruptcy Appellate Panel, which hears appeals of decisions made by federal bankruptcy courts in the western states.

Judge Spraker, 54, will serve a seven-year term on the BAP, commencing August 1, 2017. He will succeed Bankruptcy Judge Meredith A. Jury of the Central District of California, who has sat on the BAP since 2007 and served as its chief judge since 2016. She is scheduled to step down July 31, 2017.

The Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, governing body for federal courts in the western states, is responsible for BAP appointments. The council may extend the term of an incumbent BAP judge by up to three years.

Judge Spraker, who maintains chambers in Anchorage, was appointed to the Alaska bankruptcy court in 2012. He is the court's only full-time judge and assumed the office of chief bankruptcy judge upon his appointment. Judge Spraker is a member of the Ninth Circuit Conference of Chief Bankruptcy Judges and has twice served a judge pro tem judge of the BAP.

Prior to coming onto the bench, Judge Spraker had been a partner since 2002 at Christianson & Spraker (formerly Christianson, Boutin & Spraker). His practice there focused on all phases of bankruptcy and commercial matters including litigation. He represented trustees, debtors and creditors in Chapters 7, 11 and 13 matters. Judge Spraker also had been an associate at the same law office from 1994 to 2002, when it was known as Bundy & Christianson. He began his legal career in 1988 as an associate in the Denver, Colorado, office of Morrison & Foerster.

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A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Judge Spraker received his B.A., Phi Beta Kappa, from Stetson University in 1985, and his J.D. in 1988 from the University of Denver, Sturm College of Law, graduating third in the class. He was awarded the Order of St. Ives for being in the top 10 percent of his law school class and received American Jurisprudence awards in contracts, constitutional law, Uniform Commercial Code 1, UCC 2, trusts and estates, government contracts, and antitrust.

While in law school, Judge Spraker was a quarter-finalist in the New York National Moot Court Competition and received the American Municipal Government Law Award. He clerked for the Honorable John W. Sedwick of the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska from 1992 to 1994.

Headquartered in the Richard H. Chambers U.S. Court of Appeals Building in Pasadena, California, the BAP has historically handled between 49 percent and 60 percent of all bankruptcy appeals in the Ninth Circuit (district courts hear the remainder). In fiscal year 2016, the BAP received 349 of 754 new bankruptcy appeals. The panel disposed of 444 appeals during the year.

The BAP was established in 1979 by the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit as an alternative forum for hearing bankruptcy appeals. Since then, it has disposed of more than 15,000 cases, including more than 5,000 decided on the merits.

The Ninth Circuit, which is composed of nine western states and two Pacific island jurisdictions, was the first federal circuit to establish a bankruptcy appellate panel. Other circuits with bankruptcy appellate panels are the First, Sixth, Eighth and Tenth circuits. For more information, visit: <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/bap/>.

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