



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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9th Circuit Court of Appeals Reappoints Chief Bankruptcy Judge Stephen L. Johnson

SAN FRANCISCO — Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit have reappointed Chief Bankruptcy Judge Stephen L. Johnson, of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of California, to a second 14-year term effective Oct. 13, 2024.

Judge Johnson was first appointed to the Northern District bankruptcy bench in 2010 and was appointed as chief judge of his court on Jan. 1, 2023. Previously, he was an assistant U.S. attorney, from 2002 to 2010, for the Northern District of California, where he handled civil matters, including representing the interests of the U.S. and its agencies in cases filed in the bankruptcy courts. From 1995 to 2002, Judge Johnson was a trial attorney in the Office of the U.S. Trustee in San Francisco, where he litigated consumer and business bankruptcy proceedings. Prior to that, he worked for local law firms, including Morrison & Foerster.

A San Francisco native, Judge Johnson received his Bachelor of Science from the University of San Francisco in 1983 and his Juris Doctor from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law (now U.C. Law San Francisco), in 1989.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of California reported 4,883 bankruptcy filings in calendar year 2023. The court is authorized nine judgeships.

Bankruptcy judges serve a 14-year renewable term and handle all bankruptcy-related matters under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit have statutory responsibility for selecting and appointing bankruptcy judges in the nine western states that comprise the 9th Circuit. The court uses a comprehensive merit selection process for the initial appointment. For reappointments, the court conducts a performance review and considers public comment evaluations.

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