

Court Information Release



United States District Court
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

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the Northern District of Illinois
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Judge Pamela Hollis voted Chief Bankruptcy Judge as outgoing Chief Judge Bruce Black retires

The Executive Committee of the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois voted to designate Judge Pamela Hollis as Chief Bankruptcy Judge for a period of four years, commencing January 6, 2017, and continuing through January 5, 2021. Outgoing Chief Bankruptcy Judge Bruce Black will retire on January 5, 2017.

Judge Hollis earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois and her law degree from Loyola University. On January 27, 2003, she was appointed to the United States Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of Illinois. Prior to serving as a judge, Judge Hollis worked in private law practice as a partner with Hollis and Johnson, Hinshaw and Culbertson, and Law Offices of Pamela Hollis. She also served as a member on the Private Panel of Bankruptcy Trustees for the Northern District of Illinois from 1988 to 2003.

“Congratulations to Judge Hollis on her new role as Chief Judge. She has served on the Bankruptcy bench with distinction, and brings outstanding experience and management skills to lead the Bankruptcy Court,” said Chief Judge Rubén Castillo, District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

“On behalf of the District Court, we wish Judge Black all the best in his retirement. We thank him for his dedicated service to the Bankruptcy Court for over fifteen years, including the last five years he served as Chief Judge, leading with excellence one of the busiest and most efficient bankruptcy courts in our nation.”

Chief Bankruptcy Judge Bruce Black was sworn-in as a bankruptcy judge to a term beginning on August 13, 2001. He was appointed as Chief Bankruptcy Judge on July 1, 2011. He earned his undergraduate degree from Bradley University and his law degree from the University of Illinois

College of Law. Prior to his appointment as a bankruptcy judge, he served as law clerk to the Honorable Robert D. Morgan, U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois. He became Assistant State's Attorney of Tazewell County, Illinois, and then Tazewell County State's Attorney. He was a judge for the Tenth Judicial Circuit of Illinois at the time of his appointment to the Bankruptcy Court in 2001.

All bankruptcy cases are handled in federal courts under rules outlined in the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. There are ninety U.S. Bankruptcy Courts, which, by statute, are units of the U.S. District Courts. A U.S. bankruptcy judge presides over a bankruptcy case. The judge is appointed to a 14-year term by the judges of the local U.S. Court of Appeals and can be reappointed. 28 USC §154(b) provides that in each district court having more than one bankruptcy judge, the district court shall designate one judge to serve as chief judge of such bankruptcy court. The chief bankruptcy judge is responsible for the effective execution of court business and oversees a number of administrative matters.

The Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Illinois is comprised of the Eastern Division and Western Division. With court locations in Chicago, Joliet, Rockford, Lake County and Geneva, the Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Illinois stretches across 18 counties, covering an area of nearly 10,100 square miles, with a population of 9.3 million people.

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