

# Courthouse Connection

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# Construction in Progress



Construction continues at the Charles E. Whittaker Courthouse in Kansas City. The North facing window replacement is nearing completion and lots of work continues inside in preparation for tenants to move back into offices.

Work has commenced on the South side of the building as well. Please be cautious entering and exiting the building and pay close attention to signage providing direction for modified entrances. Please give yourself extra time to enter the Kansas City Courthouse during the construction project.

The estimated project completion is targeted for early Summer 2026. **As a reminder, public access hours at all WDMO courthouses are from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**



# WDMO Special Ceremonies



The Central Division held a naturalization ceremony at the Osage County Community Center, located on the State Technical College of Missouri campus in Linn, Missouri on June 14, 2024.

Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Willie J. Epps, Jr. presided as eighty-three individuals from thirty-eight different countries finalized the requirements for American citizenship. Friends and family packed the venue to witness this very special event. The ceremony began with welcoming remarks by Chief Magistrate Judge Epps, followed by a presentation of the flag by Scouts BSA Troop #17 & #3017. Zoe Rehagen, a member of the Osage Angels trio, performed an inspiring rendition of "America the Beautiful" and also sang the national anthem. Melissa Warren, Deputy Clerk, administered the Oath of Allegiance.

A reception for the new citizens and their guests was sponsored by members of the American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 5; they also assisted with the program by providing small American flags to each new citizen as the ceremony came to a close. The new citizens were given the opportunity to register to vote by the Boone and Cole County Clerk's office staff and passport information was offered by a U.S. Post Office Clerk. Naturalization ceremonies are one of the most meaningful and moving events held by the U.S. District Court.

## Central Division Naturalizations



Chief Magistrate Judge Wille J. Epps, Jr. of the Western District of Missouri and Magistrate Judge John M. Bodenhausen of the Eastern District of Missouri, conducted a joint bar oath ceremony at the Harry S. Truman Building on Friday, April 26, 2024.

Surrounded by friends and family, 23 new attorneys who recently passed the February 2024 Missouri State Bar exam were sworn in to the Western District of Missouri. Congratulations!



## Joint Bar Oath Ceremony



# Save the Date

FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025

The 25th Annual D. Brook Bartlett Lectures

**Featuring  
Erwin Chemerinsky  
Dean, UC Berkeley  
School of Law**





# Mediation and Assessment Program (MAP) News

In August of 2024, Mediation and Assessment Program (MAP) Director Laurel Stevenson celebrated her fourth year with the Court. She is assisted by Office Manager JoAnna Hickman who has been with the Court for more than a decade and by Administrative Assistant Robert Cole who is now in his second year with the MAP Office.

MAP's role is critical to increasing judicial efficiency and access to justice. With an average of 1,000 civil cases annually assigned to MAP, approximately fifty percent of cases resolve in whole or in part through Early-Stage ADR which typically occurs within 75 days of the Rule 26 conference. Mediation remains the most used form of ADR. Consistent with the provisions on page 8 of the MAP General Order, the assigned "Neutral" (MAP Director, MAP Judge, Category I or Category II Neutral) determines the mode of mediation or other ADR session, not the parties and/or their counsel. The assigned Neutral determines requirements for participation, preparation, statements, and other matters consistent with the MAP General Order.

During 2024, MAP has seen an increase in other types of ADR, including confidential facilitative communications (FC's), resulting in a narrowing of issues early on, and/or leading to resolution of cases without extensive litigation. Most cases that do not resolve in Early-Stage ADR resolve in Later-Stage ADR, often eliminating the need for dispositive motion practice and/or trials. The Program has also been successful in resolving cases on appeal to the 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit.

MAP Director Stevenson is in her second term as co-chair of the ABA's Section of Dispute Resolution Court ADR Committee. She also

recently completed her first year as the Editor of *The Resolver*, a publication of the FBA's ADR Section. During the FBA's 2024 Annual Meeting in Kansas City, Director Stevenson was the moderator for the Mock Mediation Workshop which included as panelists MAP Neutral Amy Coopman and Jo Colbert Stanley, then Chair of the FBA's ADR Section. Director Stevenson received a Leadership Appreciation Award from the ADR Section during the Annual Meeting. In November, Director Stevenson and Amy Coopman received an Appreciation Award from the Association of Missouri Mediators (AMM) for their role in organizing a Self-Reflective Practice Workshop featuring speaker Dr. Rochelle Arms-Almengor.



# Save the Date

FRIDAY, JUNE 6, 2025

The 17th Annual

— Frank W. Koger

Bankruptcy Symposium



# Bankruptcy Court News



**NEW BANKRUPTCY  
ZOOM (AUDIO)  
HEARING LINES  
ARE COMING!**

**Effective December 1, 2024**

**JUDGE BRIAN T. FENIMORE:**

Toll Free 833-435-1820

Meeting ID: 161 5466 2224

**JUDGE CYNTHIA A. NORTON:**

Toll Free 833-435-1820

Meeting ID: 161 3505 0945

# Bankruptcy Court News

## **FOR ZOOM AUDIO HEARINGS ON OR AFTER DECEMBER 1, 2024**

-The same telephone number is used for both judges.

-Each judge has a different meeting ID.

-There is no participant ID so press # when prompted.

-If using the app, no dial-in needed. Just enter the meeting ID.

\* **The court suggests attorneys and other participants download the Zoom app.**

\* **There is no cost to you or your clients for this service.**

\* **Phone dockets will not be by video – see the court’s website for separate instructions if you have a hearing scheduled for a Zoom video conference.**

### **EFFECTIVE DATE:**

Current phone lines will be utilized for all hearings through November 29, 2024.

All hearings currently scheduled on or after December 1, 2024, will be renoticed with the new hearing phone information below.

JUDGE FENIMORE: Toll Free 833-435-1820

Meeting ID: 161 5466 2224

JUDGE NORTON: Toll Free 833-435-1820

Meeting ID: 161 3505 0945

### **KANSAS CITY CHAPTER 13 DOCKET ONLY:**

Please note that the court will continue to sort the Kansas City Chapter 13 docket by last name of the debtor’s attorney and divide the docket into groups by hour. A copy of that docket will be emailed to counsel the Friday before the docket and posted on the court’s website at <https://www.mow.uscourts.gov/bankruptcy>.

### **PHONE ETIQUETTE:**

Please call in at least 5 minutes before your case group is scheduled to begin.

Before you call in, **please mute your telephone until the court calls your first case.** When the court finishes hearing your case(s), please put your telephone back on mute or hang up.

**DO NOT PUT YOUR PHONE ON HOLD AT ANY TIME** because that might play “hold music” for everyone on the line, including the court, and interfere with the docket.

Please remember to speak directly into your phone and enunciate clearly so we make a good record.

**PLEASE CONTACT THE CLERK’S OFFICE WITH QUESTIONS  
AT 816-512-1800.**

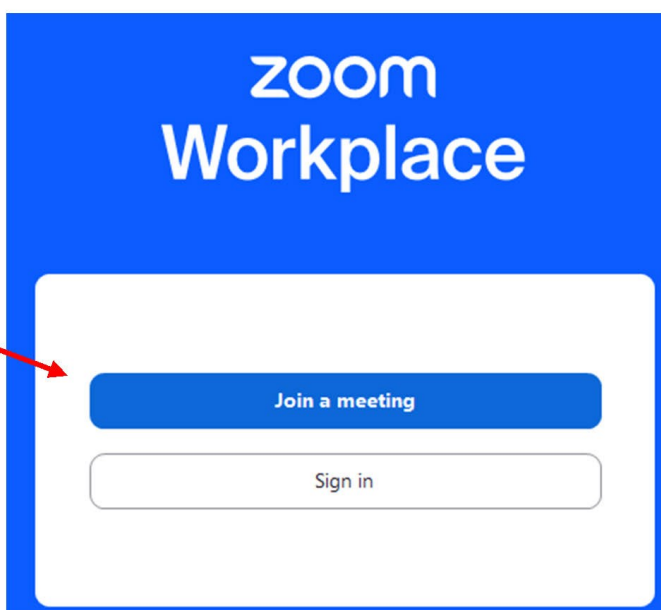


# Bankruptcy Court News

**DOWNLOAD THE ZOOM APP TO  
YOUR PHONE IF YOU HAVEN'T  
ALREADY**



**CLICK ON JOIN A MEETING**




**ENTER THE MEETING ID LISTED IN  
THE HEARING NOTICE AND CLICK  
JOIN**

*Make sure you input your name  
and  
check turn off my video before joining*

**Meeting IDs  
JUDGE FENIMORE: 161 5466 2224  
JUDGE NORTON 161 3505 0945**

## Join meeting

Meeting ID or personal link name 

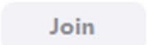
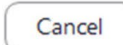
Dawn Meador

☒ Remember my name for future meetings

☐ Don't connect to audio

☐ Turn off my video

By clicking "Join", you agree to our [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Statement](#).





**The 8th Circuit Judicial Conference**  
is scheduled for  
**July 30 - August 1, 2025**  
in Kansas City, MO at the  
Westin Crown Center.

This will be a full conference for all judges and members of the bar. Agenda and on-line registration coming soon. For more information, please contact: Circuit Executive Office, [JudConf@ca8.uscourts.gov](mailto:JudConf@ca8.uscourts.gov), (314) 244-2600.

**THE WESTIN CROWN CENTER**





## **IMPORTANT NEWS!!!**

The attorney annual dues collection period will change in 2025!

It will be open:

**January 1<sup>st</sup> – January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025**