

United States Bankruptcy Court
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

CHAMBERS OF
SCOTT W. DALES
CHIEF JUDGE

TELEPHONE
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ONE DIVISION AVENUE NORTH
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503

Via E-Gov Delivery

January 30, 2018

Members of the Bar
United States Bankruptcy Court (W.D. Mich.)

Re: Federal Bar Association (FBA) Bankruptcy Section Pro Bono Program

Ladies and Gentlemen:

After more than a decade of serving as the FBA bankruptcy section's *pro bono* administrator, Hal Nelson has announced that he is turning the reins over to Norm Witte. I am writing to publicly thank Hal for all he has done for the unrepresented in our community over the years. My colleagues and I have not hesitated to call on him to help the most despairing litigants find counsel, and he has selflessly, graciously, and unflaggingly responded to the call.

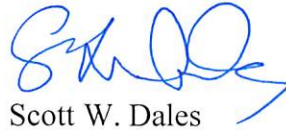
I am also writing to thank Norm for stepping-up to serve as the new *pro bono* program administrator after having served less publicly on the committee and taken numerous *pro bono* cases himself. My colleagues and I look forward to working with Norm to deepen the bar's commitment to serving the under-served in our District. As lawyers, most of us are public spirited but also risk-averse. I plan to work with Norm to reduce the risks, real or perceived, and eliminate other barriers to taking cases through the *pro bono* program. Just today, Norm and I were discussing different ways to get younger lawyers involved in the program, early in their careers.

This brings me to my final point. The changing of the guard from Hal to Norm presents each of you with the opportunity to consider your own commitment to serving the public by assisting unrepresented individuals in our court. As you reflect on the examples that Hal and Norm have set over the years, I urge you to reach out to Norm ((517) 913-5104) to ask how you can assist him in making justice more widely available in the Western District.

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Thanks, again, to Hal and Norm and the rest of you who quietly and continuously serve our community by participating in the FBA bankruptcy section's *pro bono* program.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott W. Dales", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scott W. Dales

SWD/ks