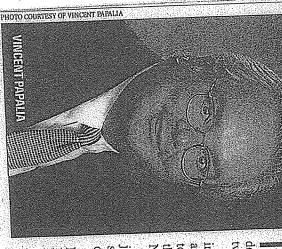
By Mary Pat Gallagher



death that by mid-2015 will have led to the loss of six of its nine judges within a court is in the process of being remade due to a series of retirements and one In what one lawyer termed a "generational change," New Jersey's bankruptcy

Since mid-2013, three new judges have been brought in to fill the openings, one in each of the three vicinages.—Newark, Trenton and Camden. The most recently

appointed was Judge Vincent Papalia, who was sworn in at the end of last year and N.J., who is set to leave in May after more than 21 years on the court. took the bench in Newark for the first time Jan. 12. And within the next six months, hree more judges will be retiring, including Chief Judge Gloria Burns in Camden, The other impending retirements are both in Newark—Donald Steckroth, a

since 1991, has a June exit date. The three leaving this year have almost 60 years judge since 2001, is leaving at the end of January and Novalyn Winfield, a judge of combined experience on the bench

N.I., with 22, and Michael Kaplan, also in Trenton, with just under nine years. Rosemary Gambardella in Newark, with 30 years. Kathryn Ferguson in Trenton. Once they are gone, the district's three most senior bankruptcy judges will be The spate of departures began in April 2013, with Judge Raymond Lyons,

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NJ Bankruptcy Court Undergoing 'Generational Change

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since 1999 but left at the end of his since 2006, when Kaplan was hired in sition of the court had been unchanged who had been on the bench in Trenton Princeton, N.J. At that time, the compo-14-year term to join Fox Rothschild in the Trenton vicinage.

N.J.'s Markowitz Gravelle, Christine Gravelle of Lawrenceville, Markowitz O'Donnell. Lyons was replaced July 1 by

obtained her first law licenses in Rhode Law School in Boston, Gravelle Island in 1986 and Massachusetts in 1987, followed by New Jersey in 1993. A graduate of Suffolk University

had been on the bench almost 30 years. Judge Judith Wizmur in Camden, who in April 2014, was the vacancy left by The next spot to become available,

Jersey's highest rated bankruptcy judge in October 2013, Wizmur was New survey of federal judges, published versus the court's overall 8.91 average. with an overall score of 9.42 out of 10 In the Law Journal's most recent

ors, creditors and trustees. N.J., representing credit unions, debtthe bench, he had a practice in Marlton, of Dayton Law School. Before joining admitted to practice in New Jersey in Judge Andrew Altenburg Jr., who was 1992, after graduating from University Taking over for her on the court was

> A seat in Newark opened up last year when Judge Morris "Mickey" Stern, who had been on the bankruptcy during which he continued to work. oldest member, died in February at age bench since 2001 and was the court's 72, following a long battle with cancer

Florham Park, N.J. tor's rights department at Saiber LLC in bench headed the bankruptcy and credijudge, Papalia, who before joining the Filling his seat is the court's newest

reorganization plan over the objections which a bankruptcy judge imposes a lished two articles on cram downs, in in New Jersey since 1985. He has pub-Law School, Papalia has been licensed of creditors. An alumnus of Fordham University

a great opportunity for him, albeit a "great loss to the firm and to me per-Saiber managing partner William Maderer called Papalia's judgeship ruptcy lawyers from the New York firm sonally." Saiber has taken on four bankhandle Papalia's case load, Maderer Weltman & Moskowitz as counsel to

at "shuttle diplomacy." But Rosen said everything," and said Steckroth excelled and creditors'-rights department of bankruptcy, financial reorganization Roseland, N.J.'s Lowenstein Sandler, "passionate about pro bono" and "read recalled Stern as a judge who was Kenneth Rosen, who heads the

> the new judges. he had "great expectations" regarding

on things like breakup fees and roll-ups about them, such as how they will rule tion, though there are some unknowns Section 363 sales," Rosen said. and "how receptive they are to quick Each of them has a great reputa-

binding precedent. especially on issues where there is no these new judges feel about things," O'Boyle in Englewood, N.J., agreed "we're going to have to find out how that change brings uncertainty and Gary Norgaard of Norgaard

that Kaplan has ruled one way regarding interest on tax sale certificates while the other way. Winfield and Ferguson have come out For instance, Norgaard pointed ou

years before the retiring judges. change" that is "somewhat melancholspate of retirements as a "generational ic" for lawyers who have practiced for & Stolz in Millburn, N.J., referred to the Daniel Stolz of Wasserman, Jurista

also retired as of Jan. 1. Third Circuit, including New Jersey U.S. trustee for the districts within the Stolz noted that Roberta DeAngelis, But Stolz said he was happy with

three appointments yet to be made. the new judges and confident about the

Hackensack, N.J., chair of the state Meisel, Forman Gerald Gline, of Cole, Schotz, & Leonard

> but added that Gravelle and Altenburg had hit the ground running and that he expects Papalia and whoever else is sounded a similar note, saying lawyers a great bench and many years of conin New Jersey have had the benefit of chosen will do the same. tinuity. Gline said he was sorry for the bar association's bankruptcy section, loss of Stern and the retiring judges

said he found Gravelle to be "very to get both attorneys on the phone" to approachable" and said the judge "likes Hill, N.J., consumer bankruptcy firm, work through complex issues Lee Perlman, who has a Cherry

Perlman added. ing extra attention to service issues, appear before" and seems to be pay-Altenburg has been "a pleasure to

according to Bankruptcy Court Clerk end of February. and Burns would be made toward the decision on who will replace Steckroth James Waldron. He said he anticipated a two are well on the way to being filled, Of the three vacancies still to come,

are typically reappointed. ruptcy counterparts would receive to \$199,100, which meant their bank-2009, boosting their pay from \$174,000 district judges got their first raise since federal district judges make. In 2014, ries are pegged at 92 percent of what is no lifetime tenure for bankruptcy \$183,172, up from \$160,080. There judges, but they get 14-year terms and By statute, bankruptcy judge sala-

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