UT LAW CLE Continuing Legal Education

45th Annual Jay L. Westbrook Bankruptcy Conference
November 19-20, 2026 • Four Seasons Hotel • Austin, TX
November 19-20, 2026 • Live Webcast

Thursday Morning, Nov. 19, 2026

Presiding Officer:
Sean B. Davis, Baker Donelson - Houston, TX

	Thank You To Our Webcast Sponsor Jackson Walker
7:30 am In Austin Only	**Registration Opens** Includes continental breakfast. **Thank You to Our Breakfast & Break Sponsor** FSS | FINANCIAL SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS
8:10 am	**Welcoming Remarks**
8:30 am 1.00 hr 0.25 hr ethics	**Recent Developments – Part I** Some of these recent cases get better with time. Some not so much. But all are “interesting” and several are really important or at least really funny. Moderator: Angela Littwin, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX Panelists: R. Byrn "Byrnie" Bass Jr., Attorney at Law - Lubbock, TX Demetra Liggins, McGuireWoods - Houston, TX Bill Rochelle, American Bankruptcy Institute - New York, NY R. Adam Swick, Akerman LLP - Austin, TX
9:30 am	

	15-Minute Break
9:45 am 0.75 hr ethics	**AI: When to Use It, and When Not To** Knowing when to lean on generative AI, and when to hold back, is now a core professional skill for the bankruptcy professional. This session unpacks how and when AI belongs in bankruptcy work and where it doesn't. The discussion covers the themes and trends shaping AI adoption, why most legal AI initiatives fail, and a practical adoption framework for implementing generative AI effectively in a bankruptcy context while managing client privacy expectations and bridging the gap between seasoned practitioners and the next generation of lawyers. It then turns to the ethical frontier: client disclosure obligations, ABA Formal Opinion 512, and the professional responsibility risks of AI-generated errors under Rule 9011. For the consumer bankruptcy audience, the session also examines how AI is changing the landscape for pro se filers and issues like car lender disputes, solar panel financing, and mechanics liens—with implications extending into business bankruptcy as well. This interactive session is grounded in real practitioner experience, attendees leave equipped to use AI with sound judgment, sharp ethical instincts, and real practical skill. David M. Klauder, Bielli & Klauder, LLC - Wilmington, DE Joseph R. Tiano, Jr., Legal Decoder, Inc. - Falls Church, VA
10:30 am 0.75 hr	**Staying Ahead of the Curve: Anticipating the Future of Bankruptcy** Bankruptcy is changing — for individuals, for businesses, and for Texas. This experienced panel examines the trends and developments poised to reshape the field in the near future. Pam Bassel, Standing Chapter 13 Trustee for the Northern District of Texas, Fort Worth Division - Fort Worth, TX Gabriel Morgan, Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP - Houston, TX Hon. Michael M. Parker, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Western District of Texas - San Antonio, TX
11:15 am 0.75 hr	**National Bankruptcy Conference: A Legislative Dialogue** The National Bankruptcy Conference has advised Congress on bankruptcy legislation since the 1930s. Throughout its history, the Conference has studied emerging issues in bankruptcy law, developed consensus positions on proposed legislation, and served as a nonpartisan resource to members of Congress, congressional committees, and their staff on technical bankruptcy matters. This panel of Conferees discusses the Conference and some of its recent work, including proposed amendments to chapter 15, a streamlined restructuring process in a proposed chapter 16, renewed efforts to increase the subchapter V debt limits, and a number of consumer bankruptcy proposals. Hon. Chris López, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Texas - Houston, TX James H.M. Sprayregen, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP - New York, NY Tara Twomey, The George Washington University Law School - Washington, DC
12:00 pm In Austin Only	**Pick Up Lunch** Included in registration.

Thursday Afternoon, Nov. 19, 2026

Presiding Officer:
R. Byrn "Byrnie" Bass Jr., Attorney at Law - Lubbock, TX

LUNCHEON PRESENTATION

Thank You to Our Luncheon Sponsor

12:30 pm
0.75 hr
0.25 hr ethics

Bankruptcy in Texas: From the Alamo to the Texas Two-Step and Beyond

Texans are fiercely independent risk takers and national leaders in entrepreneurship and in ways of addressing the fallout of taking financial risks — bankruptcy. The panel offers a brief history of bankruptcy in Texas from the Republic of Texas to the oil barons, to the silver barons, to booms and busts, to high flying airlines, to LME's. The panel offers the unique Texas perspective on the "fresh start" and describes why Texas has been at the forefront of bankruptcy innovations, from adoption of the first homestead exemption to the invention of the Texas Two Step.

Moderator:
Charles A. Beckham, Jr., Haynes and Boone, LLP - Houston, TX
Panelists:
Zack A. Clement, Attorney at Law - Houston, TX
Berry D. Spears, Keller Benvenutti Kim LLP - Austin, TX
Deborah D. Williamson, Dykema Gossett PLLC - San Antonio, TX

1:15 pm

30-Minute Break to Tracks

Thank You to Our Afternoon Coffee Bar Sponsor (1:15 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.)

Enjoy a coffee or tea for a little afternoon pick-me-up.

HAYNES BOONE

General Business Track

Presiding Officer:
Jay H. Ong, Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr, P.C. - Austin, TX

1:45 pm
0.75 hr

DIP Financing and Alternative Financing Strategies in Lower to Middle Market Cases

Explore approaches professionals can utilize to ensure that narrow-margin chapter 11 debtors can successfully reach the finish line.

Mark A. Castillo, Carrington, Coleman, Sloman & Blumenthal, L.L.P. - Dallas, TX
Hon. Brenda T. Rhoades, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Eastern District of Texas - Plano, TX

	Rachael L. Smiley, Shipman & Goodwin LLP - Dallas, TX
2:30 pm 0.75 hr	**Hot Topics in Subchapter V: From Eligibility, to Confirmation, to Post-Confirmation** Follow a hypothetical debtor through a Subchapter V case and vote at each turning point before the judge rules from the bench. A bankruptcy judge, a Subchapter V trustee, and a debtor's counsel use the story to tackle some of the hottest, most contested questions in Subchapter V today. Todd Headden, Hayward PLLC - Austin, TX An Nguyen, Nguyen Law PLLC - Austin, TX Hon. Eduardo V. Rodriguez, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Texas - Houston, TX
3:15 pm 0.50 hr	**Bankruptcy Alternative: Why are Receiverships on the Rise?** Given the ever-increasing costs of bankruptcy, the panel discusses why varying forms of receivership are becoming a commonplace solution. Gregory S. Milligan, Harney Partners - Austin, TX Trip Nix, Kane Russell Coleman Logan PC - Austin, TX
3:45 pm	**10-Minute Break**
3:55 pm 0.75 hr	**Understanding and Contending with MCAs** This discussion provides both debtor and creditor perspectives on how merchant cash advances (MCAs) have been addressed in bankruptcy proceedings in recent years, along with important case law developments that impact both sides. Moderator: Timothy A. Million, Husch Blackwell LLP - Houston, TX Panelists: Matthew W. Bourda, The Lane Law Firm, PLLC - Houston, TX Jeff D. Carruth, Condon Tobin Sladek Sparks Nerenberg PLLC - Dallas, TX
4:40 pm 0.75 hr	**CRO/Interim Leadership: Perils, Pitfalls and Pathways to Success in Operating Companies in Chapter 11 or Out of Court Workouts** Navigating an operating company through financial distress requires far more than balance-sheet engineering; it demands immediate triage, transparency, and decisive operational leadership. Speakers share their opinions and guidance for avoiding governance traps, fixing broken business models, and preserving enterprise value in Chapter 11 and out-of-court workouts. Drew McManigle, MACCO Restructuring Group, LLC - Houston, TX Charlie Shelton, Hayward PLLC - Austin, TX

Complex Business Track

Presiding Officer:
Kelli S. Norfleet, Haynes and Boone, LLP - Houston, TX

1:45 pm In Austin Only 0.75 hr	**The State of Private Credit and Potential Impacts on Restructuring Practice** Private credit has seen tremendous growth and has become a dominant player in certain segments of the corporate debt stack with US private credit at about $1.7 trillion and global private credit at about $3.5 trillion. Private credit, while not dominant in total corporate borrowing in the US, has become a dominant force in certain sectors including leveraged buyout financing and middle market direct lending. What are

	some of the key potential challenges facing private credit in the current financial environment? What are some potential impacts of private credit on the restructuring practice? Could private credit and sovereign debt be setting the stage for a potential systemic global risk? Moderator: William L. Wallander, Vinson & Elkins LLP - Dallas, TX Panelists: Edward I. Altman, New York University, Stern School of Business - New York, NY Jonathan C. Lipson, Temple University - Beasley School of Law - Philadelphia, PA
2:30 pm In Austin Only 0.75 hr	**To Opt-In or Opt-Out: Practical Suggestions on How to Approach Third-Party Releases** The law governing third-party releases continues to evolve at a rapid pace, with significant developments emerging across the country and within the Fifth Circuit. Moving beyond prior conference coverage, this panel provides an updated and critical examination of recent Fifth Circuit developments—including *In re The Container Store*—and offers practical guidance for practitioners navigating these issues in chapter 11 plan practice. Kristian W. Gluck, Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP - Dallas, TX Hon. Mark X. Mullin, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of Texas - Fort Worth, TX Lydia R. Webb, Gray Reed - Dallas, TX
3:15 pm In Austin Only 0.50 hr	**Issues and Trends in LMEs** Explore the current issues and trends in liability management exercises, including market trends and responses to court decisions related to Serta, Converge One, Del Monte, and others. Brent Herlihy, PJT Partners - New York, NY Chad Husnick, Kirkland & Ellis LLP - Chicago, IL
3:45 pm In Austin Only	**10-Minute Break**
3:55 pm In Austin Only 0.75 hr	**Comparison of Foreign and U.S. Insolvency Regimes and Predictions for the Future** The panelists discuss restructuring statutes from certain other countries in contrast with Chapter 11 and discuss current trends in cross-border insolvency, including the increased use of Chapter 15. Hon. Lisa G. Beckerman, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of New York - New York, NY R. Adam Swick, Akerman LLP - Austin, TX
4:40 pm In Austin Only 0.75 hr	**Mass Torts or a Mass of Torts? Knowing the Difference and How It Impacts a Reorganization** Discuss the difference between mass tort bankruptcy cases and bankruptcy cases involving large numbers of torts for separate injuries both in type and in occurrence. Explain how companies navigate restructurings under both scenarios, what the scenarios have in common, and how their differences impact issues with insurance, releases, continuing liabilities, and achieving a value-maximizing transaction. Hear analysis from the creditors' perspective, including how these cases affect claim reconciliation, adjudication, trust procedures, and creditors' recoveries and natural tension that exists between the secured creditors who want to increase their chances of being repaid and the unsecured creditors who want to maximize unsecured creditors' access to recoveries from an often limited pool of assets. Erin E. Jones, Jones Murray LLP - Houston, TX Felicia Gerber Perlman, McDermott Will & Schulte - Chicago, IL Nicholas Zluticky, Stinson LLP - Kansas City, MO

Consumer Track

Presiding Officer:
Pam Bassel, Standing Chapter 13 Trustee for the Northern District of Texas, Fort Worth Division - Fort Worth, TX

1:45 pm 0.75 hr	**Addressing Practical Problems in Consumer Cases** Explore common and increasingly complex issues encountered in consumer bankruptcy cases, including reaffirmation agreements, property surrender, client-filed pro se pleadings, and more. Discuss practical strategies for identifying, preventing, and resolving these issues while protecting debtors' rights and ensuring creditor and servicer compliance throughout the bankruptcy process. Richard W. Anderson III, Leinart Law Firm - Dallas, TX Hon. Marvin Isgur, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Texas - Houston, TX Kelli L. Johnson, Mackie Wolf Zientz & Mann, P.C. - Dallas, TX
2:30 pm 0.75 hr	**Ashes to Assets: Inheritance, Disclosure, and Other Probate Problems in Bankruptcy** Gain insight on probate issues bankruptcy attorneys need to spot early, including inherited assets, deceased debtors, non-filing heirs, estate administration, exemptions, claim disputes, disclaimers of inheritance and the automatic stay's impact on probate proceedings. Review practical red flags, common traps, and strategies for keeping "family drama" from becoming case-ending litigation. Megan Baumer, Law Office of Michael Baumer - Austin, TX Cristina Rodriguez, The Office of Tiffany Castro, Chapter 13 Trustee - Houston, TX Marvin Sprouse, Sprouse Law Firm - Austin, TX
3:15 pm 0.50 hr	**Judicial Estoppel under the "Totality of the Circumstances" Test** What will judicial estoppel look like in bankruptcy cases after the Supreme Court's big decision in Keathley? Discuss practical implications for bankruptcy practitioners, what case law from other circuits may tell us about how the "totality of the circumstances" test will be applied in the Fifth Circuit (and elsewhere), and what other tools are in the bankruptcy court's "arsenal" (as Justice Sotomayor's concurrence put it) to police wrongdoing. Hon. Christopher G. Bradley, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Western District of Texas - Austin, TX Behrooz P. Vida, The Vida Law Firm - Bedford, TX
3:45 pm	**10-Minute Break**
3:55 pm 0.75 hr	**Making the Call: Personal vs. Commercial Chapter 7 — Including Best Practices for Navigating SBA Loans Inside and Outside Bankruptcy** The presentation provides an overview of SBA loans and collection procedures, potential pitfalls, and negotiating with SBA vs filing bankruptcy. John Akard Jr., Coplen & Banks, P.C. - Houston, TX Benjamin Stolz, The Perliski Law Group P.C. - Dallas, TX
4:40 pm 0.75 hr	**The Means Test: When Does It Matter and Why Do We Care?** The Means Test can be difficult to navigate if you aren't sure where to begin, what information is needed/ relevant, or if it is even worth digging into for your specific scenario. From income (what is considered income, what is too much income?) to marital adjustments, household size (can you count them as a dependent?), and special circumstances, this presentation explores the ins and outs of the Means Test, for

	both Chapter 7 and 13, and will have you feeling like a pro in no time. Anne Elizabeth Burns, Chapter 7 Panel Trustee, Cavazos Hendricks Poirot, P.C. - Dallas, TX J. Robert Vanhemelrijck, Vanhemelrijck Law Offices PC - San Antonio, TX
5:25 pm In Austin Only	**Adjourn to Reception**
In Austin Only	**Jay L. Westbrook Bankruptcy Conference Reception (5:25 p.m. to 6:25 p.m.)** Join program faculty and attendees for drinks and hors d'oeuvres. **Thank You to Our Reception Sponsor** Vinson&Elkins

Thursday Evening, Nov. 19, 2026

In Austin Only	**Young Lawyers Committee Annual Evening Reception (8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.)** Please join the **Young Lawyers Committee of the Bankruptcy Law Section**. All are invited to join in the celebration! Moonshine, 303 Red River St., Austin, Texas 78701

Friday Morning, Nov. 20, 2026

Presiding Officer:
Ashley L. Harper, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP - Houston, TX

8:00 am In Austin Only	**Conference Room Opens** Includes continental breakfast. **Thank You to Our Breakfast & Break Sponsor** Parkins & Rubio LLP Attorneys and Counselors at Law

8:30 am 0.75 hr 0.50 hr ethics	**The Next Frontier of AI: Hiring, Training, and Matter Pricing** Like the move from book research to Westlaw and Lexis, AI is changing not whether lawyers add value, but where they add value. This presentation explores how AI may reshape the law firm leverage model—from the skills firms hire for, to the way associates are trained, to how bankruptcy matters are staffed, supervised, and priced. Liz Boydston, Thompson Coburn LLP - Dallas, TX Alexandria Rahn, Thompson Coburn LLP - Dallas, TX
9:15 am 0.75 hr 0.25 hr ethics	**Work-Life Balance for Bankruptcy Lawyers** Tips and pointers for managing deadlines, stress, and billable hours requirement while also prioritizing your physical and mental health and well-being. Dr. Brooke Robinson, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Mayborn College of Health Sciences - Belton, TX Hon. Shad Robinson, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Western District of Texas - Austin, TX
10:00 am	**15-Minute Break** Join us in the foyer for our Puppy Cuddle Lounge, open from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Hosted by Financial Software Solutions.
10:15 am 0.75 hr 0.50 hr ethics	**From Likes to Liability: Social Media Investigations, Hidden Assets, and Evidentiary Best Practices** This panel explores practical techniques fiduciaries and other parties-in-interest may use to investigate hidden assets and uncover bankruptcy fraud, with particular focus on social media as an investigative tool, including the ethical boundaries practitioners must observe when mining public and quasi-public platforms for evidence. The panel also addresses the evidentiary path for getting social media-derived evidence authenticated and admitted, including the growing challenge of deepfakes and AI-manipulated content, and how parties can authenticate or challenge digital evidence in an era where images, video, and audio can no longer be taken at face value. Amber M. Carson, Gray Reed - Dallas, TX Annmarie Chiarello, Winstead PC - Dallas, TX Hon. E. Lee Morris, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of Texas - Fort Worth, TX
11:00 am 0.75 hr 0.25 hr ethics	**Funding the Fight: The Role of Litigation Finance in Bankruptcy** The litigation finance industry has experienced massive growth in recent years, and the topic continues to engender spirited debate within the legal community. Litigation finance is particularly well suited for the bankruptcy world, where holders of affirmative claims often lack financial wherewithal to pursue them. This program explains common applications in bankruptcy and addresses common questions on issues such as attorney fee splitting, conflicts of interest, confidentiality, privilege, litigation decision-making and independent professional judgment. Also, this presentation explores unique rules and considerations in bankruptcy surrounding disclosure and obtaining court approval, when necessary. Anne Elizabeth Burns, Chapter 7 Panel Trustee, Cavazos Hendricks Poirot, P.C. - Dallas, TX Amy Tellegen Geise, Omni Bridgeway - Houston, TX Hon. Michelle V. Larson, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of Texas - Dallas, TX
	Recent Developments - Part II More recent cases. More evolving issues. Still interesting.

11:45 am 0.75 hr 0.25 hr ethics	Moderator: Aaron M. Kaufman, Gray Reed - Dallas, TX Panelists: Omar J. Alaniz, Reed Smith LLP - Dallas, TX Brian T. Cumings, Graves Dougherty Hearon & Moody - Austin, TX Cristina Rodriguez, The Office of Tiffany Castro, Chapter 13 Trustee - Houston, TX
12:30 pm In Austin Only	**Pick Up Lunch** Included in conference registration.

Friday Afternoon, Nov. 20, 2026

Presiding Officer:
Angela Littwin, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX

LUNCHEON PRESENTATION

	Thank You to Our Luncheon Sponsor VRG VERITAS Restructuring Group
12:50 pm 0.75 hr	**Closing Lunch with Professor Mechele Dickerson** Gain insight into why it is so hard for lower- and middle-income young adults in this country to become and remain middle class. Hear suggestions on things our country's leaders should do to restore middle-class stability and security. A. Mechele Dickerson, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX
1:35 pm	**Adjourn**