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Ex Maine Chief Bankruptcy Judge Heads To Bernstein Shur

By **Carmen Germaine**

Law360, New York (October 29, 2015, 11:44 PM ET) -- New England firm Bernstein Shur Sawyer & Nelson PA announced Thursday that it expanded its restructuring practice with the addition of the former chief judge of the Maine bankruptcy court, who also has extensive experience serving on a tribal appellate court.

Judge Louis H. Kornreich will join Bernstein Shur as an of counsel attorney leading the firm's mediation practice in its Portland, Maine, office, bringing 14 years of experience as a justice on the bankruptcy court, over half of it as chief judge.

Judge Kornreich told Law360 on Thursday that he decided to come to Bernstein Shur after talking with Bob Keach, the co-chair of the firm's business restructuring and insolvency practice group, about the possibility of the firm expanding into mediation.

"It was a perfect fit for me and a perfect fit for Bernstein Shur because they're entrepreneuring and they're looking to reach out to new areas of practice," Judge Kornreich said.

As part of a new mediation practice building on the firm's existing bankruptcy and restructuring strengths, Judge Kornreich will draw on his bankruptcy court reputation for mediating disputes to help resolve complex reorganization cases.

Judge Kornreich will also rely on his extensive experience overseeing complicated bankruptcy cases from his former seat in Bangor, Maine.

In one recent notable example, Judge Kornreich presided as the American judge in the bankruptcy of Montreal Maine & Atlantic Railway Ltd., collaborating with a Canadian counterpart in the jointly administrated case that resulted from a devastating 2013 train derailment and fire in Lac-Megantic, Quebec.

He also presided over the bankruptcy proceedings of Great Northern Paper and multiple other major Maine paper mills and manufacturing operations, and sat several times on the Bankruptcy Appellate Panel for the First Circuit.

The First Circuit selected Judge Kornreich for appointment to the Maine bankruptcy court



Judge Louis H. Kornreich

from a pool of 18 applicants in 2001. He retired in April after completing his 14-year term.

Prior to his appointment to the bankruptcy court, Judge Kornreich served as a managing partner of what is now Bangor firm Gross Minsky & Mogul PA, where he focused on bankruptcy and reorganization cases and eventually became senior partner.

Judge Kornreich had already gathered extensive judicial experience prior to his appointment from more than 20 years of service as an appellate judge for the Penobscot Nation Tribal Court, where he reviewed both civil and criminal cases.

When Judge Kornreich was sworn in as a bankruptcy judge, he was even presented with a Penobscot war club by the tribal court's chief judge, Gary Growe, which prompted him to recount once presiding over a tribal case on the Penobscot reservation wearing his robes and the "skullcap of an Orthodox Jew" while surrounded by war clubs and tribal art.

"I think the quote at the time was 'only in America,'" Judge Kornreich told Law360, recalling being moved as he was "looking at my surroundings and looking at the cooperation and the respect for law and process among different people and different backgrounds."

Judge Kornreich's legal career began in 1975, after serving a year as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserves, when he joined the firm Goodman & Kornreich, where he worked as a partner in the bankruptcy practice.

Bankruptcy law was not initially his plan, Judge Kornreich told Law360, but he became interested in the subject after completing a part-time stint as a clerk in a bankruptcy firm while in law school. He was particularly attracted by the broad spectrum of legal issues encompassed in bankruptcy law, saying it covers a range across "finances and the human condition."

Judge Kornreich received a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Connecticut in 1971 and graduated with his law degree from the Catholic University of America in 1974. He lives in Bangor, Maine, with his wife and has four daughters and 10 grandchildren.

--Editing by Catherine Sum.

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