

We are pleased to announce that this quarter's Member Spotlight is Bruce Borrus

Bruce focuses his practice on business bankruptcy, workouts, business loan documentation and commercial litigation. He represents creditors, debtors, trustees, committees, guarantors and individuals who find themselves entangled in creditor-debtor and other commercial disputes. Bruce also advises clients about ways to minimize the risk of litigation by properly structuring and documenting business transactions. Bruce's clients include financial institutions, forest products companies, commercial builders, health care companies and individuals. He is a frequent lecturer on bankruptcy topics, particularly those related to preferences, fraudulent transfers, debtor-in-possession financing and cash collateral. Although Bruce practices most frequently in courts located in Washington, he has also represented clients in bankruptcy and other federal courts in Alaska, California, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York and Texas.



Bruce Borrus
Fox Rothschild LLP

Spotlight Questions and Answers:

1. What is your professional background? Law is a second career for me. I began my work life teaching writing and English literature at the University of Washington as a graduate student in 1972. While there, I met my wife Tina and we wanted to stay in Seattle. There were no openings for English professors there, so I entered law school at the University of Washington. I finished my dissertation during my first quarter of law school.

What made you get involved in Bankruptcy? I did not plan to be a bankruptcy lawyer. I took no bankruptcy courses in law school. But when I started my legal career in 1981, the bankruptcy practice was exploding. The Bankruptcy Code of 1978 made bankruptcy a flexible business tool. There were no bankruptcy experts in my firm, but there was an influx of bankruptcy work. It was assigned to me, the lawyer with the lowest billing rate. I am an autodidact, and I enjoyed learning bankruptcy on the job.

What made you get involved in ABA? I attended my first ABA Business Bankruptcy Committee meeting in 1990 in Williamsburg, Virginia. There were opportunities to write and to speak, and I took advantage of them. But the most important reason for my continued activity in the ABA Business Bankruptcy Committee is the people. Sadly, some of my friends—most notably Mark Paben, Kate Heidt, and Mark Leipold—are no longer with us. But others—too numerous to list—have been good friends for thirty years.

What advice would you give to younger members of ABA? Volunteer. The BBC offers many opportunities to contribute. Write an article for the Business Bankruptcy Newsletter or Business Law Today. Assist with a subcommittee program. And continue to attend meetings twice a year. It takes a few years for people to learn who you are. Be patient—and persistent.

Favorite piece of advice you received in your career? I was in a trial in the bankruptcy court in Grand Rapids, Michigan. At one point, I objected to a question on hearsay grounds. The judge—who shall remain nameless—looked down at me and said: “Mr. Borrus, you asked some objectionable questions, but opposing counsel was courteous to you and did not object. I would have hoped that you would have shown courtesy in return.” That was the first—and-only—time that I was advised about the courtesy exception to the hearsay rule.