

BRUCE BEESLEY BRINGS HIGHEST STANDARDS, DEGREE OF HUMOR, TO
RENO BANKRUPTCY COURT

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As a partner in the then law firm of Gordon, Silver, and Beesley, Bruce Beesley once carved a happy face into a wall which was scheduled for demolition. At least, he thought the wall was coming down. As it turns out, he picked the wrong wall. But he faced the incident with good humor, because that's the kind of guy Bruce Beesley is – always ready with a joke or a smile, never letting the pressures of an impressive legal career, rich family life, and dedication to his community impinge upon his good nature and sense of humor. As Nevada's newest bankruptcy judge, he will undoubtedly bring these qualities to his courtrooms in both Reno and Las Vegas.

Beesley was a Biology major at the University of Nevada, Reno. He chose McGeorge School of Law (where he graduated *cum laude*) over the University of Michigan School of Law, recognizing that, "Michigan is freezing cold." He chose the path of the law because, in his own words, "I couldn't get into medical school."

He met his wife, Ann Morgan, in college. Between college and law school, Beesley worked as a firefighter because, "It paid a dollar an hour more than construction." As a young lawyer, he served as a public defender, and, as an associate with Ken Robinson, assisted in the (unsuccessful) defense of Patrick McKenna in a capital trial, more than 25 years ago. (Although the defense was unsuccessful, McKenna is still awaiting execution.)

We asked Beesley why he wanted to be a judge. "Because I like the practice of bankruptcy a great deal, I enjoy the complexity of the cases and like the Code character of the practice, I like the Article 9 aspects....My dad was a judge from about when I got out of law school for about 20 years, and I clerked for Bruce Thompson, whom I greatly admired, and he loved being a judge, I have a number of friends who love it, and about a dozen years ago I decided that's what I wanted to do." He has been a longtime member of the State Bar Board of Governors, he is a past president and master *emeritus* of the Bruce R. Thompson Chapter of the American Inns of Court, a member of the American Bankruptcy Institute's Southwest Bankruptcy Conference (on which he will continue to serve as judicial liaison), and is a Creditors' Rights Specialist certified by the American Board of Certification. He is also active in the community, including as a member of the Interfaith Hospitality Network, American Bar Foundation Fellow, and Nevada Law

Foundation Colleague. He is an avid history buff, and records daily outgoing voice mail messages announcing what happened “on this day in history.” (Beesley advised us that our interview occurred on the anniversary of Thomas Edison’s unveiling of the phonograph in 1877.)

Nevada lawyers will remember Beesley as the immediate past chair of the Nevada Bar Association. In his acceptance speech, he famously thanked numerous colleagues, but neglected to mention his wife, attorney Ann Morgan. (He blames this on the fact that he was heavily medicated – suffering a broken neck from an incident two weeks prior). Kathy England, speaking later in the program, thanked Ann Morgan. Discussing the highs and lows of serving as State Bar President, he enjoyed travelling to Washington to meet with elected representatives, lobbying for funding for legal services, getting to meet with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and meeting with other bar presidents from around the country. The biggest challenge was the extensive time commitment, requiring devotion of approximately half of his professional time in service to that office. He also mourns the passing of Vince Counsel, fellow McGeorge law graduate and former Nevada Bar President.

Although he is looking forward to his new job, Beesley is worried about the potential isolation of being a judge. However, he is excited about leaving behind such annoyances as keeping track of billable hours and collecting accounts receivable. Although he professes that he will not miss the marketing duties associated with his successful practice, he passes on this advice to upcoming professionals. One has to attend a fair number of “rubber-chicken” dinners in order to become known. Other ways of becoming recognized in the community include services to the state bar, volunteering to provide legal aid, and serving other charitable organizations. But the best way of marketing is to stay in touch with your clients about what is happening with their cases. Speaking of how incorporated this principle into his own practice, Beesley said, “I copy my clients with everything, take their phone calls, and get back to them quickly.”

Judge Beesley will join Bankruptcy Judge Gregg Zive of Reno, who will continue to work, taking senior status. Both judges’ courtrooms will be located on the fifth floor of the Clifton Young Federal Building. Judge Beesley will also receive assignments of cases originating in Southern Nevada, and plans to spend four days a week, two weeks a month, in a second floor courtroom in the Foley Federal Building in Las Vegas.

He hopes that those appearing before him will project the best qualities of the profession, including being honest with the court, clients and other counsel, and being well prepared. “Be honest with your clients, honest with yourself, and be an attorney who can be trusted. Balance work and family life, because family is the most important part of your life.” As a judge, he hopes to emulate the qualities he most admires in other jurists, including being fair, pleasant and appear in front of, and capable of making prompt decisions.

Judge Beesley is appropriately proud of his own family. His father, the late Richard Beesley, served as Circuit judge in Klamath County, Oregon for approximately

twenty years, Bruce's son, Robert, is a pre-med major at Oregon State. Bruce's daughter, Elizabeth, holds honors degrees in German and Political Science. Judge Beesley's wife, Ann Morgan (to whom he is deeply thankful), is a partner in the Reno offices of Jones Vargas. Asked how she felt about her husband leaving his lucrative practice to serve as a bankruptcy judge, Ms. Morgan responded: "Great! How often do you see the person you love attain his heart's desire?" We join the many members of the bar, the community, and his family, in declaring our pride in his appointment. Keep smiling, Judge Beesley.