

United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maryland

THOMAS J. CATLIOTA
CHIEF JUDGE

U.S. COURTHOUSE
6500 CHERRYWOOD LANE
GREENBELT, MARYLAND 20770

MARIA ELLENA CHAVEZ-RUARK SWORN IN AS UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY JUDGE

November 18, 2020

Maria Ellena Chavez-Ruark was sworn in today as the new bankruptcy judge for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maryland. She was appointed to fill the vacancy created by the untimely passing in November 2019 of The Honorable Wendelin I. Lipp. Judge Ruark will sit in the Bankruptcy Court's Greenbelt Division.

Judge Ruark was a partner in the Bankruptcy and Restructuring practice group at Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP in Baltimore, with extensive experience representing debtors, creditors' committees, secured creditors, unsecured creditors, landlords, lessors, purchasers of assets, and trustees in complex insolvency proceedings such as Chapter 11 bankruptcy cases, receiverships, and assignments for the benefit of creditors. She also represented parties in workouts, restructurings, and complex commercial litigation, including fraudulent transfer, deepening insolvency, breach of fiduciary duty, and preferential transfer litigation. She has experience in state and federal courts throughout the United States.

Judge Ruark is a distinguished member of the bankruptcy community. She is a past president of the Maryland Bankruptcy Bar Association and has served on several of its committees; a member of the American Bankruptcy Institute and chairs its Mentoring Program Committee; the Immediate Past President of the Chesapeake Chapter of the Turnaround Management Association and serves on several of its committees; a member of the Global Executive Board for the Turnaround Management Association; the Immediate Past President of the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland; a member of the American Bar Association; a member of the Business Bankruptcy Committee of the ABA's Business Law Section; a member of the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; a member of the Maryland State Bar Association; and a member of the Bar Association of Baltimore City. She is also a frequent speaker and author on various bankruptcy subjects.

Judge Ruark was named to the Lawdragon 500 Leading U.S. Bankruptcy & Restructuring Lawyers in 2020. She was also named one of "America's Leading Lawyers for Bankruptcy/Restructuring" by Chambers USA from 2015 through the present, named to The Best Lawyers in America list for Bankruptcy and Creditor-Debtor Rights Law from 2013 through the present, and selected for inclusion in the Maryland Super Lawyers (a publication of Law & Politics) from 2010 through the present. In addition, in 2009, 2011 and 2020, she was

named one of Maryland's Top 100 Women in Business by The Daily Record, an annual award which recognizes leadership roles and outstanding professional, civic, and mentoring achievements of professional women who reside and work in Maryland and who are making an impact on the State. Also, in 2010, Judge Ruark was named one of the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland's "pro bono stars" for her exemplary service and commitment to providing pro bono legal representation to Maryland's needy and underrepresented citizens. In 2006, Judge Ruark earned the first annual Educator of the Year Award by Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service for her pro bono service in the State of Maryland.

Judge Ruark is passionate about mentoring young women, pro bono service, community service, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and the betterment of the legal profession. In furtherance of these objectives, she served on her firm's Pro Bono Committee and Diversity and Inclusion Committee, she served as the Chair of the firm's Minority Attorney Resource Group, and she has actively mentored law students and young lawyers.

Judge Ruark clerked for The Honorable James F. Schneider of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maryland and The Honorable Susan M. Marzetta of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City.

Judge Ruark has a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Salisbury University, a Master of Business Administration from Salisbury University, and a Juris Doctor from the University of Baltimore School of Law.

The judges and the entire courthouse family congratulate Judge Ruark and are excited to welcome her to the Court.