

Yakima bankruptcy judge named to appeals panel

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SAN FRANCISCO — Chief Bankruptcy Judge

Frank L. Kurtz of Yakima has been appointed to the 9th Circuit Bankruptcy Appellate Panel.

The appointment to the panel, which hears appeals of decisions made by federal bankruptcy courts in the Western states, was announced Tuesday by Chief Judge Alex Kozinski of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Kurtz, 67, was appointed to the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Washington in 2005 and became chief judge in 2007.

Prior to that, he served as a judge on the Washington State Court of Appeals since 1996, and was in private practice in Yakima from 1979 to 1996. He is a native of Omaha, Neb., where he graduated from Creighton University in 1968 with a bachelor's in history, before earning his law degree in 1974 from the Gonzaga University School of Law.

The Bankruptcy Appellate Panel is based in Pasadena, Calif., and handles up to 60 percent of all bankruptcy appeals throughout the 9th Circuit. District courts hear the remainder.

Kurtz's appointment is for seven years, with eligibility for a three-year extension. Appeals are heard on a part-time basis, and he will continue to serve as chief bankruptcy judge for Eastern Washington.

He succeeds U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Bruce A. Markell of Nevada, who will retire from the bench today.

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