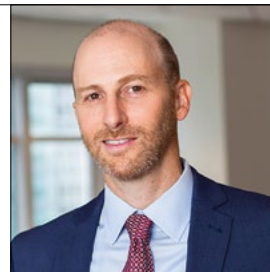


# Checking In

In this series, Practical Law Advisory Board members discuss their current work and key legal developments in their practice area.



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**Education:** 1999: LL.B., University of Toronto Faculty of Law; 1995: B.Comm., University of Alberta.

**Career in Brief:** 2018–present: Goulston & Storrs PC, Director; 2008–2018: Haynes and Boone, LLP (2011–2018: Partner; 2008–2010: Counsel); 2002–2008: Luskin, Stern & Eisler LLP, Associate; 2001: Shearman & Sterling LLP, Associate.

**What do you think is currently the biggest challenge facing bankruptcy attorneys?** Over the past decade, the administrative costs of Chapter 11 reorganizations have become

**In an increasingly competitive legal market, what strategies do you employ to generate business and retain clients?**

I work to foster long-term relationships with my clients. To do so, beyond simply offering legal advice, I use my business school training to give my clients practical advice that works in the real world. I also aim to assist my clients, particularly strategic investors, lenders, and acquirers, in finding cases to get involved with.

**If not an attorney, what would you wish to be?** Assuming professional tennis player were not an option, I would be a consultant or chief restructuring officer.

station threatened to fire me if I left my shift early to go to the doctor. Needless to say, that was my last day on the job. Still, it was a valuable learning experience about the need to get a good education.

**What is the best career advice you have ever received?** The best career advice I have ever received is that the law constantly changes, and so it is necessary to constantly evolve your practice and skill set to stay on the cutting edge. When I first became a bankruptcy attorney, my practice focused on creditors' rights and litigation for banks and other creditors in large bankruptcy cases, such as *Adelphia Communications*.

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prohibitively expensive for many small and midsize companies. As a result, the pressure to conclude a bankruptcy case before the company runs out of cash often leads debtors to engage in quick liquidation sales under section 363 of the Bankruptcy Code, rather than attempt to reorganize.

**Are there any recent legal or market developments that you think could significantly affect bankruptcy practice?**

Federal lawmakers recently introduced a bipartisan bill, the Small Business Reorganization Act of 2018, which would cut the administrative costs and lengthy procedural requirements of Chapter 11 reorganizations for companies with approximately \$2.5 million of debt or less. The bill would require small business debtors to file a repayment plan within 90 days from the start of a bankruptcy case, and would also make it easier for these debtors to pay creditors over time and retain ownership of the company.

I have also always had a strong interest in business and entrepreneurship (perhaps because I started watching *Family Ties* at an impressionable age). I also come from a family of authors and journalists (and I often write in my spare time), so being a writer is high on the list, too.

**What book has influenced you the most?**

I would have to say *Angela's Ashes: A Memoir* by Frank McCourt. It is incredibly poignant and well written, and it reinforces for me the constant need for compassion. It reminds me how fortunate I am, and how it is impossible to really know the struggles people may be dealing with in their personal lives, as well as the sacrifices many people make on a daily basis just to feed and clothe their families.

**What was your first job?** I was a part-time gas station attendant while I was in high school. I still remember the day when one of the nozzles malfunctioned and sprayed gas directly into my eyes. The owner of the gas

station remains an important part of my practice, I currently spend at least half of my time advising private equity funds and other investors on distressed acquisitions, both in and outside of bankruptcy.

**What one piece of advice would you give to a junior attorney considering specializing in bankruptcy law?**

The greatest thing about bankruptcy law is that it is a hybrid practice. If you enjoy both negotiating transactions and litigating, then bankruptcy practice may be a great choice for you. Bankruptcy practice is also well suited to people who enjoy the intellectual challenge of formulating novel solutions to complex operational and financial problems.