



2018 Annual NMI District Conference Summary

On March 10, 2018, the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands held its annual District Conference. This year's theme was Doing Business in Today's CNMI.

The Conference greatly benefited from the insights of special guests Circuit Judge M. Margaret McKeown, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit; David Addington, Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Chief Legal Officer of the National Federation of Independent Business; and Nelson Xu, Partner at Baumann, Kondas & Xu. Their participation was made possible in large part due to the dedicated efforts of Vincent J. Seman and Bruce L. Berline, Ninth Circuit Lawyer Representatives, both of whom played a significant role in organizing the Conference.

The morning began with presentations about the achievements of and challenges facing the legal community. Attendees heard remarks from Circuit Judge McKeown; Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona; Charles E. Brasington, President of the CNMI Bar Association; and Bruce Berline, Chairman of the Criminal Justice Act panel. Judge McKeown headlined the remaining morning sessions on legal ethics. With fellow panelists Steven P. Pixley and Catherine J. Cachero, members of the CNMI Bar Association Ethics Committee, Judge McKeown spoke about challenges in representing organizations, including identifying the client and possible conflicts. Nicole M. Torres-Ripple, In-House Counsel for the NMI Settlement Fund, moderated the panel. Following the panel, Judge McKeown presented on civility in the legal profession, especially as it pertained to discovery disputes.

The afternoon sessions focused on three substantive legal issues that CNMI businesses and lawyers are facing: business formation, taxation, and immigration. Janet H. King and Matthew T. Gregory introduced David Addington to attendees through a Conversatorio. Mr. Addington also spoke about how to advise clients creating small businesses and, with panelist Dean Burger, CPA at BCM LLC, spoke about the recent federal tax reforms. Dean Manglona, Associate at Civile & Tang, PLLC, moderated the panel.





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