

## Charlie Beckham Authors President's Message for American College of Bankruptcy

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**PRACTICES** Restructuring, Energy, Power and Natural Resources, Latin America Caribbean, Bankruptcy Litigation, Oil and Gas

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Haynes Boone Partner [Charlie Beckham](#) authored a colorful President's Message in *College Columns*, a magazine for American College of Bankruptcy (ACB) Fellows. This is Charlie's first column since being elected president of the ACB. Below is an excerpt of his column, "These Old Boots." ...

The Bankruptcy Code was new and fresh and the dust clouds of the Texas Oil Bust of the 1980s were building in West Texas. In November 1981, the partner who was about to become my boss walked into my office to tell me that I was no longer a litigation associate but a bankruptcy associate working for him. It was my first experience with Involuntary Bankruptcy. I freaked out. ...

A few days later, 81-year-old Eugene Smith, the patriarch of Kemp Smith [Duncan & Hammond], strolled into my office and eased down into a chair. ... Mr. Smith was a storyteller and took a deep breath and started:

"It was 1929. The depression had just begun but the tentacles of impending doom were already reaching into far West Texas. A nice young man down the street owned a shoe shop and boot store. ... The bootmaker explained to me that the depression had wiped out his business and he owed a bunchy of money to the bank. He reluctantly told me that he needed to close his shop, lay off his two employees and go out of business. He didn't know what he would do next to support his family. I decided I would help him." Surprised, I said, "How?"

Excerpted from the ACB's *College Columns* magazine. Read Charlie's full column [here](#) (Pages 4-5).