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"Katharine English was really involved with lesbian custody," Cumfer explains. "You have to credit her with really changing the atmosphere in the courthouse—judge by judge."

In 1984 English was hired as a juvenile court referee. Today she is chief judge for the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.

During her time with the Community Law Project and later with her own practice, Cumfer offered legal services to several trans clients who had children by a previous marriage and were having problems about visitation or support. She was also one of the first attorneys to handle domestic partner agreements. She conducted workshops and wrote a number of articles for queer publications on domestic partner issues such as estate planning and power of attorney. She wrote a do-it-yourself book for couples who didn't want to see an attorney but still needed domestic partner agreements.

During the 1980s, Cumfer saw an increase in the number of lesbians who opted to have children via artificial insemination. She was a consultant for one of the first lesbian couples in which one partner became pregnant through artificial insemination and the other partner became the adoptive parent of the child.

"After a couple of years of thinking it over and going through the pros and cons, I finally had a couple who wanted to go through with the adoption," she says.

It took a while for this couple to come forward because of financial and emotional costs. And even though the process was confidential, they worried the story might leak out because they weren't ready to have themselves or their kids exposed to publicity. It took a bit of finesse for Cumfer to educate judges on same-sex adoption issues and to find one who would take the risk to sign the adoption order.

"It was 1985, and as far as I know, that was the first time in the United States that it had been done. The next year, there was an adoption in Washington and then one in California. It spread all over because we built on it, and I would send my pleading [documents filed with the court] to California or wherever. A lot of states allow it now. It's a no-brainer. In terms of my legal career, that part is one of the things I am probably proudest of," Cumfer says.

In the 1990s she limited her general law practice to estate planning for unmarried couples and legal issues for nonprofit organizations. Then she narrowed it down to just nonprofits. In 1996 she went back to school to get a Ph.D. in history at UCLA.

"What I was most interested in was the question of, 'If the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and the Constitution have all of this language that suggests we treat everybody equally or humanely or responsibly, then how could it be that in the same mind there are things like slavery, devastation of Native Americans, gender inequality and all kinds of racial inequality? How does the same mind hold all of those concepts?'"

"And so ultimately that was...what I did my dissertation on," she says. "I think it is that same mind-set that we still deal with today, and I wanted to understand how that got to be part of the American psyche."

Today Cumfer is almost finished with a two-year position at Reed College, where she teaches history. When the position ends, she'll return to her law practice and concentrate on nonprofits.

"I believe that the voluntary sector is an important arena in which social change can occur," she says. "By working with organizations, I believe that I can more effectively assist change."

Fred Neal

Fred Neal remembers talking to one of his friends about gay rights in the 1980s and saying: "Well, I have rights as an American.... Rights are universal and should apply to everyone. And they should apply to me equally as a gay person as they do to a heterosexual person," he recalls, laughing at the memory.

But Neal caught on quickly as his friends nudged him to get involved with the fight against the anti-gay Ballot Measure 8 in 1988. The initiative repealed Gov. Neil Goldschmidt's executive order banning discrimination based on sexual orientation in state employment.

"I said sure, and I signed over my life savings at the time," Neal says of his large dona-

tion to the campaign to defeat Measure 8. "I don't think anybody even knew it, but I thought, 'OK, I'm young, I can save anew.'"

And with that, he found himself immersed in the fight for gay rights. He thought his friends had the right idea of working at the local level, getting people to register to vote and urging gay men and lesbians to participate in politics.

After Measure 8 passed and rained depression and shock over the queer community, Neal joined the Right to Privacy board and served as fund-raising chairman. He also worked for Multnomah County Chair Gladys McCoy. In 1992 he took some time off to serve on the No on 9 steering committee.

"After Measure 9, I went back to work, but then Gladys died and it was time to do something else," he says. The early 1990s were difficult years, as he lost his partner and friends to AIDS and then came to terms with his own HIV-positive status.

But he felt healthy and wanted to continue his involvement with local government and politics. He wanted to take a stand on issues such as quality of life, equality of opportunity for citizens and the structure of Portland's government. So, he decided to run for City Council in the 1994 primary.

When he signed on, he wasn't expecting Earl Blumenauer to run for re-election. Neal lost, but not before he had a chance to speak out on the issues. "I have always felt the need to be somewhat of a catalyst for getting people to see things from a different perspective, and part of that was the council race," he says.



Fred Neal is a campaign finance manager at the Oregon Elections Division

Neal was also open about being HIV-positive during his run for office. "I would get thank-you letters from gay men who were HIV-positive [saying] it gave them great inspiration. They were so proud," he says. "And I was saying: 'Well, I am not just going to lie down and die. I am going to participate in the broader community, be a part of my world and be out there speaking.'"

The campaign was exhausting, and Neal discovered what it was like being a public figure. "I was never comfortable having my name on bus benches all over town and being misquoted in the press," he laughs. Ultimately he decided that working behind the scenes was more his style.

Today Neal is a campaign finance manager at the Oregon Elections Division. When voters passed a campaign finance reform measure in 1994, the state needed additional resources to implement the changes, which created the opening for him. He spent months implementing the program, only to have the Oregon Supreme Court overturn the ballot measure as unconstitutional. Neal had to undo all the changes. One of his latest challenges is making campaign finance information available to the public in a timely manner.

Reflecting on his career and some of the changes in Portland, Neal says his underlying passion is equal rights and human rights. But he also stresses the need for gay men and lesbians to get involved with the broader community as well as their own.

"If you are gay or lesbian or bisexual or transgender and you are not registered to vote, you are doing yourself a disservice," he says. "If you are not reaching out to your neighbor and participating in your broader community, you are doing yourself a disfavor."

"Democracy is only as strong as the level of participation. If you have more people participating in it, then you are going to have a more meaningful dialogue. I don't think anyone has a franchise on the truth, but if everyone is more honest with each other and themselves, then democracy will survive." □

PAT YOUNG is a Portland free-lance writer and president of the Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest.

Then and Now A selected timeline of anti-gay ballot measures sponsored by the OCA

1988 Measure 8 Repealed an executive order and overturned nondiscrimination protection in public employment Passed: 53 percent "yes" to 47 percent "no"	1992 Measure 9 A constitutional amendment to codify discrimination based on sexual orientation Failed: 56 percent "no" to 42 percent "yes"	1994 Measure 13 A constitutional amendment to codify discrimination based on sexual orientation Failed: 52 percent "no" to 48 percent "yes"	2000 Measure 9 To prohibit public schools from promoting/sanctioning homosexuality/bisexuality Failed: 53 percent "no" to 47 percent "yes"	2004 Student Protection Act III To prohibit public schools from promoting/sanctioning homosexuality/bisexuality Status: Approved for signature gathering
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