Rob Collins vies for circuit judge position

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Pendleton attorney Robert "Rob" Collins aims to step from his successful law practice to judge of the local circuit court.

"I don't think there is anything more important I could do for the last six years of my career," Collins said.

Collins, who has 37 years of practice, and fellow Pendleton attorney Michael Breiling are vying for Position 1 on the bench of the Sixth Judicial District, which encompasses Umatilla and Morrow counties.

Judge Lynn Hampton serves in the post now but is not seeking re-election. Judges Eva Temple and Christopher Brauer are running unopposed for their seats.

Collins said the adversarial elements of lawyering are less interesting now than working to find the right outcome under the law. He said the integrity of the justice system depends on impartial judges, and he wants to bring his broad knowledge of the law and sense of fairness to bear in the circuit court.

"That's the reason I'm choosing to run," he said.

Rob Collins

Collins has worked as a pro-tem city court judge for five years and his practice encompasses an array of civil law, from litigation to custody cases to real estate. Circuit court judges handle all of that and more, but they primarily oversee criminal cases. Collins said he can bridge that gap.

"No judge ever knows everything they need to know about what's coming in front of them," he said, and as a lawyer he must constantly stay up on new laws and court rulings. He also said he is no criminal law novice.

Early in his career he served as the lead clerk for a Chicago firm that handled criminal appeals. He often prepared those appeals, he said, and assisted the attorney who argued the case in court. The work helped him acquire a "fairly broad knowledge of criminal law," he said.

Collins returned to Pendleton after graduating law school in 1981 and joined his father Robert Collins Sr., and his brother, Michael Collins, in the family firm, which the two sons continue. The junior Collins said he initially took on defense work. In his first jury trial, he recalled, he represented a grandmother who faced insurance fraud. She submitted a claim for ski equipment she lost in a crash, the latest of several insurance claims for reimbursements she made in a span of a few years.

"I was fully convinced of my client's innocence," he said. "We tried the case. ... The jury was out for about 15 minutes and acquitted her."

After the trial, he said, the grandmother promised she would never again pull the scheme. Collins said the experience "sort of soured" him on defense work. When the opportunity came for what he saw as more stimulating legal employment, he said, he took it.

His father saw the law as a way to contribute to the community, Collins said, and he follows suit. He has donated legal services to local nonprofits, serves on several local boards and is in his eighth and last year on the board of directors for the Pendleton Round-Up Association. The role of circuit judge, he said, would be a new challenge and a way continue to serve the public.

Collins also said he has a deep interest in the rebirth of drug court. He and his wife have three children, all grown and successful, he said, but one son struggled with drug addiction and is now 15 years sober. Collins said he observed some sessions of the old drug court and attended one of the graduations.

"I was just so impressed with the transformation in lives with some of these people getting second chances," he said.

Like most local races, the two circuit judge candidates are the biggest donors to their campaigns. Oregon elections financial data show Breiling reported almost $23,000 in total contributions, and $15,000 coming in loans from his law practice. Collins reported $6,100 in total contributions, $5,500 of which comes from his loans.

Collins and Breiling have been knocking on doors and putting up campaign signs. They are among the local candidates who will try to sway voters at the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce candidate forum April 19 at Pendleton High School.

HERMISTON

Police looking for burglary suspect

East Oregonian

Hermiston Police have recovered several pickup loads full of stolen property, and are looking for a suspect in those thefts. Items recovered include personal items, furniture, and military ordnance.

Officers are looking for Russell Scott Greene Jr., 36, of Hermiston, who they believe is involved in the crimes. So far, officers have identified eight burglary victims.

"As of right now, Mr. Greene is who we are looking for, however it is quite possible he may have many accomplices working with him since we are talking about such a large number of items," said Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston in an email to the *East Oregonian*.

Edmiston said so far, officers have recovered five truck loads from a home on Northwest 12th Avenue, one large U-Haul load, and minor property, all from different locations where stolen property was stored.

On April 9, officers searched Dun Rollin Trailer Court on West Jennie Avenue, which Greene has been known to frequent, and found a stolen bicycle, auto parts, jewelry, tools and boxes that matched those reported stolen from a storage unit in the previous month.

After receiving a tip on April 5 that stolen property was being stored on Northwest 12th Street, officers found five pickup loads of stolen property at the location, and found there were two storage units in Umatilla with more stolen property.

Officers got a search warrant for the Umatilla storage unit where property had previously been reported stolen and seized several truckloads of stolen items, including electronics, furniture, sporting goods, clothes, tools, and auto parts.

They also recovered military ordnance in the storage unit, such as anti-tank rounds. Those items were inspected by Oregon State Police bomb technicians, and some were found to be harmless. Others could not be verified through a visual inspection or x-rays.

Ayers sentenced to 40 months for child abuse

HERMISTON — A Umatilla County man will spend more than three years in prison for the physical abuse of a child who was under 10 years old at the time.

Nicholas Ayers was sentenced Wednesday in Hermiston to 40 months with the Oregon Department of Corrections, and will spend three years on post-prison supervision. He is also not allowed to have contact with the victim or the victim's mother, and is recommended to have anger management and drug/alcohol evaluations, and complete any recommended treatment.

Both the victim and his mother were present for the hearing. The case started in 2015, and in March 2018 Ayers pleaded guilty for the charge of attempting to commit a class A felony. He was convicted, but with a District Attorney-elected reduction, the charge is a class B felony.

His other charges were dismissed, one of criminal mistreatment in the first degree, and two of assault in the third degree.

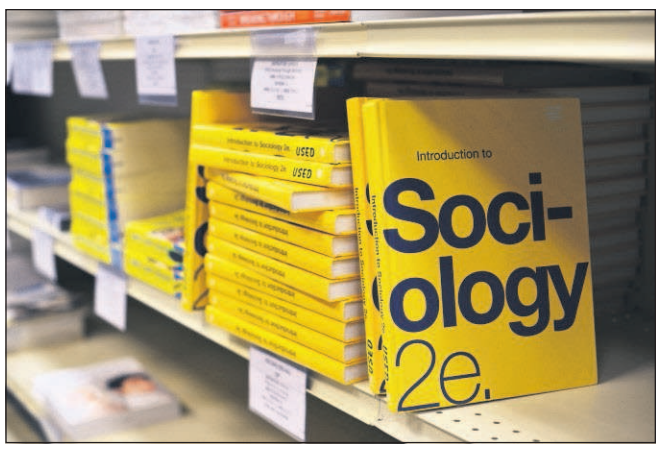
COLLEGE: Plenty of resources for students who work

Continued from 1A

"I have multiple friends who work two or three jobs," she said. She said among her friends, some use their money to cover tuition costs, while others use it to pay for various other needs.

She said OSU has some resources, such as the HSRC Textbook Lending Program, which allows students in need to borrow previously donated textbooks. She said some students also check out texts from the library, or use books from friends who previously took the same class.

Zepeda said there are plenty of resources for students who work, as well as lots of campus jobs. Zepeda said her jobs have opened up new opportunities for her.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
"Introduction to Sociology" textbooks sit on the shelf in the BMCC bookstore in Pendleton.

While taking classes at the Oregon Commission for the Blind, **Kodie Arnold** has found herself getting even busier.

She recently started taking a Writing 115 class at Portland Community College.

Blind since birth, Arnold has continued to take skill-building classes at the commission, such as mobility, orientation, and stamina. Those courses assist with independent living, allowing Arnold to recently move out of student housing and into an apartment with a roommate.

Arnold said finances have not been too much of a concern for her. She received funds from the Oregon Commission for the Blind for classes, and said her PCC classes were paid for by vocational rehab.

Arnold has been working, however. She spent a few weeks this summer at a restaurant in Salem.

"I was a server, bussing tables and making to-go boxes," she said. Arnold said working in a restaurant was tough, especially being blind, but she enjoyed the experience.

Arnold is in her last term at the commission. After that, her path isn't set, but she'll focus in more on her goal of playing music.

"I ultimately want to go to East Tennessee University," she said. "They have a bluegrass program that I really want to join."

Deep into her sophomore year at the University of Washington, **Cece Hoffman** has thrown herself into campus life.

Between 12 hours per week coordinating activities at the campus longhouse and the rest of her academic and extracurricular activities, all of her commitments are taking a toll on her health.

As she gets less time for self-care activities like sleeping and going to the gym, she's had to deal with exhaustion, headaches and stomach issues.

Hoffman said she's trying to figure out how to prioritize her time better, but the money she makes from her part-time job helps pay for the bills at her off-campus apartment.

She's also had a good run of low costs for textbooks and school supplies, with many professors using open resources for class material.

"A lot of the teachers are trying to make it more accessible," she said.

Her luck nearly ran out when the textbook bill for her current quarter was around $300. She was ready to bite the bullet and pay for them, but she was able to borrow a book from a friend and check out another from the library, although she did have to pay $80 for an online access code for one of her textbooks.

After seeing time on the field last fall as a defensive lineman, Eastern Oregon University sophomore **Patrick Collins** is already preparing for next year in spring practices.

In addition to football and working toward his degree in agriculture and resources, Collins works 20 to 30 hours per week at the EOU bookstore and the campus' Small Business Development Center.

Collins said most of his paychecks go toward school expenses and recreation.

"We just got out of snowmobile season, so that will help," he said.

Collins spends about $300 per quarter on books and has never spent less than $200 in a quarter.

While he won't pass up a great deal, Collins said his job as a bookstore employee means he tries to buy most of his books at the university.

Despite the prospect of saving a few bucks, Collins said he prefers the ability to highlight and annotate a physical book rather utilize an online option.

As an exchange student in Germany, **Ryan Lacey's** campus life is a little different this semester.

Instead of spending the spring at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida, Lacey is taking courses at the Munich University of Applied Sciences.

In an email, Lacey wrote he was a frustrated that he was still required to pay for a semester at Embry-Riddle, because colleges in Germany are free and have no required textbooks.

Student union-subsidized food and boarding means Lacey pays half of what he pays at Embry-Riddle, and textbooks aren't a factor either.

"There are no books to buy (well there are, but they aren't at all required) and the learning material is provided online for free on what are called 'scripts' — basically an abridged version of a book designed for the class," he wrote. "For the semester I've only spent about 10 euros total on school supplies while at ERAU I'd have to spend a couple hundred for the textbooks and all."

BRIEFLY

Junior academy sets alumni event

PENDLETON — Alumni, teachers and administrators, along with their family and friends, are invited to the Harris Junior Academy/ Pendleton Junior Academy Alumni Day.

The event is Saturday beginning at 9:30 a.m. with a sabbath school and church program at the Pendleton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1401 S.W. Goodwin Place. Afterwards, a haystack lunch and a reminisce program will be held at Harris Junior Academy, 3121 S.W. Hailey Ave., Pendleton.

The event also includes class socializing in the evening and a Sunday morning brunch. For more information, visit www.harrisjunioracademy.org or call 541-377-3273.

Chocolate Derby benefits Dream Catcher

PENDLETON — Put on your best Kentucky Derby attire and head down to Oregon Grain Growers Brand Distillery for the inaugural Chocolate Derby.

The event, which benefits Dream Catcher Therapeutics of Pendleton, features dinner and a variety of chocolate dishes created by Pendleton restaurants. The 21-and-older event is Saturday from 6-9 p.m. at the distillery, 511 S.E. Court Ave. The Chocolate Derby also includes live music, dancing and an auction.

Tickets are $30 per person or $225 for a table of eight. They can be purchased at Dan Ceniga's State Farm office, 1704 S.W. Frazer Ave., Pendleton, or by calling Morgan at 541-377-1479.

All proceeds from the event will help fund rider scholarships and care for Dream Catcher's therapy horses. For more information about their program, visit www.dreamcatchertrc.org.

SAGE Center soars with craft activities

BOARDMAN — Soar to new heights with a choice of activities during SAGE Saturday.

The event features free admission and activities for families with children. Kids can choose from a hot air balloon craft or a clothespin airplane. The event is Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman.

The SAGE Center — Sustainable Agriculture and Energy — is an interactive visitor's center developed by the Port of Morrow. It's open Monday through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Expanded hours begin Memorial Day weekend.

For more information, contact 541-481-7243, sagecenter@portofmorrow.com or visit www.visitsage.com.

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