

Judge Dretke moving on

He'll leave the bench to practice as an attorney

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Circuit Court judge Brian Dretke is stepping down from the bench after more than four years of service in 10th Judicial District, which encompasses Union and Wallowa counties. While Dretke enjoyed his time on the bench administering law, his love for practicing law has led him to Bend.

Dretke applied for and was appointed by then-Gov. John Kitzhaber to the 10th Circuit Court bench in 2012, succeeding retiring judge Phillip Mendiguren. He applied for the job because of a shortage of judges in the area, and he felt it was his civic responsibility to step up to the plate.

"It seemed like the right fit at the right time to help the situation," Dretke said. "I enjoy the work, but it never has been my long term goal to retire at this job. I'll do as good a job as I can in it, but if a good opportunity comes up, and things are going well, I'll take that opportunity."

The opportunity came as a partnership offer from a Bend firm that will now become Dwyer Williams Dretke Attorneys.

"It's a plaintiff's firm, so

it's civil work," Dretke said. "They needed somebody to litigate, and that's what I do."

His previous specialty was litigating senior-home cases. "That to me was really rewarding. When you are able to get one resolved, it usually changes the way the facility treats their residents."

Dretke spent his formative years in Oklahoma and attended Oklahoma State University, where he met his future wife before joining the Air Force. The military sent him to Shreveport, La., where he finished his undergraduate degree at Louisiana State University in 1983.

After military service, Dreke returned to Oklahoma and went to work for the Tulsa Police Department, where he worked for nine years in a number of capacities including narcotics, patrol and fugitive warrants.

"It was always a running fight. It was a great job when you're young and invincible," he said with a laugh.

During that time, Dretke attended law school at Tulsa University. Upon graduation he searched for employment as a prosecuting attorney. He and his wife toured Oregon, and he received a job offer from Lane County contingent upon his passing the bar exam. Dretke studied for the bar at the University of Oregon while his wife and children returned to Oklahoma. After the exam he returned to Oklahoma, and in four months

received the news he'd passed the bar. He called Lane County to tell them he was on his way, only to find a timber industry downturn had negated the offer.

After more searching, Dretke mulled over offers from the district attorney offices of Union and Umatilla Counties.

He chose Union County for its scenery.

"That was 1993, and we've been there ever since," Dretke said.

He worked for the DA's office for several years before entering into private practice in 1997, eventually becoming a partner in the Pendleton law firm Hallman & Dretke in 2000.

Dretke has enjoyed his time on the bench although it also posed challenges, particularly in family law.

"You hope you have enough depth of experience and knowledge to make the right decision. ... You're asked to make an important decision that's going to affect people's lives, that's going to affect their children, based on a very limited exposure to them. All you do is just hope and pray that you made the right decision. I don't think people have any idea how much I struggle with those."



Dretke

Wallowa County District Attorney Mona Williams said she's sorry to see Dretke go because of the pains he took to be prepared for every case.

"Judge Dretke has been a good judge. He's fair and thorough," she said.

Williams said she appreciates Dretke's innate humor and good nature, which he used on occasion to calm down even the most cantankerous of defendants before him.

Williams recounted a mental commitment hearing that sticks out in her mind: "He was totally out there, thinking he had been talking to Jesus and had been told he needed to do some violent things, and they were having a hard time with him at the jail. At the hearing he kept saying 'They won't feed me enough food here, and that's part of the reason I'm having so much trouble.'"

By the end of the hearing, Dretke had pacified the man considerably. After telling the man he was sending him to a hospital to get stabilized, Dretke turned to the deputy and said, "By the way, deputy, can we get this young man a baloney sandwich?"

"It was the perfect thing to say to the defendant," Williams said. "He laughed and thanked the judge and said, 'That'd be great, judge.' He had that way of dealing with people and it was really good to see from my perspective."

FOR THE RECORD

Dispatch log highlights:

- Monday, Oct. 10**
- 9:28 a.m.: Burglary reported in Enterprise.
 - 3:40 p.m.: Enterprise police arrested Jeremy Hankey, 26, of Joseph for DUII; released on own recognizance.
 - 4:20 p.m.: Report of negotiating a bad check in Enterprise.
 - 7:09 p.m.: Request for ambulance in Wallowa.
 - 9:17 p.m.: Traffic stop in Enterprise.
- Tuesday, Oct. 11**
- 1:14 p.m.: Request for ambulance in Enterprise.
 - 1:33 p.m.: Traffic stop in Joseph.
 - 1:38 p.m.: Telephonic harassment reported in Wallowa.
 - 1:45 p.m.: Traffic stop in Joseph.
 - 5:50 p.m.: Trespassing complaint in rural Wallowa.
- Wednesday, Oct. 12**
- 7:03 a.m.: Request for ambulance in Enterprise.
 - 9:17 a.m.: Civil dispute in Joseph.
 - 10:57 a.m.: Traffic stop in Enterprise.
 - 12:22 p.m.: Request for ambulance in Joseph.
 - 2:23 p.m.: Report of possible wolf depredation in rural Joseph.
 - 4:02 p.m.: Found male German shepherd in Enterprise.
 - 5:12 p.m.: Request for ambulance in Enterprise.
- Thursday, Oct. 13**
- 11:03 a.m.: Enterprise police arrested Errol Glenn Sherod, 54, of Joseph for theft II. Transported to Umatilla County jail.
- Friday, Oct. 14**
- 6:04 a.m.: ODOT notified of tree limbs on Highway 82 in
- rural Joseph.
- 9:30 a.m.: Report of dog as public nuisance in Enterprise.
 - 11:13 a.m.: Unattended death in Enterprise.
 - 12:01 p.m.: Older female pit bull/terrier mix found in Joseph.
 - 2:15 p.m.: Report of possible burglary in Joseph.
 - 4:11 p.m.: Request for ambulance in Joseph.
 - 5:54 p.m.: Horses loose in Joseph.
 - 8:46 p.m.: Disturbance in Joseph.
- Saturday, Oct. 15**
- 8:08 a.m.: Request for ambulance in Enterprise.
 - 9:07 a.m.: Large rocks in roadway, rural Wallowa.
 - 9:09 a.m.: Attempt to locate/welfare check request for overdue camper at Wallowa Lake.
 - 5:02 p.m.: Report of possible intoxicated driver in Enterprise.
 - 6:40 p.m.: Wallowa County issued a warrant for David Dean Killion, 56, of Joseph for probation violation, original charge trespassing.
 - 7:09 p.m.: Report of criminal mischief in Wallowa.
 - 7:35 p.m.: Report of criminal mischief in Wallowa.
 - 8:19 p.m.: Report of harassment in Lostine.
 - 8:33 p.m.: Sheriff's Office arrested Matthew George James Clark on a Yamhill County warrant for failure to appear, original charge stalking. Posted bail and released.
 - 9:53 p.m.: ODOT notified of large rocks on Highway 3, mile post 3.
- Sunday, Oct. 16**
- 9:06 a.m.: Lost black female dog and white male dog from Enterprise.
 - 1:35 p.m.: Sheriff's Office arrested Otilia Thiel, 50, of Enterprise for burglary. Transported to Umatilla County jail.
 - 1:45 p.m.: Traffic stop in Enterprise.
 - 4:57 p.m.: Request for ambulance in Enterprise.

WORDS

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And what has happened is disaster, from the Savings and Loan fiasco to Enron and Wells Fargo to political gridlock. The nature of sports, business and society has made winning and wealth more important than neighborliness, sportsmanship and citizenship, made litigation more common than cooperation. The end product of this selfishness was made movie famous by Michael Douglas

in "Wall Street" — "Greed is Good," he professed.

The cooperators are still here. Those who realize where we would be with slavery if we had relied on "local" control; what kind of nation we would have become with dozens of currencies and armies. Cooperators think that the country works because of, and not in spite of the tensions between local and national, private and public, east and west, north and south, that checks and balances have worked well for almost 250 years.

Cooperation works because

Warren Buffett — the very successful capitalist who speaks truth to greed, who made his money investing in good and stable companies, has paid taxes every year since he was 14 and takes tax deductions for charity gifts of millions as he gives away additional billions — sees capitalism's limits. Like Carnegie and Rockefeller, he has become an example for Bill Gates and other successful entrepreneurs to give away billions toward public good.

It works because many of us who are not millionaires work

in successful nonprofits straddling public and private in education, natural resources and health care. It works in small towns like ours because government employees and ranchers and accountants coach Little League and serve on school boards, talk with and to each other rather than at each other.

Let's remember what we have had and have, and pass it back up the political and social ladders that have told us otherwise.

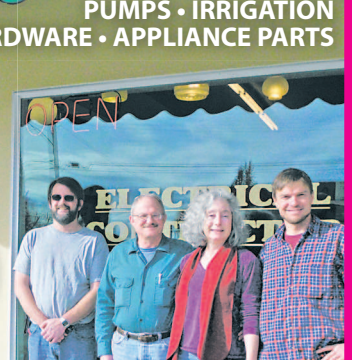
Columnist Rich Wand-schneider lives in Joseph.



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MEASURE

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No matter how frustrated you are with the political landscape of Oregon and our great nation, no matter how tired you are of picking be-

tween candidates that don't reflect your own principles or ideals, please do not simply ignore your ballot.

The fight against Measure 97 cannot be "someone else's" issue. It is an issue for every Oregonian. Please do not be complacent. You must

vote, and I strongly urge you to join me in voting "no" on Measure 97. It is bad policy, a bad idea, bad for business and bad for Oregon.

Jeff Bailey of Heppner is president and CEO of Bank of Eastern Oregon. He resides in Heppner.

LETTERS

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He has zero experience in foreign policy, brags about his ability to buy members of Congress and is proud of not paying taxes — taxes which, among other things, pay for VA hospitals, agricultural subsidies, roads, dams, post offices, services for the neediest of our citizens, public safety and the military.

Of course I will be voting for Hillary Clinton.

Ann Browder
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