

Frolander on board as new DA

Began career as a legal assistant

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Former deputy Wallowa County District Attorney Rebecca Frolander is now the district attorney.

Former DA Mona Williams has been appointed to the 10th Circuit Court bench.

Frolander ran unopposed for the slot in the May election.

Frolander, a Wallowa County native, graduated as valedictorian from Enterprise High School in 1999. Intending to become a doctor, she attended Pacific University in Forest Grove, taking undergraduate degrees in both journalism and cell and molecular biology.

"I wanted to be a unique applicant when I applied to medical schools, so I was taking all my science courses and majoring in journalism — I was going to be a doctor who could communicate with people," Frolander said.

As time passed, she found herself less interested in medicine.

She wanted to attend graduate school but wasn't sure what field to pursue, so she moved back home, where she ran the tech crew with the Employment and Training Consortium.

Eventually, Williams, who was in private practice at the time, offered Frolander a legal assistant position.

"She knew I had graduated from Pacific, and I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do," Frolander said.

Frolander agreed to a two-year commitment and when



New Wallowa County Deputy District Attorney Becky Frolander

Williams became DA, Frolander was offered the post of Victim Services manager, also continuing her work as a legal assistant and office manager.

After nearly four years, Frolander decided to pursue a legal career and began attending Willamette University.

"I knew I wanted to be a prosecutor when I went, and my ultimate goal was to end up here back in Wallowa County," she said. She spent two summers interning for Williams and graduated in 2013.

While still in college, Frolander heard a deputy district attorney slot was about to open, and she intended to apply, but the slot was filled before she graduated.

"I was pretty upset," she said. "Not that there was the promise of a job, but I had a plan, and it changed at that point."

She debated about becoming a prosecutor elsewhere or opening a private practice in the county. She applied for a slot in the Union County DA's office, but it was taken by the person hired in Wallowa County while she was still in school.

"I applied for the open-

"I've always been someone who wants to help others and this is a good way to do it."

— Becky Frolander

ing that created here, and I got hired," she said.

Her previous legal experience and victims services work helped give her a leg up on the position as colleges don't necessarily train lawyers for specific fields.

"You learn how to research and write, and you learn subject matter, but you don't learn general practice," she said.

The first time Frolander officially appeared in court was for a game violation sentencing. She was nervous.

"I was so nervous, I couldn't remember the facts of the case," she said. "I was trying to read from the police report, and when I got to the end, I said, 'And those are the facts, your honor, as confusing as they may be!'"

What Frolander most enjoys about her work is advocating for others.

"I get to advocate for the public as a whole," she said. "The part I'm most passionate about is that I get to advocate for victims and ensure they're given meaningful access to the court system."

She said that she's cognizant of how personal crimes

affect the victim. "I try to make sure they're not revictimized by the court process. I've always been someone who wants to help others and this is a good way to do it."

Frolander believes in offender accountability, but she also sees the other side of the coin.

"I also believe in treatment and reformation, but I think you need the accountability part if you're trying to change someone's behavior," she said.

The most challenging part of her job is trying to be neutral when the facts of the case are challenging — for example, when she sees people she knows or grew up with at the defendant's table. Also, the job doesn't end when she leaves the court or office.

"I'm always a district attorney, when I go grocery shopping and when I'm weeding my flower beds in the front yard," she said with a laugh. "It's a 24/7 job."

She intends to hire a deputy shortly.

The DA is responsible for the investigation of all unintended deaths. She is also the chair for the child abuse multi-disciplinary intervention team.

Frolander said not to expect big changes in the office. She believed she and Williams did a good job of representing the community in the execution of their office and that will continue.

"I've been doing the job, and I will evaluate every case and determine what I can or can't do with it," she said. "I care very much about the position and the people who live here, and I will continue to serve them to the best of my ability."

Williams vs. Williams

Attorney from La Grande will run for judge

Wes Williams, a La Grande attorney, has announced he will be a candidate for 10th District Court judge for Union and Wallowa counties in November. He will be running against Mona Williams who was recently appointed to the post by Gov. Kate Brown.

"I am respectful to others and this is no small point," Williams (no relation to Mona Williams) said. "I truly believe that all people, regardless of their economic status, political position, sex or ethnicity deserve respect."

Williams said if elected he would show all people "patience and respect."

"In this way, everyone that comes before me in court will know that they have been heard and have received a full and fair hearing," he said.

Williams was raised on a small farm and attended Southern Oregon State Col-

lege in Ashland. He was the first member of his family to obtain a college degree.

He taught U.S. history, law and justice and geography at the high school level for seven years while saving money to go to law school. He studied law at the University of Oregon, where he met Jennifer, his wife of twenty two years.

He opened his practice in La Grande in 1996. The couple has two children.

He has experience in real estate transactions, employment law, criminal defense, setting up businesses, wills, probates and contract litigation. "This breadth of experience will help me understand the legal issues that will come before me if I were elected judge," he said.

The Oregon General Election is Nov. 6. Ballots are due to be mailed by Oct. 23. Candidates must file by Aug. 28.



Williams

Busy fire season likely

This year's growth of grass and brush and a substantial carryover from 2017 should contribute to continued expansion of wildfire activity in July and August in the region as these fuels continue to dry out, the National Interagency Fire Center said in its June-September forecast.

"As soon as those grasses dry out, there is going to be a lot of fuel for wildfires," said Jennifer Smith, U.S.

Bureau of Land Management public affairs specialist at the center.

Four fairly small range fires ignited southwest of Boise June 5 and were contained shortly thereafter. Subsequently, rain has spurred more growth of grasses and brush, Smith said.

FOR THE RECORD

JUNE 4
9:55 a.m. — 911 call reporting a disturbance in Enterprise.
10:59 a.m. — Report of animal neglect in Wallowa.
1:54 p.m. — Timothy O'Brien Mcrae, 40, of Lostine, was arrested by Wallowa County Sheriff's Office for criminal trespass and disorderly conduct. He was transported to Umatilla County Jail.
JUNE 5
8:59 a.m. — Hit and run reported at Wallowa Lake.
JUNE 6
2:57 p.m. — 911 report of an erratic

driver in rural Wallowa.
JUNE 7
12:50 a.m. — Wallowa County Community Corrections has entered an order of arrest and detention for Christopher Thacker, 33, of Enterprise, for probation violation. Original charge is possession of meth.
JUNE 8
5 p.m. — Dog as a public nuisance complaint in Joseph.
11:13 p.m. — Enterprise PD arrested Christopher Irvin Thacker, 33, of Enterprise, on a Wallowa County Community Corrections Order of Arrest and Detention for probation violation. Original charge was possession of meth. He was transported to Umatilla County Jail.

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Births

A son, Rhett Everett William Robb, was born May 30, 2018 in Enterprise to William and Jamie Robb of Lostine. Grandparents are Deborah Woody, Frank Woody, Judith Robb and Alvy Robb.

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urtops

This week we're honoring a number of athletes for our athlete of the week. In this case, we're celebrating the contributions of all the county's school bus drivers, whether event driver or the day-to-day routes. These heroes exert every bit of energy they have to taking care of school children delivery. They monitor squabbles, help children on and off the bus and most importantly, deliver their charges safely to school and back to their homes without fail. For that we give them our thanks.

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