

Position of Honors Attorney created for Tribal members

LEGAL continued
from front page

In 2013, Partridge joined the Tribal Attorney's Office as an intern, working for six months as a Ceded Lands specialist. In that role, she served as the Tribal representative in negotiations over the Superfund site in the Portland Harbor. Two weeks later, she passed the Oregon State Bar Exam and later in 2013, she became the first Tribal member hired by the Tribal Attorney's Office.

The Tribe had created a position of Honors Attorney for Tribal members lacking the required two years of legal experience, to give them a way to join the department while they are gaining experience.

"I did not expect to get hired here as my first job: I thought it would be years before I worked for the Tribe," Partridge said.

After deciding against pursuing criminal law, she thought back over her studies of Tribal law and sovereignty.

"It seemed like a natural fit," she said.

The Honors Attorney position was another perfect fit, she said. "My family wanted to come back; my dad grew up here and connecting with the Tribe is important to all of us," Partridge said. "Now we all live here; my parents, my sister and me."

Partridge is still working on the Portland Harbor cleanup; now as the legal representative for Ceded Lands.

"What I learned in those first six months really made it easier to do my job today," she said.

Like all of the Tribe's attorneys, Partridge also does her share of child welfare cases. Her work often deepens her appreciation of Tribal ceremonies and milestones, she



Brooks Wakeland



Holly Partridge

noted. "It makes it more rewarding, when I go to a First Fish ceremony, knowing I have a role in making the river safe for those fish," she said. "When I go to harvest lamprey, knowing I have a role in keeping the Willamette River clean. ... When I'm there for the worst moments of someone's life, like when we're taking someone's children – I'm also there at their best moments, when we return someone's children and they're being the best parents they can be. I don't get to celebrate with them but I get to see it and know I had a role in keeping that family together," she said. "When I went to the opening for Stratus Village – I was there, every step of the way ... and now I get to go on a tour of it."

She said she most enjoys her environmental work.

"I am not a litigator," she said. "I can tell you what is not my favorite part; going to court. I do it and I think I'm good at it, but it's not my favorite part. What I really enjoy is working with my clients; helping them be successful. I really enjoy that."

Wakeland said he had intended to pursue a medical career in forensic psychology, earning degrees in science and sociology.

"It wasn't until my last two se-

mesters at Portland State (University) that just for fun, I took a class in forensic evidence by a professor who used to be a defense attorney in California," he said.

The professor suggested that he consider law school instead and Wakeland said the idea appealed. He was earning an A in the class, while struggling with Cs in his chosen major. After he earned a second A in a follow-up class suggested by the professor, he called his parents to announce he was changing his focus.

His father, Tribal Elder Pete Wakeland, who was working for the Tribe in forestry, told him there was an internship open in the Tribe's legal office.

"So, I've been in the legal office since 2012; I interned there before I even went to law school," he said. "I really enjoyed it. ... I came back every summer until 2015, then graduated and got hired on permanently."

Wakeland said he focused on business in law school. "I had zero interest in property or tax law," he said. "Everyone in our office does a little bit of everything. My primary focus is contracts and contract negotiation."

Wakeland said his clients include "Natural Resources, the Tribal Police Department, the Tribal Fire Department. And a lot of boards and committees... My biggest clients are the casino and child welfare work.

... Also employee litigation ... I'm now the primary litigator in the office, so I am the one who goes to court most often."

Wakeland said he particularly enjoys that aspect.

"I love going to court; it's one of my favorite parts of my job," he said.

Theater improvisation classes and speaking classes as a kid helped build his enjoyment of being in the courtroom, he said.

Wakeland said he was born in Eugene and the family moved to Salem when he was in middle school. His father's work for the Tribe in forestry led to hunting and fishing trips on the reservation, he said, "so I've always kind of been around."

Partridge and Wakeland both encouraged Tribal youth to pursue any interest they have in education and law, noting that the Honors Attorney position can be an important step in pursuing a career.

"I would like all Tribal members to know they can be successful in anything they choose and education is the key to that," Partridge said. "I was the first in my family even to go to college, let alone all the way through law school, so it can happen for anyone."

Wakeland encouraged members with questions about law school or a legal career to call him at 503-879-2344. ■

Clothes Closet open

The Clothes Closet is open from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 to 2 p.m. every Friday on the Tribal campus near the Elders Activity Center at the end of Blacktail Drive. The Clothes Closet accepts clothing, small appliances and pieces of furniture, electronics and household goods that are clean and in good condition. It does not accept books, large TVs or furniture, but there is a community board where people can post those items. For more information or emergency clothes, contact Lori Walker-Hernandez at 559-847-7565. ■

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