

Collins, Breiling vie for circuit court role

By PHIL WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Pendleton attorneys Robert "Rob" Collins and Michael Breiling are vying for a seat on the bench of the local circuit court.

The two are running for Position 1 on the bench of the Sixth Judicial District, which encompasses Umatilla and Morrow counties. The seat is being vacated by Judge Lynn Hampton, who has decided not to seek re-election. Judges Eva Temple and Christopher Brauer are running unopposed for their seats.

Collins

Collins, who has 37 years of practice, said he doesn't think there is anything more important he could do with the last six years of his career. He said the adversarial elements of lawyering are less interesting now than working to find the right outcome under the law. He said the



Rob Collins

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.

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. Early in



Michael Breiling

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. 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.

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.

Breiling

Breiling, 47, filed to run on Oct. 6 2017 according to the state's election website. The term for circuit court judges is six years.

"We're going to need a

new judge," Breiling told the *East Oregonian* at the time. "It is important that the judge be well versed in different areas of the law, and have deep experience in the areas of law the court is most likely to consider."

"I think I'm the best person for the job."

Breiling began his legal career 22 years ago in the Portland area and has been in Pendleton 18 years. He and his wife, Heidi Van Kirk, have their own law firm in Pendleton and have raised a son and daughter.

Breiling is an aggressive defense lawyer but said his legal background covers more. He said he has done "every kind of criminal case, from murder to barking dogs, and every kind of family case you can imagine."

He said most people have one interaction with the justice system, which probably means some kind of crisis brought them to court. The

experience should be as positive as it can be, he said. Those murder and barking dog cases of years before, he recalled, came back-to-back and taught him a valuable lesson.

"Every person who shows up to the court, their case is the most important case there is," Breiling said in 2017. "I think that's something a judge really needs to remember."

Winning would mean leaving the firm of Breiling & Van Kirk and the job he loves, he said, for a new challenge. If he wins, he said, the firm would continue with another lawyer taking over his end of the practice.

Collins and Breiling will have a chance to sway voters at the Boardman Chamber of Commerce forum on Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Port of Morrow Riverfront Center, 2 Marine Drive in Boardman, and a Pendleton Chamber of Commerce candidate forum Thursday at Pendleton High School at 6:30 p.m.

Voters will decide whether to fund OSU Extension Service District

HERMISTON HERALD

While voters have some tough choices between candidates during the May 15 election, they will also have to decide whether to throw their support behind a new taxing district that would provide a steady source of funding for 4-H, agricultural research and education.

Umatilla County and Morrow County voters are each being presented with a separate measure for a district in their own county that would fund support staff and operations for the Oregon State University Extension Service. In each case, the district would add 33 cents per \$1,000 assessed value to homeowners' property taxes. In Umatilla County, the tax would yield about \$1.7 million, and in Morrow, about \$700,000.

The money raised would help fund the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Education Center in Hermiston and other area extension services, including 4-H programs, after-school education programs, Master Gardeners, health fairs, agricultural research and capital improvements. During a recent tour of HAREC that director Phil Hamm gave Rep. Greg Walden and other government officials, Hamm said that while growers in the area are very generous about giving to new buildings and equipment, it is always harder to raise money for day-to-day operations than an exciting new project.

The district in each county would be overseen by that county's board of commissioners. Umatilla County gave \$321,090 this budget year to the Oregon State University Extension Service, and commissioner

Larry Givens told the *East Oregonian* that the county would be able to contribute less if Umatilla County voters passed the district, although the county may still contribute some funds.

The 33 cents per \$1,000 equals about \$49.50 on a \$150,000 home, but some taxpayers in compressed areas like Hermiston will not see an increase to their bill. Instead, the city and other taxing districts would receive less money. Taxpayers can find their own tax code area on their property tax statement, then go to the county website and access the tax rates for everything in their code area if they want to figure out how the new district might affect their own taxes. The tax rates are available at www.co.umatilla.or.us/at/index.html.

Three Republicans lead GOP pack for governor

HERMISTON HERALD

In the race to unseat Oregon's Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat seeking her first full term in the office, three Republicans have risen to the front of the pack.

Registered Republicans will cast a vote in May to decide among 10 candidates who will enter the general election in November, while Democrats will select either Kate Brown or one of two lesser-known challengers.

Knute Buehler, an orthopedic surgeon who was first elected to the Oregon House of Representatives in 2014, has been long considered a potential candidate and has the most campaign funding on the Republican side with a little over \$1.5 million.

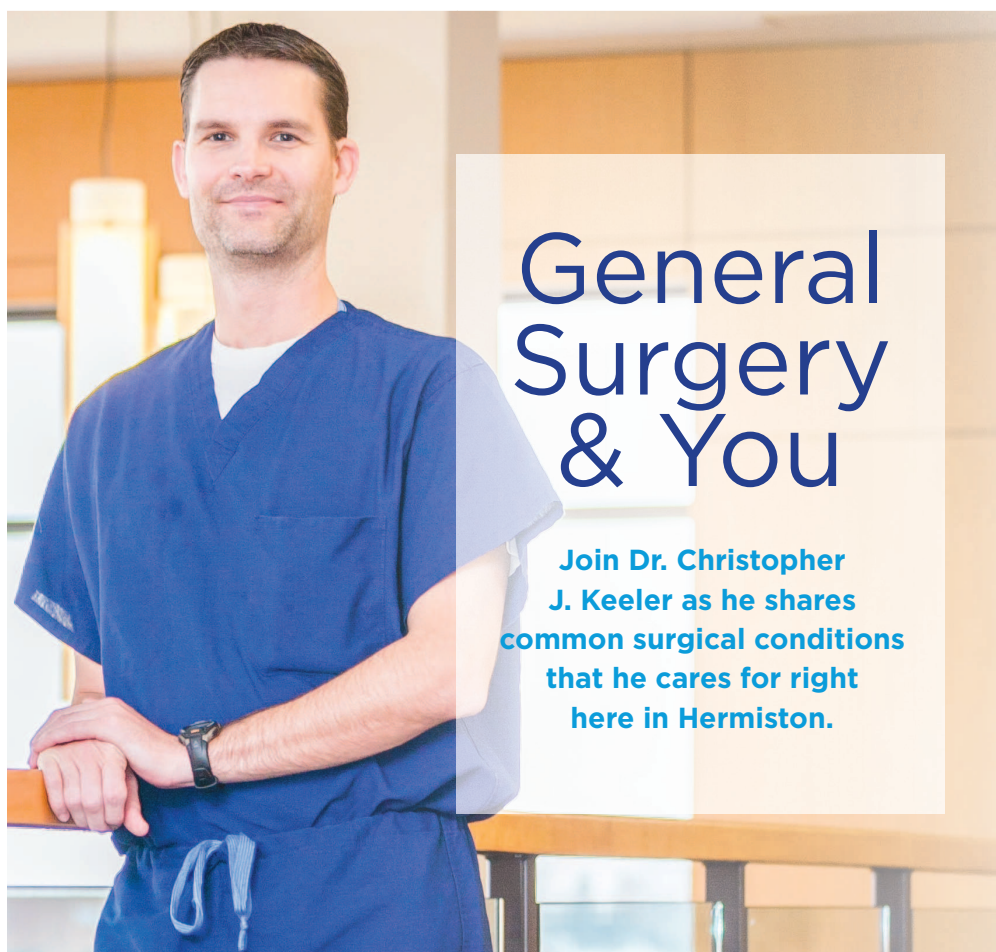
He's raised and spent about \$850,000 this year alone.

Greg Wooldridge, a former commander of the Blue Angels who now lives in the Portland area and trains companies to achieve better performance, has never held political office but served as a delegate to the National Republican Convention.

Sam Carpenter has fashioned a "Make Oregon Great Again" campaign as his ticket to the general election, though he has finished behind both Buehler and Wooldridge in most polling. He is CEO of Centraltel national telephone answering service and is the author of two books on business management. He has twice run for U.S. Senate but has never held public office.

GoodHealth LIVE

WITH CHRISTOPHER J. KEELER, D.O.,
BOARD CERTIFIED GENERAL SURGEON



General Surgery & You

Join Dr. Christopher J. Keeler as he shares common surgical conditions that he cares for right here in Hermiston.

Wednesday, April 25

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Good Shepherd Health Care System
Conference Center 1 and 2
610 NW 11th Street | Hermiston, OR 97838

A Healthy dessert with light refreshments will be provided

Space is Limited. Register today!

Call 541.667.3509

or Register Online at Eventbrite

SPRING PRICE BREAK*

COMMERCIAL TIRE

COOPERTIRES

YOKOHAMA BRIDGESTONE

*ON SELECT TIRES. SEE STORE FOR DETAILS.

Can't Make it to the Event?
Watch Live at www.facebook.com/gshcsnews



GOOD SHEPHERD
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM