

## Pro Bono Spotlight: W. George Senft

By Abra Cooper, Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt  
and YLS Pro Bono Committee member.

Although he has only been practicing in Oregon for about two years, W. George Senft has already made a significant impact on his new community through his work with Legal Aid Services of Oregon's (LASO) Bankruptcy Clinic. Senft, who has his own bankruptcy practice in Portland, relocated here from Los Angeles in 2007. After passing the Oregon bar exam in 2008, he began volunteering with the clinic and has taken on approximately 37 pro bono clients through it.

"I try to accept two cases every month from the clinic and I plan to work with it about 10 months out of every year," says Senft. In addition to his work with the clinic, Senft also accepts pro bono bankruptcy cases from other sources. His

pro bono clients are individuals, filing for bankruptcy under either Chapter 7 or 13.

Senft's pro bono clients have benefited from his significant experience as a bankruptcy attorney, both here and in Los Angeles. Born in Germany, Senft completed the law program at the University of Bayreuth before moving to Los Angeles, where he earned a law degree from the University of La Verne College of Law. He was admitted to the California bar in 2003, and began handling bankruptcy and family law cases. Senft also found the time while practicing in California to give back to the community through pro bono work. He volunteered with Legal Aid, the Domestic Violence Project of the Superior Court of California and received an award



from the Legal Neighborhood Clinic for his involvement in a family law clinic for low income citizens.

Senft "absolutely" plans to continue his pro bono work with the Bankruptcy Clinic. "I am convinced there are a number of people in this community who can neither afford an attorney nor handle a bankruptcy themselves." Senft's commitment to his work with the clinic goes a long way in helping alleviate the needs of those individuals.

## High School Students Connect with the Law

By Christopher Allnatt, Judicial Clerk for the Honorable Jean Kerr Maurer and YLS Futures Committee member.

In early July, 16 ninth and 10th graders visited Judge Adrienne Nelson at the Multnomah County Courthouse and toured the Davis Wright Tremaine law firm. The visits were part of "Ninth Grade Counts," a "Summer Youth Connect" program connecting at-risk high school students with academic support and providing them with career and college experiences.

The visit began with a tour of the courthouse and then to Judge Nelson's courtroom. Shy in their surroundings, the students were quiet until Judge Nelson's warm personality, at one point drawing two distracted girls up front, made them more comfortable. Judge Nelson talked about her responsibilities as a judge, and the conversation eventually shifted to the challenges Judge Nelson personally faced as a teenage girl and as an African-American.

Most of the students were female and came from families where English is a second language. Through their questions the students shared candidly their challenges: overcoming their own stereotypes and resisting pressure from some peers to engage in risky behavior. Judge Nelson let the students know that the challenges teenagers face do not change from generation to generation, and were similar to what she experienced. She concluded her remarks by stating, "No matter what happens, don't give up."

The students then toured the Davis Wright Tremaine law firm and met with an attorney, the firm's librarian and human resources director. When asked, the students remembered the 3,000 law books. But more importantly, the students also remembered the positive role models they encountered and which make the program so successful.



According to "Connected by 25" (see the Web site at the end of this article), the ninth grade transition is a critical time for students at risk of dropping out of school. Numerous elements can conspire to discourage a teenager from reaching for success. "Ninth Grade Counts" works with middle school counselors to identify students who have shown an increased risk of dropping out of school and gives them a summer of weekly interactions with adults in a broad range of career and college sites.

Members of the YLS Futures Committee organized and hosted these events. Bullivant Houser Bailey, Miller Nash and OTLA also hosted tours for different groups of students over the summer.

Over 1,000 students participated this past summer; you and your firm can add to the success of the Summer Youth Connect program. If interested you can learn more by contacting: Reese Lord, Education Strategies Program Coordinator for Mayor Sam Adams, 503.823.4027, reese.lord@portlandoregon.gov.

**For more information:**  
www.portlandonline.com/mayor/index.cfm?c=50300  
www.worksystems.org/YouthOpportunities/BizConnect/tabid/154/Default.aspx  
www.connectedby25.org/



## Campaign for Equal Justice Hosts 5th Annual Party Under the Stars

On Thursday, September 23, the Campaign for Equal Justice (CEJ) hosted its fifth annual Party Under the Stars on the outdoor terrace at Ater Wynne. The party is an informal gathering at which the CEJ Associates Committee reaches out to young lawyers to introduce them to the growing needs of Oregon's Legal Aid Services and the mission of the CEJ. Lawyers in attendance heard from the leaders of the committee and from Ed Johnson. He manages the housing unit at the Oregon Law Center, and he spoke about his work as a legal aid attorney and a case that the law center is currently handling. Food and drinks were sponsored by Beovich Walter & Friend.

The CEJ, whose mission it is to ensure equal access to justice for all Oregonians, is a nonprofit organization comprised of more than 200 lawyers that supports statewide legal aid through fundraising, state and national legislative advocacy, and education and outreach to the legal community. The CEJ operates an annual fund drive in which it raises funds to help support 100 legal aid attorneys in 19 communities throughout the state, including legal aid lawyers in Multnomah County. The purpose of the committee is to promote annual giving by associate attorneys at local law firms to support the CEJ and its mission. In the last several years, associates have increased their contributions to the CEJ by 57%.



### YLS Social Spotlight

On October 7, the YLS Membership Committee and Queen's Bench, the Portland chapter of OWLS, co-sponsored a Drop-In Social at On Deck Sports Bar & Grill in the Pearl District. The weather cooperated and the location was ideal for an after-work social. Attendees enjoyed happy hour and socialized with colleagues outside on the elevated deck. The YLS Membership Committee will continue to sponsor socials throughout the year.