

# Pro Bono Spotlight: Josh Ross

By Ben Cox, Associate at Dr. Aaron DeShaw, Esq., P.C.

Josh is a San Antonio native who attended the University of Texas, served in the Israeli Defense Forces as a paratrooper and worked as a chef's assistant in a Moroccan restaurant in Jerusalem. Josh attended law school at Lewis & Clark and clerked for Judge Rick Haselton of the Oregon Court of Appeals before joining Stoll Berne in 2005.

Josh serves as a volunteer attorney for the Legal Aid Services of Oregon (LASO) Domestic Violence Project, representing victims of domestic violence:

"Typically, clients are seeking to continue a restraining order that is being contested by the alleged abuser. Cases require a number of client meetings to prepare for the contested hearing. The hearings are like mini bench trials with presentation of evidence and examination of witnesses.

"The cases present entirely different sets of facts and legal issues from my regular practice. It's a fun challenge to develop and use different skills than I typically use."

I asked Josh if he had any advice for young attorneys considering pro bono work, but who might feel

a) they don't have the expertise, b) they don't have the support of their employer and/or c) they just don't know how to get started:

"My firm strongly encourages and supports pro bono work: it's part of the firm's core philosophy. I have a few suggestions for new lawyers who may be hesitant to approach firm management about pro bono work: First, do your homework. What is the case/program about? How many hours might the matter take? Will you need staff or other lawyers? Are there anticipated costs and can the client cover those? Is there a possibility to recover fees and costs if you win?

"Second, present the opportunity as 'the right thing to do:' show passion for the issue and explain why it's important to you.

"Third, identify how the project may benefit you and/or the firm. Will it help you get experience working a case start to finish? Will it help you get time in court?

"Fourth, only take on issues you're comfortable with, but don't let the fact that it's a new area of law dissuade you. There are plenty of experienced lawyers willing to act as mentors.



"Finally, taking pro bono matters through an organization like LASO makes it easy. They have a wealth of information for you, can match you to a mentor, and will work with you to find matters that are suitable for your experience level and schedule.

"I really feel that as lawyers we're given an extraordinary amount of power and that, as part of the privilege of practicing law, we are obligated to use that power to help people who are at a disadvantage in the legal system only because they cannot afford to pay someone to help them."

Josh Ross lives in North Portland with his wife and two children. Josh's practice at Stoll Berne focuses on complex business, consumer, and securities litigation.