

VLP ATTORNEY OF THE MONTH

A Lawyer with Math Skills Helping Others Pro Bono

By Peggi Cornelius, CVA



Scott W. Hyder

Attorney Scott W. Hyder believes the value and satisfaction in practicing law comes with helping people in need. Acting on his belief, Hyder joined the Volunteer Lawyers Program

shortly after his graduation from the school of law at Arizona State University in 1996.

When he learned of his recent recognition as VLP's "Attorney of the Month," Hyder said, "I have met so many amazing lawyers, judges and other volunteers that regularly participate in the Volunteer Lawyers Program. It keeps me grounded. And I learn so much, not just about practicing law, but

about how to deal with different types of people with varying personalities."

A third-generation Arizona native, Hyder has followed in the professional footsteps of elder members of his family. "My father and uncle are practicing lawyers, and my grandfather was a Superior Court judge," he said. "Their dinner table stories of trials and tribulations influenced me, and were incredibly entertaining."

In his own law practice, Hyder has developed expertise in bankruptcy, real estate, foreclosure, estate planning, and business law. His current pro bono work through the VLP involves advising pro se litigants in the Bankruptcy Court. Hyder serves as a friend of the court during reaffirmation hearings to inform debtors of the pros and cons of reaffirming certain debts, such as vehicle loans. In addition to his work in reaffirmation hearings, Hyder also serves as a volunteer in the court's Self Service Center, providing advice to those considering whether or not to peti-

tion for bankruptcy.

Staff member and client advocate Danae Brownell notes that VLP's coordination of volunteer lawyers and law students at the reaffirmation hearings is a relatively new endeavor that relies on experienced bankruptcy attorneys. "It provides an important service to pro se litigants and simultaneously creates a learning environment for students and recent graduates from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law and the Phoenix School of Law. Students who have had an opportunity to work with Mr. Hyder have commented positively on his skills as a mentor."

"As an undergraduate, I majored in mathematics and almost became a teacher before deciding to attend law school", said Hyder. "Pro se litigants, law students and new attorneys often feel nervous about appearing in front of a judge or trustee. If I can help calm nerves and alleviate fears, especially in letting litigants know their problems have solutions, that's my goal."

Hyder acknowledges it isn't always possible to help everyone in need, or to solve some problems. When debts that cannot be discharged in bankruptcy represent unreasonable burdens for low-income people, he says his goal becomes to mitigate the harm as much as possible. "I enjoy helping my business clients with their legal needs, but when you are helping people, it isn't always about the bottom line. It is about using your expertise to support the little guy in exercising his rights under the law, and in standing up for himself." ■

Scott W. Hyder graduated from the University of Arizona with a B.A. in 1992, and then with a J.D. in 1996 from the Sandra Day O'Connor School of Law at ASU. He was admitted to the State Bar of Arizona in 1996. He practices law in Real Estate, Bankruptcy, Commercial Transactions and Estate Planning. For more information, please visit his website at www.scotthyderlaw.com.