

## Mentor as...a Continuum

*By Erik Ideta, Associate*

When I began as an associate with Ross, Dixon & Bell (now Troutman Sanders), Malte Farnaes was assigned to be my associate mentor. Malte had been with the firm for about seven years, and was there for another year following our merger with Troutman Sanders in 2009. He has since left the firm and has started his own practice in Solana Beach, and is doing very well. Malte was a great mentor to me my first year, and continues to be someone I look to for guidance in the practice of law.

Earlier this year, I was heading up to Orange County to defend my first deposition. While I had a general understanding as to what objections I could make and how to defend a deposition, I wanted to make sure that I was not “missing something”. At about 7:30 a.m. on my drive up to the OC, I decided to call Malte. He answered his cell phone and I told him I was heading up to defend my first deposition and needed some guidance. He was still at home getting ready to leave for his office, but he was more than happy to help and walked me through the rules for objecting and the general process and format of a deposition. The call lasted only about five minutes, but it really eased my mind going in. Ultimately, the deposition went fine.

This was a significant mentoring experience for me, not so much because of what I learned from Malte during the call, but because of the role Malte played in my growth and advancement in the practice of law. Malte was available for me—even at 7:30 in the morning—and was happy to assist—even though we no longer worked together. Malte unselfishly gave up his time and imparted his experience, with no expectation of anything in return. To me, Malte embodies what it means to be mentor.