

BACKGROUND FOR CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE

We have established a questionnaire/interview process in which we will invite candidates to participate as a way to gather both objective and subjective information. This information will be synthesized and used in the selection of the candidates we choose to endorse. As a multi-media outlet with a primary focus on the African-American community, we've established criterion by which we will select the candidates for endorsement. The process of setting the criterion began with a critical analysis of the current state of African Americans in Memphis.

A brief statistical and empirical journey revealed the following:

- According to the 2000 Census, Memphis had the 8th largest African-American population percentage-wise at 61.9 percent, representing 402,367 people.
- According to the 1997 Census data, there were 10,931 black-owned businesses in Memphis and of that number only 1,335 had paid employees. Among those 1,335 businesses, average annual revenues were \$357,000 in contrast to average annual sales for white-owned firms (with employees) of \$4,818,000. Among the total number of black-owned firms, average revenues were only \$64,000 per year. More importantly, the total amount of revenues attributed to black-owned business was less than one-tenth of one percent of all revenues generated by all businesses in the Memphis-MSA. (That's \$705,000,000/\$90,391,440,000.)
- According to the U.S Department of Labor unemployment figures for 2009, the percentage for unemployment among African-American men in Tennessee was 20.2 percent compared with 11.1 percent for white men and 17.1 percent for Hispanic men. In some areas of Memphis it was estimated that the rate was 50 percent or more and overall the rate was approximately 30 percent.
- According to www.city-data.com, there is nearly a 30 percent poverty rate in the African-American community of Memphis, representing over 132,000 residents. There are neighborhoods where over 90 percent of the residents live at or below the nationally defined poverty rate. According to city-data statistics, there are fewer than 20,000 white residents living at or below the poverty rate and negligible numbers of other represented residents of other races.
- According to statistics released last year by Memphis City Schools, only 66.9 percent of the students are graduating, indicating a 33 percent dropout rate in a district that is over 90 percent African American. According to a 2008 report by the Schott Foundation for Public Education, Memphis had the nation's highest gap in graduation rates between black males and white males, standing at 30 percent in 2005/2006.
- Significant disparities also exist in imprisonment rates, health care, crime and violence and more importantly in the availability of resources and opportunities that would open

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the door for these circumstances to begin to dynamically or even moderately shift towards more positive trends.

From our point of view candidates must intrinsically understand these dynamics and how they impact the welfare of our entire city. We will endorse candidates- regardless of race or party affiliation- that represent the best vision, that can present solution-oriented plans of action, and exhibit the best ability to execute and deliver on their plans to address the issues and disparities facing the citizens of Memphis.

We understand that the issues that exist in Memphis and Shelby County are broad and complex. We know that each candidate must serve and govern in the interest of all voters. However, also our contention that understanding the severity and significance of the issues confronting black Memphis – and working to address those issues – will not only serve to uplift the African-American population of Memphis, but in doing so will improve the quality of life for all Memphians, hopefully allowing us to ultimately and truly be “One Memphis.”

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CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE

Vision and Plans

What is your vision for Memphis?

As a judicial candidate, I offer a broad and balanced legal career over a period of twenty-seven (27) years. I have represented the black folk and white folk, poor and rich, plaintiff and defendant, republican and democrat, governments and churches, corporations and individuals. My practice has ranged from the area of voting rights cases to church rights issues in politics, elderly law to juvenile law, divorce cases to support and custody matters, consumer protection cases to employment relations cases, just to name a few.

My vision is to conduct my courtroom in a manner which allows the litigants, lawyers and their clients, to earnestly seek justice. They will know they have my attention and a desire to do What's Right With Their case. Moreover, it is my desire to help remove barriers to equal justice by encouraging lawyers to take on more pro bono cases. Finally, it is my vision that I would be a stable voice on the bench as our society begins to respond and grapple with the scarcity of resources and the limitations imposed by a damaged economy.

What is your approach, platform or plan of action for the office that you are seeking? What do you want to ACCOMPLISH while in office and what problems must be addressed in order to achieve those goals and objectives?

See my response above.

How do you plan to address the challenges and disparities listed in the background section of this questionnaire through the office you desire to hold?

See my response above. Additionally, I believe education goes a long way to facing challenges and reducing disparities. The same holds true in the legal arena. Provided funding is available, I believe that community seminars should be held which discuss the timing and rising cost of litigation as compared to the timing and lower cost of alternative dispute resolutions.

Qualifications and Experience

Why are you running for elected office?

I am a servant at heart. I have spent many years helping people who have problems. I have fought for people, often for free, who are unable to fight for themselves. Many people ask that I be the decision maker in their disputes, particularly between church people who shun courts. I now want to be in a position where more of my friends and neighbors of Memphis and Shelby County can take advantage of my experience and willingness to serve.

As the Children's Pastor at Oak Grove M.B. Church, I watch the early disputes of children mirror the later disputes of grown ups. It is my desire to assist adults in problem resolution just like I am able to do with the children. My heart is turned to helping solve people's disputes.

What makes you qualified for holding the office you are seeking? What previous experience lends itself to success in the office?

See my response above. To be sure, qualification as a judge requires the holding of a valid license, without more. I have twenty-seven (27) years of experience in a wide range of legal matters covering the gambit of the type of cases handled by a circuit court judge. I have served as a substitute judge from time to time. I have practiced in all of the courts of Tennessee, both state and federal.

Who has endorsed or expressed public support for your candidacy?

Ability to Implement Initiatives

A clear vision and a plan for the future are important, but it means nothing if a candidate does not have the ability to get anything accomplished.

How would you address the issues identified as most critical for the city/county from the seat you are seeking?

As a judicial candidate, it is not appropriate to argue the city and county politics. However, I believe education will help define the issues and help to bring about solutions.

What opportunities do you see in working with other elected officials and or with other governmental bodies in the metro area and how do you define your role in government and the overall role of government?

Education! I see an opportunity, albeit limited, to work with other elected officials and governmental bodies in the education of our citizenry relating to race, and how truly little it matters in resolving the issues that effect all of us. Education! There are many opportunities to raise the awareness of our citizens and galvanize them to be more civically responsive and responsible. Education!

How would you go about building consensus or support to accomplish goals or in the case of a judgeship or similar position how do you go about making your rulings/decisions?

Judges are supposed to make decisions based upon existing law or legal precedent. That is the easy part. The difficult part is taking the time to discern the real facts and the real controversy between the parties. Therefore, judges should be careful to listen

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attentively to the litigants and their lawyers. Once the true facts are on the table and the objectives of each party are known, it is generally easy to reach a decision. The facts of the case are analyzed with the applicable law in the area under consideration. Then the judge decides the case.

Would you demonstrate the integrity and fortitude to stand on principle to accomplish an important objective despite opposition or lack of popularity for an idea? Give an example. Provide past examples of experiences you had where that was the case?

As a teenager, I helped to integrate a segregated waiting room in a physician's office. Also, as a college student, I organized a counter-march to the Klansmen.

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