

## 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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/\$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](http://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 largely 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.

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- 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 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 ó and working to address those issues ó 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 òOne Memphis.ö

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## CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE

### **Vision and Plans**

*What is your vision for Memphis?*

*I envision Memphis as a metropolitan with quality education for our youth to enhance their career and job skills. Quality education will attract businesses seeking to relocate or expand. High quality jobs will reduce our poverty rate of 25% in Memphis. People gainfully employed will make our city safer. Memphians also have to continue to work hard at create a city void of racial tension.*

*What is your platform or plan of action for the office that your 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?*

*I'm seeking the office of Circuit Court Clerk. This is an office of record. I want this office to be accessible to the people of Shelby County. When elected people will be able to file their complaints online for divorces, garnishments, auto accidents, name changes and other litigation. I plan to rid this office of cronyism. The customer will be treated and served promptly and politely.*

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*How do you plan to address the issues listed above through the office you desire to hold?  
The above actions will be implemented within 30 days of taking office.*

## **Qualifications and Experience**

*Why are you running for elected office?  
There is a need in Shelby County for true public servants. A public servant that will not be swayed by politics, but have an interest in serving people.*

*What makes the candidate qualified for holding an office? What previous experience lends itself to success in the office?*

I received a B.S degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The Circuit Court Clerk is an administrator for the office. I have various years of managerial experience. I was a store manager for Chism Trail grocery, managing over 30 people. I was a manager for the Memphis Housing Authority for 10 years. During my tenure with MHA, I managed developments such as Lauderdale Courts and Walter Simmons. I over saw the budgets and supervised the maintenance of these developments. My career as an officer in the Tennessee Army National Guard placed me in various roles as a manager. I was a commander that over saw 100 people and was responsible for millions of dollars worth of equipment as a Captain. As a Major, I was responsible for accountability and logistical support for our customers.

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*Who has endorsed or express support for your candidacy? The Afro Police Association*



### **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 tackle the issues identified as critical for the city/county from the seat you are seeking?*

As the circuit court clerk, I will have the ability and authority to create policy and procedures in that office.

*What opportunities do you see in working with other cities and counties in the metro area and how do you define your role in government and the overall role of government?*

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I see the opportunity to serve the people of Shelby County. The overall role of government is to provide services for its citizens.



*How would you go about building consensus or support to accomplish goals?*

I have been active in the community most of my adult life. I am active in the Whitehaven Kiwanis Club and NAACP. As a Memphis City Schools connect mentor, I help young people choose the right direction. I have been a member of the Shelby County Democratic Executive Committee. I have worked in various campaigns to elect quality candidates, the last was for Mayor AC Wharton. During this time I have built relationships with a number of leaders. I will continue to network in Shelby County to build consensus support.

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*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?*

*Yes, As a member of the Shelby County Executive Committee several years ago, I pressured to vote for the recommendation of consolidating city and county government. I did not waver in my opposition to this proposal. Again during my term on the committee, I was pressured to oppose primary elections in Shelby County. I voted in favor of primary elections in Shelby County, which was in the best interest of the people.*