

Review of Star Articles about Local Candidates –Evaluation by Robert A. Williams

Election Day 2016 is this coming Tuesday, November 8, 2016 and the Star has published just a few “low to no” information articles regarding local candidates. This is what we have to say.

First, the Star asks three very simple questions to each candidate and writes down what they say without any backup questions.

1. Briefly describe your background as it relates to the field you are running in.
2. Why are you pursuing this office?
3. Briefly describe your top priority as an elected official.

For the most part, answers to these questions are “pie in the sky” and mean nothing in evaluating an incumbent’s service in office or a challenger’s qualifications.

However, Debi Mull Harrill, Democrat-running for Register of Deeds, hit a home run when she said (in part) that her top priority was “continuously improving customer service and being a good steward of taxpayer funds.” No other candidate for any office said a word about being a good steward of taxpayer funds. We should make Debi Harrill the Queen of Cleveland County for having the good sense of looking after the best interests of those who pay the bills. Folks, That’s you and me!!!

Second best place (and close to tied to first place) was District Court Judge candidate Justin Brackett. Justin says he wants “to return fairness to our courtrooms. Each and every person deserves to be treated equally and with respect when they come before the court. Judges must make decisions based

solely on the law and the facts presented, and I will do just that." Justin also says "It is time that we get tough on the career criminals in our community. As your judge, I pledge that I will support our local law enforcement and that when career criminals are found guilty, I will impose stiff punishments that meet the crimes committed." Hurray for Justin Brackett For District Court Judge.

The obvious last place finisher in the Star reports just happens to be Justin Brackett's opponent, Judge Meredith Shuford. Shuford came in last in the Star articles probably because the Star did such a poor job of not editing out the most egregious of Shuford's lies. Judge Shuford is known around the Courthouse as a "man-hater" because she almost always gives the man in a domestic case the shaft. Shuford has been known to throw a man in jail for contempt, which allowed his estranged wife to clean out the house and the checkbook. Criminals who have plead guilty are given such slack sentences by Judge Shuford that they choose to serve time in jail instead of paying restitution for their crimes. There is too much to mention, but my recommendation here is to vote for Justin Brackett and send Judge Meredith Shuford back to Lincoln County.

Probably the least instructive Star Report was regarding the County Commissioners race. We recommend single-shot voting for Willie B. McIntosh for that office simply because the incumbent commissioners basically gave away the Cleveland County Healthcare Facilities in a secret deal for pennies on the dollar. And what money they did get out of the deal, they spent themselves-the citizens of Cleveland County got nothing.

Basically, the Star has been so slack in providing facts about most candidates that it is almost impossible to make informed decisions on what candidate to vote for. And it's not necessarily what the Star says, it is what they don't say or do. For instance:

What the Star does not do is a major appointment. Let's just make a short list: The Star:

1. Does NOT research any voting records of any of the incumbents.
2. Does NOT fact check anything a candidate says.
3. Does NOT ask anything about the major issues that affect the citizens of Cleveland County.

So, Folks, if you want to be an informed voter, you had better go somewhere else. We recommend you go to www.citizensforgoodgovernment.org and look at our article entitled "Sample Ballot" and "2016 Voter's Guide" for more information and our recommendations for the local candidates as well as all other candidates that will be on your Cleveland County ballot.

I will see you at the Polls on November 8th. Be sure to bring a carload with you to vote in this election that will affect you for the rest of your life.