

# **Commissioner Candidate has Felony Conviction!! Felony Conviction Record Missing from Courthouse files!!! Updates and Report by Robert A. Williams**

My previous article published February 24, 2018 regarding Commissioner candidates was written before the close of the candidate filing period. There have been some changes and updates since that original report. Candidate filings are over now and this updated article tells it all.

My original article included a report of criminal convictions of the commissioner candidates. My information came from "official" records at the Cleveland County Courthouse. In a review of the candidates records filed at the Board of Elections I discovered an unsettling disclosure of a felony conviction for possession of marijuana in 1978 in the records filed by Commissioner candidate Caroline Dedmon. That disclosure is attached at the end of this article. The unsettling part of this is why this record was not in the files at the Courthouse although the felony charge was made in Cleveland County, Ms. Dedmon was found guilty in Cleveland County in 1978, her citizenship rights were taken away and then restored two years later (1980). And none of this was available at the Cleveland County Courthouse.

I smell a rat with the Courthouse records, even though all this felony stuff took place 40 years ago. And Ms. Dedmon's conviction for DWI 20 years ago was in fact available at the Courthouse although it was a misdemeanor. Also note that since

I had been tipped off about the possibility of this felony conviction and searched the computer records myself. And not finding them, I asked a Courthouse employee to help find any such felony conviction of Candidate Caroline Dedmon and was specifically told that no such record existed at the Courthouse.

My recollection is that Mrs. Ruth Dedmon, a relative by marriage to Candidate Caroline Dedmon, was the High Clerk of Court for Cleveland County in 1978 and was responsible for maintaining such records. Since simple arithmetic indicates the Present Clerk of Court, Mitzi Johnson (running for re-election unopposed this year). is not old enough to have been involved in any of this, nobody should even think about making any connection with Ms. Johnson and these missing records at the Courthouse.

Also, Democrat Candidate Todd McIntosh switched his filing from running for the two year vacancy to running for a four year term. This means Candidates Eddie Holbrook, Chris Gash and Todd McIntosh are running for the two open four year commissioner's offices. A Democrat Primary will be required.

This also means that Democrat Candidate Caroline Dedmon will not face a Democrat Primary Election and she, as well as Republican Candidate Ronnie Whetstine will face off in the November to fill the unexpired term of Commissioner Ronnie Hawkins.

Also, Republican Candidate Deb Hardin has filed to run for one of the four year term Commissioner's offices alongside with Republican Candidate Doug Bridges . Therefore, there will be no Republican Primary Election for the two four-year Commissioner offices.

So, in terms of the Commissioner's races, the two four year term offices will go straight to the November General Election. As stated above the three Democrat Candidates for

these two four-year terms will face a Democrat Primary Election May 8, 2018. Incumbent white Democrat Eddie Holbrook will face two young black candidates Chris Gash and Todd McIntosh, who have never sought political office. With the nationwide political climate surrounding these 2018 elections and with blacks voters holding about 40% of the registered Democrat voters in Cleveland County, Incumbent Eddie Holbrook may very well be in for a career ending race for his elected office. Especially when you factor in Holbrook's voting record to raise taxes, secretly sell the Hospital system for a low price and spend all the proceeds, so many tax incentive giveaways and various other scandals. Then you have Caroline Dedmon's gay rights agenda folks getting fired up on top of the historical experience of the 2017 School Board Election which put two black candidates winning the election out of the four Democrat Candidates. With a continued increase of white voters staying home on Election Day, this particular commissioner's election will be hard to predict.

The commissioner's General Election race between Democrat Candidate Caroline Dedmon and Republican Candidate Ronnie Whetstine is also hard to call. Although Democrat Candidate Caroline Dedmon has the worst criminal record of all the Commissioner candidates, they happened a long time ago. Forty years ago on a marijuana charge in 1978 will be disregarded by many as some states have legalized the sale and use of marijuana. Another plus for Dedmon is she voluntarily provided this felony conviction information when the Courthouse records had been expunged in some way or another. Perhaps Democrat Candidate Caroline Dedmon will provide other mitigating circumstances regarding this felony conviction. Right now I have unconfirmed and maybe unconfirmable verbal information that the actual criminal charge included growing marijuana and that Ms. Dedmon, a teacher in Cleveland County Schools at the time (many years before school merger), was fired from the school system and banned from school property because of those charges. Irregardless of those felony charges, it appears Ms.

Dedmon has paid her debt to society and since 1980 has all of her rights as a US Citizen restored to her in accordance with the law. Thus making her a legally qualified candidate for the County Commissioner's seat she is running for.

On the other hand, Candidate Dedmon's opponent for the two year term Commissioner's office, Ronnie Whetstine who has never faced an election by the people, was appointed by 20 or so on the Republican Party Executive Board to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Commissioner Ronnie Hawkins until such time that the remaining time in the vacancy can be filled by an election. This has allowed Commissioner Whetstine to gather about a year's worth of experience as a Cleveland County Commissioner. The downside of this is that Mr. Whetstine had to ensure certain things to the Republican Party Executive Board as well as the County Commissioners who would approve the appointment instead of having a mandate from the citizens of Cleveland County. As I recall, Commissioner Whetstine has voted with the commissioners who approved his appointment 100% of the time since he was sworn in as an appointed Commissioner. In this respect we do not know if elected Commissioner Whetstine will represent the best interests of the citizens of Cleveland County or continue going along with the other commissioners on everything that comes down the pike. It would be safe to assume that Mr. Whetstine will continue on his present path of taking his lead from the other Commissioners. And, already in a number of instances, such a path has violated the wishes of the citizens of Cleveland County. The best example of that being the raising of the County Fire Tax by 75% just months after the vast majority of citizens voted against such a tax increase. Another example is Whetstine's going along with the "shady" way the office of Cleveland County Coroner was done. Just because the Coroner's wife had made a post on Commissioner Jason Falls' wife's Facebook page regarding a waste of taxpayer dollars when all the Commissioners (including Whetstine), their spouses and other County employees took a boondoggle trip to Washington DC

at taxpayer expense. It may very well end up that Mr. Whetstine will come to regret accepting his appointment to Commissioner with so many strings attached.

Also, very recently appointed Commissioner Doug Bridges also had similar strings (but not so long) attached with his appointment. It may very well end up that Commissioner Bridges may also regret accepting his appointment with so many strings attached. Instead of waiting for these 2018 Elections. And running as his own man to serve the citizens and not the 14 on the Republican Party Executive Board and other four Commissioners that appointed him.

Folks, this article about the Commissioner's election race is long enough. I will report on the other races for political office in a separate article. Stay Tuned and don't forget to go vote on Election day.

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