

# **Sheriff's Race Heats Up!!! Unaffiliated Candidate Files on Petition!! Report by Robert A. Williams**

**Shelby-** Clyde Stephen Ledbetter has filed today for the Office of Cleveland County Sheriff. Mr. Ledbetter filed using the Petition Process, the only way an unaffiliated candidate is allowed to run for office in North Carolina. Mr. Ledbetter's thousands of signatures on his petition have been reviewed by the Cleveland County Board of Elections and have been confirmed that the required 4% of "Verified" Registered voters had been obtained. This means Mr. Ledbetter's name will appear on the General Election Ballot for the November 6th General Election for Sheriff along with Incumbent Sheriff Candidate Alan Norman.

As I have previously stated, I encourage Unaffiliated Registered voters to run for office. I encourage all Registered voters to consider signing petitions for any person considering running for elected office as present law makes it difficult for anybody but registered Republicans or Registered Democrats to run for office. Just because you are not sure you will vote for the person whose petition you sign is no reason not to sign his or her petition.

The fact is the Republican and Democrat Parties both agree on one thing To make it hard for anybody else to run for office. That is why the laws are set up the way they are. But registered voters can make it easier for unaffiliated voters to foil these frivolous and discriminatory laws by readily signing a candidates petition. If anybody looks closely, they will find my name and signature on Mr. Ledbetter's petition. I would even have signed School Board Candidate Kathy Falls'

petition for last year's School Board Election for the same reason; although I would never be caught dead actually voting for her. I do however support any and every persons right to run for elected office.

As far as Mr. Ledbetter's platform and position on issues, I will have to research that. I have never met Clyde Ledbetter but have been told that he is retired from the State Highway Department as a District Engineer. Since I am an Engineer myself, I have to assume Mr. Ledbetter is well schooled in the "Continuous Improvement Program." Not like the Continuous Improvement Program the Cleveland County Schools and others only claim to have, but a real program that recognizes and understands that problem identification and problem solving is the ONLY way to actually make improvements to whatever business that you re in. And that just blowing your own horn and patting people on the back never works, never improves anything.

Note that I am not saying that Sheriff Norman does not solve and fix problems. He has. Enduring the Dan Crawford and Raymond Hamrick Sheriff's years, getting fired by Hamrick and coming back to win election to Sheriff, and then leading the department out of chaos speaks well for Sheriff Norman. But answering to the people and challengers who think they can do a better job keeps elected officials on their toes. And that is a good thing for Sheriff Alan Norman too.

I would add my recommendation to Sheriff Norman that he resign from the Cleveland Community College Board of Trustees now that a new President has been selected and enough of the scandals are on the way to resolution by that new President. That Board position has taken too much of Sheriff Norman's time and effort. Now is the time to concentrate on the Sheriff's Department. Catching crooks, drug dealers and thieves. And maybe developing a "white collar" crime division to ferret out those that steal our tax dollars by using County P-Cards for personal use, etc. Those who fraudulently obtain

and sell their Foodstamps for drugs, etc. There is still much to do to better protect the citizens of Cleveland County.

Well folks, now you know there will be a contested race for Sheriff of Cleveland County. All in all we are probably much better for it. I look forward to forums and discussions regarding this political race. And will make my usual reports and recommendations. To both the people as well as the candidates. I am known to do that.

PS: Anybody wanting to run as a write-in candidate for any county wide office will have to have 100 signatures of verified Cleveland County Registered voters on a petition filed 90 days before the General Election On November 6th. If we don't like how the Primary Elections turn out, or have just dawdled; there is still a chance to make changes.