

Write-In Commissioner Candidate Willie Green Tells it Like it IS in Response to Issues!!! Identifies Problems, Offers Solutions!!! A Brand New and Welcome Style in Cleveland County Politics!! Report by Robert A. Williams

Editor's Note: I make it a standard practice to send advanced copies of my political articles to everyone mentioned directly or indirectly in each article. Since it is Election time, I also send advanced copies of my articles to every candidate for every office that I mention or discuss in my articles. For instance, if my article mentions the Cleveland County Commissioners, I send advanced copies to every incumbent Commissioner, every challenging commissioner candidate and usually the County Manager and Assistant County Manager. Often to the County Attorney too. I include with my advanced copy a statement asking if there are any comments or questions and, if so, Please reply to this email. Write-In Commissioner Candidate Willie Green, in regard to several articles and in particular to the article published September 16, 2018 titled "The Day of the Suits" took me up on my offer to provide a response. It is noted below.

However, Commissioner Candidate Willie Greens response was so compelling, I am making his response into a full fledged article and also invite, again, all the other Commissioners

and Commissioner Candidates to also provide their responses and comments too.

Also as the internet has provided an opportunity for unpresided political discussion on the issues, I intend to expand this discussion into a full fledged web based debate between citizens, their elected representatives as well as challenging candidates. Since most Political Debate formats are conducted with a moderator who asks the candidates questions with 60 to 90 seconds to respond, this new method should prove very informative for the citizens and prevent the incumbents and challengers from just regurgitating their talking points, leaving citizens mostly in the dark on where the candidates really stand on the issue.

Now, as you go through Write-In Commissioner Candidate's response below, note that Mr. Green starts out noting state laws and other facts for his basis of discussion and then cuts loose with bluntly identifying problems and offering logical solutions. You have to read it all closely to get the maximum understanding of what Mr. Green is saying and realizing that valid discussion points and solutions have been provided. Also note that Mr. Green's proposal to add opportunities for scholarships to deserving High School is not the "Free Education" proposed by the Democrat-Socialists at the national level where students can go to college for life and never work-all at taxpayer expense. Mr. Green is talking about a program he offered the Commissioners years ago to allow funding be raised in a public-private partnership to send deserving students to college. The Cleveland County Commissioners, including Eddie Holbrook said NO! only to have Gaston County implement the very same thing that Mr. Green proposed several years before. No wonder Gaston College already has an Advanced Manufacturing Training Facility and Cleveland County does not.

Now, for Mr. Willie Green's unedited or censored response:

Robert,

In response to your September 16th article and previous articles relating to the appointments of the Cleveland Community College Board of Trustee being stripped from the CCS Board of Education. I wanted to give you and your readers some insight of the role a person holds as a Government Relations person for a company or an organization, then offer a solution to resolve the CCC Board of Trustee appointment mishap, and finally offer the readers another option as County Commissioner to move the county in a more positive and beneficial direction.

Since 2001 and after my playing days in the NFL, I have served in career positions relating to Government Affairs. In my last position with the financial services industry. I became the first African-American Vice President of External Affairs and Government Relations in the company's 60-years of existence, prior to me stepping down and after serving in government related positions over a 15-year period, to pursue my own business interest in Cleveland County. As VP of Government Relations, my role and responsibility consisted of (a) attending all company, state/federal association board meetings, (b) monitoring all local/state/federal legislation affecting the financial services industry, and (c) working with both the consumer advocates groups, the minority organizations and the industry to not only pass favorable win-win-win legislation, but to also hold the industry accountable for making sure they are re-investing in the communities that they are serving. This should be the same job description and responsibilities that Eddie Holbrook would have as Director of Government Relations at Cleveland Community College.

In January 2017, HB DRH30012-MK-26: "AN ACT TO MODIFY THE APPOINTMENT METHOD OF THE STANLY COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES" was filed in the NC General Assembly. This Bill would take the four appointments of Community College Board of Trustees from the Governor and give two appointments to the Speaker of the House and two appointments to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. The Bill name was later changed in late January 2017 to: "AN ACT TO MODIFY THE APPOINTMENT METHOD OF

THE STANLY COMMUNITY "CERTAIN COMMUNITY" COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES". This opened the door for Amendment No. A1: "SECTION 2. (c) This section applies only to Cleveland Community College.... The Amendment passed the House 80-37 on February 1, 2017, which lead to the final passing of HB12 in June 2018, 18-months after first filing of the Bill. How does the passage of HB12 affects Cleveland County specifically?

In the Shelby Star July 22, 2018 article "Who Should Choose?", the Star points out "In years past, the Cleveland County Board of Education, Cleveland County commissioners and the governor each appointed four members. Now, these appointments fall solely in the hands of the county commissioners and state legislators." According to the article, County Commissioner Chairman Eddie Holbrook, who is also the Director of Government Relations for the Cleveland Community College said, "no one on the county commission board advocated for the change." So what Commissioner Holbrook is saying is, the NC General Assembly gave the Commissioners a gift by reallocating the four additional appointments, thus given the Commissioners a total of eight appointments to the CCC Trustee Board and not one Commissioner, including Chairman Holbrook asked for the four additional appointments? If so, then why have not one of the Commissioner expressed their objections to the public? Sherarra Miller, the Chairwoman of the Cleveland County Board of Education did issue a comment to The Star, by saying "We have always appointed a trustee that we felt had the best interest of our students and the college's students in mind... we are disappointed the change has occurred..."

I recall having a meeting several years ago with the President/CEO of the company, where I was the VP of Government Relations, about my interest in running for public office. My boss at the time, gave me one of two options, work in government affairs in the private sector or work for the people as a public official. He believed, and I agreed that it would be a conflict of interest and it would be impossible for me to work on legislation in other states and fully serve the people who elected me to be at all meetings as an elected

official, if your job requires extensive travel. Because it was virtually impossible for Director of Government Relations Holbrook and/or Commissioner Holbrook to be in Raleigh lobbying against HB12 and campaigning at home to win in the primary elections. We now see the results of an unfair piece of legislation that now monopolizes our local government and removes appointment decisions from one of our local public agencies.

To put this in perspective, the Cleveland County School System is CCC's best client, over 30% of the current enrollment at CCC, are students participating in the "Dual Enrollment" program where students who are currently in high school are also taking college classes at CCC. And a very large percentage of students attending CCC after graduating high school, are products of the Cleveland County School system. The simple solution is for the County Commissioners to pass a resolution given CCS Board of Education the ability to recommend and place four of the Commissioner's now eight appointments to the CCC Board of Trustee. This would save time and money, from trying to get the General Assembly to reverse their vote on HB12 and it would give Chairman Holbrook more time to campaign and take credit for his innovative solution on a resolution before the November elections.

Under this current leadership of Chairman Holbrook, our county population is on the decline, millions of tax payers dollars are being spent without any oversight or fairness in the process on projects that have not yielded the county a return on its' investment, our kids are leaving and not coming back, we have no growth in new residence, we have no educated workforce programs that has, so far, bore us new industries and we continue to neglect our students who work hard to graduate from high school and not be rewarded with the ability to go to college, without occurring massive college debt. We need new leaders, with new ideas, new energy and a new direction to change the health and well-being of ALL (and not just a few) of the hard-working people in our county who deserves some assistance to better their lives and their

children's future.

The definition of insanity is doing the exact same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. We keep electing officials like Commissioner Holbrook, hoping he would change and start looking out for the best interest of the people in this county, and yet we continue to get the same results of him looking out for his family and friends' best interest and not the people of the county. I have been told by two of our minority leaders, who oppose me running for County Commissioner against Commissioner Holbrook, that Commissioner Holbrook has done great things for the minority community and I have also heard Commissioner Holbrook use the same talking point. My response has been "name one thing he has done for the minority community or the people in the upper part of the county, I'll wait?" I am still waiting on a response to all these great things he (says he) has done to empower those communities since becoming a County Commissioner.

If I am elected as your next County Commissioner, one of my first proposals from day one is to introduce and push for the passage of a resolution to help fund all students who graduate from our public schools, private school or home-school, a tuition-free and/or reduction in tuition resolution. This scholarship programs, one that I introduced in 2013, will also start addressing the educated workforce issues, incentives for industries to relocate to Cleveland County, the encouragement of our kids and family members coming back because new job opportunities and promoting more small businesses to open shop in Cleveland County.

Prior to the passage of the tuition-free resolution, I will convene a scholarship advisory committee, that will consist of each of the high schools elected president and vice presidents of the student-body, a member(s) of the CCS Board of Education and several other key business and community stakeholders to gather additional data, get their input and ideas in the creation of a successful and sustainable program. Once we reach an agreement of how the program will work, I will work with the other Commissioners to pass a funding resolution that

will start funding for tuition assistance, starting with the 2019 graduating class. Our students and their parents need our support and I will do everything I can to provide them with the resources and infrastructure they need to send our kids to college. This is just one advisory committee concept I will use so that I can get the community's input on how to best address issues related to their respective professions, industries and in their own communities. Hopefully your write-in vote will elect me as your next County Commissioner and when I am elected, your voice will be heard.

Willie Green, Write-in Candidate for Cleveland County Commissioner

Editor's Note Part II:

Mr. Green is a "Write-In Candidate and if you have chosen to vote for Mr. Green, there are additional things that you have to do to cast your vote for Mr. Green. This is how you have to mark your ballot to vote for Mr. Willie Green:

At the bottom of the list of Commissioner candidates on your ballot, there is an outline of an oval and a line. Under the line, it says Write in. You must write in or Print "Willie Green" on top of that line as well as filling in the Oval with a pen EXACTLY as shown below for your vote to be properly counted.:

Note that a full sample Ballot with all of our recommendations will be provided for your convenience before election day.