

★★ **JAMIE** ★★  
**SUMEREL**  
 Republican Primary  
**DISTRICT JUDGE**  
PD POL ADV BY JAMIE SUMEREL CAMPAIGN PO BOX 1094 RUSSELLVILLE, AL 35663

Vote **David Cory** ★  
**Cummings's**  
 COUNTY  
**COMMISSIONER**  
**DIST. 2**  
PD POL ADV BY DAVID CORY CAMPAIGN, 1005 HWY 56, RUSSELLVILLE, AL 35663

**Russellville FAMILY DENTISTRY**  
 Mike McLeary, DDS



Russellville Family Dentistry welcomes Mike McLeary, DDS

Mon., Tues, Thu., 8-5, Wed. 8-2  
 256.332.6073  
 510 Engle Dr. • Russellville

## Grimes: Goodwin 'best choice at this time and situation' to head RHS football program

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

Three days after a meeting where the Russellville City Board of Education took no action toward filling the vacant head football coaching position at Russellville High School, the board approved hiring Thompson High School assistant coach Dustin Goodwin as the next coach to lead the Golden Tigers.

Goodwin, the son of former RHS football coach Doug Goodwin, was approved by a 4-0-1 vote of the board. After Superintendent of Education Heath Grimes recommended Goodwin, board member Kim Clonts made the motion to hire Goodwin, which was seconded by Howard Hillman. Board members Greg Trapp and Ike Rogers voted in favor of Goodwin. Board member Redford Hester abstained.

See 'GOODWIN,' Page 3

## Russellville mom heads to Washington, D.C., to promote awareness of TSC

John Pilati  
 Franklin Free Press

A Russellville mother is headed to Washington, D.C., this week to promote Congressional awareness and funding for a rare genetic condition called tuberous sclerosis complex, or TSC.

Jessi White, owner of Flow Massage and Yoga in downtown Russellville, has an 11-year-old son, Slade, a fourth-grader at Russellville Elementary School, who was born with TSC.

White serves on the TSC Alliance, a non-profit national association which describes its mission as 'a source of hope and support' for peo-

ple with tuberous sclerosis complex. White is the TSC Alliance's Southeast Region Community Co-Lead and Government Action Lead. 2024 is the alliance's 50th anniversary.

White and her husband Shannon, a nurse practitioner in Russellville, have two children.

While in D.C., White will meet with Rep. Robert Aderholt and Alabama's Senate delegation of Sen. Tommy Tuberville and Sen. Katie Britt, to promote research funding for TSC.

Tuberous sclerosis complex is a rare genetic condition that causes tumors to develop in different parts inside the body and on the skin. The tumors are most commonly found in


See 'TSC,' Page 2

**CURTIS BAKER**  
 Franklin County Commissioner,  
**District 1**  
 March 5, 2024  
**Republican Primary**

Pd. Pol. Adv. By: Curtis Baker • 322 Austen Dr, Phil Campbell, AL

Taking care of your family's dental needs  
 Brett M. Bowen, DDS

**Bowen Family Dentistry**  
 243 Underwood Road • Russellville 256.332.4000



Vote for my Daddy!

**Jason Miller**  
**PROBATE JUDGE**

March 5, 2024  
**Republican Primary**



Pd. Pol. Adv. By: Jason Miller • 605 Elm Circle, Russellville, AL 35663

"In God We Trust!"

WM DAVID "OPIE"  
**HESTER**  
**COMMISSIONER**  
**DISTRICT 4**

Paid Political Advertisement by William David Hester • 702 Garrison Hollow Road, Red Bay, AL 35582

Hablamos Espanol

World-class dentistry.  
 Hometown care.

**SINGING RIVER DENTISTRY**



531 St. CLAIR ST. | RUSSELLVILLE | 256-332-6888

# Vote Barry Moore

## PROBATE JUDGE

DEDICATED • HONEST • EXPERIENCED

**March 5, 2024**  
**Republican Primary**

Pd. Pol. Adv. by Barry Moore, 399 High Pine Drive, Russellville, AL 35654

# 'TSC,' From Page 1

the brain, kidneys, heart, lungs and eyes.

Slade has TSC 2, the more severe of the two variations of the disease, and his brain tumors result in his being epileptic. Slade requires sunscreen before going outside because of his skin tumors. TSC is the leading genetic cause of autism as well, White said.

As Government Action Lead, White hopes promoting information about TSC to members of Congress will lead to additional funding for research so families won't have to deal with this devastating disease, which affects one in 5,000-10,000 newborns according to the Child Neurology Foundation.

"The TSC Alliance is calling on Congress to raise legislators' awareness and increase research funding for TSC," White said.

TSC is most often diagnosed in babies, but there are cases where symptoms may not become apparent until someone reaches adulthood.

"We want to find a cure so that one day when a parent gets this diagnosis for their child, it won't be as detrimental as it is now," White said. "And most people aren't aware of this. Sometimes, families don't find out a parent has tuberous sclerosis until a child is diagnosed."

White said there are at least four Franklin County families dealing with TSC that she's aware of.

This fall, White and other TSC Alliance members will make a return trip to Montgomery hoping to convince Alabama legislators to approve general budget funding for the TSC Clinic at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the first of its kind facility in the Southeast.

## John Almirol, M.D. Internal Medicine

*"Over 22 Years Caring for Franklin County."*

Mon-Thur: 8:30-5:00

Friday: 8:30-12:00

Se habla Español

Medicare, Medicaid, Viva, BCBS, Humana, and United Healthcare insurances accepted.

Specializing in preventing, diagnosing and treating a wide variety of diseases and health issues affecting adults.

Accepting new patients  
256.331.1900

15225 Highway 43, Suite G  
Next to Russellville Hospital

### AVIATORS DETAILING

NOW OFFERING:  
Window Tinting! And  
Mobile Detailing!

Let us come to you!

Full Detail: \$125

Basic Exterior: \$35 Full Interior: \$65

Basic Interior: \$35 Full Exterior: \$65

Maintenance Wash Program: \$50!  
Includes full interior & exterior

(256) 436-0465

13365 Hwy. 243, Russellville Airport  
Brandon Seay, Owner • Certain restrictions apply

For updates on news and sports throughout the week, don't forget to check us out on the web at [www.franklin-freepress.net/](http://www.franklin-freepress.net/)!

LOCAL • PERSONAL • CARING



Monuments are Designed & Lettered in our local shop.  
On-site Engraving & Sandblasting  
Franklin County's Home Owned and Operated Monument Dealer!

Grant & Beverly Atkins  
403 East Lawrence Street  
Russellville, Alabama

# Vote KIRK SPARKS

Franklin County Commission District One  
in the  
March 5, 2024 Republican Primary

Pd. Pol. Adv. by Kirk Sparks - 17212 Hwy 81 - Russellville, AL 35654

## Miranda Decker, M.D.

INTERNAL MEDICINE  
Comprehensive Adult  
Health Care

Russellville Internal  
Medicine, P.C.



535 Gandy Street NE  
Russellville, AL 35653  
256-332-1120

Mon-Thur  
8-5



Goodwin's hiring was the only agenda item at Friday's meeting. The position came open January 23, 2024, when varsity coach John Ritter resigned to take the same position at Decatur High School.

Goodwin was one of three finalists among 19 applicants. Grimes and RHS Principal Jeremy Madden cored that down to the top five, and interviews were conducted with each candidate. Those names were whittled down to three finalists.

At the board's February 19th work session, there was more than two hours discussion as Madden presented board members with a power point presentation of the three finalists, Goodwin, former West Point, Miss., football coach Chris Chambless and former Pike Road varsity coach Patrick Browning.

Two of the three finalists, Chambless and Browning, each have state championship teams on their resumes. Browning's Pike Road team won the 5A title in 2021, in only the fourth year of the program.

Chambless, who retired last month after 17 years at the helm of West Point, coached seven of his 17 teams to Mississippi state 4A and 5A championships in his tenure as the Green Wave head coach.

Goodwin, who has served as wide receivers coach for Thompson the past two seasons, has seven years' experience as a head coach, four at Chelsea and three at Plainview High School.

Goodwin's combined record is 36-39, with an 0-5 playoff record and a 24-19 in region games. He has been an assistant on Thompson's 2022 7A state champion and 2023's state runner-up.

Goodwin began his coaching career at Russellville, when he was hired as an offensive assistant by his father. He was on the Golden Tigers' staff from 2008-2010. Goodwin was offensive coordinator at Hueytown and Homewood High Schools.

Goodwin's first head coaching opportunity came at Plainview, where he served from 2015-2017. Goodwin left Plainview with a 21-12 record in three seasons, leading his team to the playoffs each season but losing in the first round. Plainview's region record under Goodwin was 15-4. His best season at Plainview came in 2017, when the team won its region and finished 9-2. Goodwin was named the AHSAA 3A Coach of the Year that season.

His next move was to 6A Chelsea in 2018. Goodwin's four-year tenure at Chelsea saw his teams go 15-27, 0-2 in playoff games and 9-15 in region contests.

Goodwin resigned in March 2022 to take the inside wide receivers assistant coaching position at 7A power Thompson.

He was part of the Warriors' 2022 state championship team and 2023 state 7A runner-up.

Chambless, who has now unsuccessfully applied twice for the Russellville head coaching position, retired from West Point in January after a Hall of Fame 17 year tenure. His teams posted an overall 206-45 record, with a 48-11 playoff record and a 110-11 record in region games.

West Point won state titles in 5A in 2009, 2010, 2016-2019 and 2023.

At Monday's work session, Grimes told the board he was prepared to recommend Goodwin at Tuesday morning's meeting. But no action regarding a coach was taken at that meeting.

After Friday's meeting, Grimes released a prepared statement about the hiring: "Many people want to lead, but when it comes to making the tough decisions that might not be popular or might get dragged on social media, they shy away from it and make the easy, popular or more obvious call," Grimes said.

"The board and I have worked together on this hire and have done our due diligence in considering a myriad of factors that the general public is most likely unaware of. I appreciate their willingness to do the research and trust the process. Coach Goodwin is a great fit for RHS and I hope he will be embraced with open arms," Grimes added.

After Friday's hiring was posted on the FFP's social media pages, comments ranged from very positive to very critical, as some questioned why Chambless wasn't hired when the job posting included the criteria of 'successful head coaching experience' being strongly recommended.

Personnel moves must be recommended by the superintendent under Alabama education law, so the board could not fill the position until it accepted a recommendation from Grimes, who explained his rationale.

"Successful head coaching experience means people are able to run a program, successfully keep finances in order, put a team on the field that represents its school well," Grimes said. "It's not just wins and losses. Record is not what was meant by 'successful head coaching experience.'"

"I wanted to give the board a candidate they would support. For this time, this situation and this place for now, Dustin Goodwin is the best person for this position. That's why I recommended him believing the board was going to support that decision," he added.

Goodwin will begin at Russellville on March 1st. He will come to Russellville with his wife Sara, who will be employed as a teacher for Russellville City Schools, and their four sons. Goodwin attended Friday's meeting and was delighted to be returning to Russellville.

"Honestly it feels like coming home. We still have many of the relationships we were able to establish when we were here before and we're excited to be coming back," Goodwin said. "Russellville is a special place, and I'm ready to get to work."

Although Goodwin had an interest in the system's athletic director position, his hiring does not include that position.

"My preference is we keep that position separate at least for now, with someone not focused on one sport," Grimes said. "We want an athletic director who's not coaching a varsity sport where they have time to dedicate to both male and female athletic programs and support our coaches and teams the way they need to be supported."

## Franklin Free Press

113 Washington Ave. NW  
Russellville, AL 35653  
256-332-0255

The Franklin Free Press is published weekly by Pilati Investments, Inc.  
Our publication is mailed to our readers at no charge.

### Publisher

John Pilati

### Executive Editor

Michael Rice

E-mail: franklinfreepress@yahoo.com

### Sales Representatives

Michael Rice, John Pilati

### Content Contributors

Gail Motes, Willodean Davis

### Graphic Design

Jason Hill

### Correction Policy

The Franklin Free Press strives for excellence and accuracy, and we will be pleased to correct any error in our newspaper. To request a correction or clarification, call or e-mail our office.

### Letters to the editor

The Franklin Free Press is published by hometown people, for hometown people. We urge contributions of all kinds, including guest columns, picture submissions, cartoons or letters to the editor. Send any letters to our office via U.S. Postal Service or e-mail, and we will gladly publish them. Letters must be signed and contain the hometown and phone number of the author. The Franklin Free Press reserves the right to edit letters for style, length and content.

### Copyright Information

Published by Pilati Investments, Inc. Copyright 2022  
All materials and content are copyrighted by the Publisher

This publication may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, by any method, without the express written permission of the Publisher.



## FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSION

P.O. Box 1028 · Russellville, AL 35653  
Phone (256) 332-8850 · Fax (256) 332-8855

Barry Moore, Chairman  
Chris Wallace, District I  
Jason Miller, District II  
Joseph Baldwin, District III  
David Hester, District IV  
Leah Mansell, Administrator

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Franklin County Commission is accepting applications for the following position(s):

#### **Equipment Maintenance Technician II, Franklin County Highway Department**

Applications will be accepted in the Franklin County Commission office until the position has been filled.

#### **Heavy Equipment Operator, Franklin County Solid Waste**

Applications will be accepted in the Franklin County Commission office until 5:00 PM on Friday, March 1, 2024.

An application and job description may be picked up, faxed or emailed upon request from the Franklin County Commission Office, located at 405 N Jackson Avenue, Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, by calling (256) 332-8850 or applications are available at [www.franklincountyal.org](http://www.franklincountyal.org) under the Careers tab.

Franklin County is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in the employment or provision of services.



**Tombigbee Communications is building in Franklin County!**

**We are offering the fastest internet speeds in Alabama and superior HD phone services at affordable prices.**

**Ready to sign up?**

**www.freedomfiber.com  
205-921-6712**

## Letter to the Editor: An Important County Election

Dear Editor:

More than ever, Franklin County's future depends on the Probate Judge and County Commissioners we, the citizens, not the good old boys, elect on March 5th.

With broadband in Franklin County now, all the building blocks needed for good clean prosperous development and a great quality of life are in place.

The 2022 landfill expansion proposal exposed the economic development our county doesn't want. It also showed our county didn't have the leadership our future requires.

It showed our Probate Judge and County Commission doesn't necessarily operate openly and it likes it that way. They do the bare minimum to keep us informed. If you don't seek out what they're up to, it can be too late before you know what happen.

In 2023, we formally asked them to be more transparent by holding meetings when citizens could attend, live streaming their meetings, having a five year strategic plan so we know what they are planning, establishing citizen advisory committees and providing better meeting agendas and minutes.

Once again, the Probate Judge and County Commission did the bare minimum, almost nothing. Clearly they prefer we aren't involved in our county government.

'Save Franklin County Alabama' and other concerned county citizens asked folks to stand up, speak out and run for office. We had courageous neighbors willing to do just that.

These new candidates had the additional courage to tell us, ahead of time, publicly, in radio interviews where they stood on the issues important to us, answered our questions simply, candidly and provided ideas, vision and proposals for the future of Franklin County.

It was a huge breath of fresh air compared to the good old boys running for reelection or election, and the other good old boys behind the scenes.

Here are the candidates that support a transparent County Commission, that think we can do better than the good old boy way of running our county:

For Probate Judge: JASON MILLER

For County Commissioner, District One: CURTIS BAKER

For County Commissioner, District Two: DOUG AARON, HEATH AYERS, CORY CUMMINGS

For County Commissioner, District Four: TRACIE CLARK

REMEMBER: You can vote for a county commissioner candidate in EACH DISTRICT, not just your own. One vote per district.

Last, the good old boys are hard at playing dirty politics, telling lies and rumors about these candidates. They're scared and getting desperate. But the mothers, wives and sisters of the good old boys should be specifically ashamed of the attacks on TRACIE CLARK. None of them are remotely true. The good old boys are afraid of a smart bright strong woman with good business sense who knows how to stand up for herself - and now for us.

Scott A. Mugno

For 'Save Franklin County Alabama'

**Michael EADY**  
FOR  
**District 1**  
**Commissioner**



## My Goals as Your Commissioner:

- Franklin County Citizens The Top Priority
- Publicize All Meetings & Agendas
  - Restart Recycling Program
  - No Out-of-County Waste Accepted!
    - No-Kill Animal Shelter



**"Make Franklin County Great Again!"**



# Heath Ayers

Franklin County Commissioner District 2

In The March 5, 2024  
Republican Primary

**"Thanks for Your Vote!"**

Pd. Pol. Adv. by Heath Ayers • 118 McDougle Ln, Spruce Pine, AL 35585



annacarolporterholisticharmony.com

*"Goodness. Best sleep I've had in years. I'm sore today but that means it worked. Can't thank you enough. You've got a permanent client now:  
~ Paul Wilbanks  
Disabled veteran*

Fascial Stretch Therapy helps with pain while calming the nerves to ensure a good night's sleep.

**"Get Ready to Heal!"**

Call Anna Carol Porter today!  
\*Certified Fascial Stretch Practitioner\*

 **Holistic Harmony. AC 256.668.2830**



## Dr. Kelly's Urgent Care

Walk-In visits available.  
We are available to screen and test for COVID-19.

**Mon.-Fri. 8-6, Sat. 8-3, Sun. 1-5**  
**13150 Hwy. 43, Suite 10, Russellville**  
**256-331-2092.**

Serving your family for more than 30 years.  
Family Practice, Pediatrics, Newborn Care.

## George Evans, MD

Offering general medical care services for the entire family



**SHOALS**  
PRIMARY CARE



**256.383.4473 Ext. 2021**  
**340 Cox Blvd • Sheffield, AL**







# Vote Tracie CLARK

**Franklin County Commissioner District 4**

Pd. Pol. Adv. by Tracie Clark, 802 Liberty Lane, Red Bay, 35582

## EyeCare Professionals

Russellville • Moulton • Red Bay

-  Comprehensive Eye Exams for Adults & Children
-  Contacts & Glasses
-  Eye Injuries & Emergencies
-  Designer & Safety Frames, Sunglasses



**Mon.-Fri.  
8a.m.-5p.m.**

eyecareprofessionalspc.com  
15255 Hwy 43 • Russellville • 256.332.5440

## PEST CONTROL



## PREDATOR PEST CONTROL

**"The Insect Predator"**  
**Eddie Deaton**  
**(256) 627-1996**

50 Years Combined Experience

**Toll Free 1-888-832-5405**

(662) 862-5631

(662) 840-4055



**Auto, Home, Life Insurance**  
**English and Spanish**

Real deal with a local feel.  
Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.

**Scotty Wood, Agent**  
13760 Highway 43 Ste 6, Russellville, AL 35653  
256-332-0052  
scotty@agentscotty.com  
agentscotty.com



PRSR STD US POSTAGE  
PAID Franklin Free Press  
113 Washington Ave. NW  
Russellville, AL 35653

**FranklinFreePress.net**

**SPORTS**

**2.28.24**

**RHS' Watts to continue volleyball career at Mississippi University for Women**

*Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press*

Standing in front of a crowded room Russellville High School head volleyball coach Will White said he had just one regret:

"I have only one regret when it comes to Avery and it's I only got to coach her one year," he said.

The Avery that White is referring to is Avery Watts, a standout volleyball senior at Russellville who signed with the Mississippi University for Women Owls at a signing ceremony held at the Russellville Field House Feb. 21.

For Watts, flanked at the table by her mother and father and surrounded by friends, family, teachers, teammates, and coaches, the ceremony represented the fulfillment of one of her long-time aspirations.

"It's so special," Watts said. "I've been dreaming about this day for a long, long time, and it's just really exciting for it to finally come true."

Special. That's how Watts described her day, but it's also how White described Watts. The coach, full of praise for the player, said he knew from day one Watts was different.

"I walk in the door, the first person I meet is Avery Watts. From the moment that I met her I knew she was going to be a game-changer for the program, not just from the athletic ability that she has, which is great, but also from a culture standpoint, from a work ethic standpoint, from an academic standpoint," White said. "I would have loved to coached her for three, four years and seen where we could have went."

On the court, the numbers paint the picture of Watts's ability. An All-Area Team player her senior season, the outside hitter recorded 303 kills,

**See, 'WATTS,' Page 7**

**Injuries, COVID hamper start of Bobcats' baseball season**

*Kadin Pounders  
Franklin Free Press*

It's been a tough start to the 2024 campaign for the Phil Campbell High School varsity baseball team. Coming off a 2023 season that saw the Bobcats reach the semifinals of the AHSAA Class 3A playoffs, Phil Campbell holds a 1-4 record through the first five games and has faced some unforeseeable and uncontrollable setbacks.

"Right now one of the biggest things is we've not had a full roster available yet," Phil Campbell head coach Griffin Harris said. "Whether it be injury or, you know, we've been hit with COVID and having guys out with COVID. We've not had a full roster to be able to put guys in certain places that would make us the most successful." Early season weather, a notorious nuisance for local baseball coaches, also shares some blame as Griffin said his team has not been able to put as much time on the field as he would otherwise have liked. "We got iced in for 10 days so we lost several practice days there," Harris said. "When it finally melts it's still wet and so you don't get to get on the field and get a lot of reps. It feels like it rains every other day, you know, so that could contribute to why we're behind a little bit defensively."

"Still, that's no excuse. You've still got to make the plays," he added The season started for the Bobcats on Feb. 16 when they hosted Central. Phil Campbell lost on opening day 4-3 but rebounded with a 9-8 home win against Tharptown. Cale Faust and Cody Quinn each had three RBIs against the Wildcats and Braxton Mayfield earned the win with a three-inning, one-hit performance.

"We swung (the bats) a little better that game, and had some big hits at the top of the order," Harris said. "We took advantage of some mistakes that they made. The biggest difference, really, is that we were able to hit, put it in play." Since the victory over Tharptown, the Bobcats have been on a three-game slide, losing 6-2 against Winston County before back-to-back defeats to Mars Hill, 6-0 and 11-7, respectively. In his team's first five games Harris said it's some of the fundamentals—not hitting the ball and not executing routine plays—that are hurting Phil Campbell. The first-year head coach is hopeful those issues will work themselves out as the team gets healthy and players get more reps.

"We've struggled offensively as far as we're striking out too much, but hopefully that's going to fix itself the more pitching we see," Harris said. "And we're making too many errors but some of that is coming with guys having to play positions they're not comfortable playing."

If viewed on paper, 2024 could be seen as a rebuilding year for Phil Campbell. In that respect the team's current record could be justified. The Bobcats graduated 10 seniors from last year's squad and Harris said a lot of his players are making the transition from junior varsity to varsity ball, a step that takes time.

"It's not that the guys we have aren't talented because they're talented. They won 17 or 18 games on JV last year," he said. "It's just adjusting to that jump of JV to varsity and just getting all the pieces in the right places."

Still, the Bobcats are not totally green, and a "rebuilding year" doesn't appear to be the attitude Harris is taking towards the season. There are experienced returners that will need to perform well for Phil Campbell to accomplish its goals of making the playoffs and another run at a blue map. One such returner, according to Harris, is Eli Taylor, who recorded five strikeouts in Phil Campbell's season-opener against Central.

"Eli Taylor is the ace of the staff," he said. "He went 10-3 last year. We're going to need him to have another good year on the mound."

Harris also mentioned Koltin Hester and Cody Quinn as two others crucial to this season's project. "Koltin Hester threw a lot of innings last year. He's just now getting back healthy," Harris said. "He's going to be a big piece, I think, on the mound and offensively. He'll play in the infield somewhere, possibly shortstop."

"Cody Quinn returns as another starter, and he's kind of been our utility guy right now. Whoever pitches he kind of moves around into that spot. But he's going to have a really good year offensively for us to have a chance to make a run in the playoffs," he added.

Cale Faust, Braxton Mayfield, and Chandler Bedford were also among the names Harris said have and will hopefully continue to make an impact as the season progresses.

"It's not how you start, it's how you finish" may be among the most played out sentences in the English language, but it's a cliché for a reason, and it's true when it comes to the high school baseball season. Despite the 1-4 start, Harris isn't worried just yet. The record, especially this early, isn't important and he's said as much to his team.

"What we've preached to (the players) so far is, you know, we don't play a weak schedule. We play some good teams, and we're not so much worried about win-loss record," Harris said. "We've preached to them to just keep plugging away, keep working, and some of our problems are going to work themselves out and fix themselves."

"There's only really four games on the schedule that matter and that's our two area series," he added. "If we go into the playoffs with five wins and, you know, however many losses we may have, well, we've still made the playoffs. Your ultimate goal is a state championship. So we're just taking it a day at a time and trying to get better."

**Vargas Roofing & Home Remodeling**

**Shingle & Metal Roofs,  
Vinyl Siding, Drywall  
and Much More.**

**Freddy Vargas**

256.668.7715

Licensed • Insured • Jeremiah 29:11



# Russellville FAMILY DENTISTRY

Mike McLeary, DDS



Mike McLeary, DDS



Sarah Dale Wood, DMD



Russellville Dental Care is now  
Russellville Family Dentistry.  
We welcome Dr. McLeary  
to Russellville. We are  
honoring all "Smile With Us"  
plans purchased through  
Russellville Dental Care.

256.332.6073  
510 Engle Dr. SE  
Mon., Tue., Thu., 8-5, Wed. 8-2

## 'WATTS,' From Page 6

23 blocks, 119 digs, and had a stellar serving percentage of 93 percent. Offensively, defensively, and in service, Watts was a triple threat for the Golden Tigers. But the stats, anyone can see and appreciate those. What those on the outside may not have seen were the maturity level and leadership traits that, White said, are uncommon in high school athletes.

"We have four coaches on staff and there were times where I would go to Avery and say, 'hey, what do you think?'" White said. "She was able to tell me how it was going inside the locker room, how it was going out on the court, and things that, as a coach, unless you're in those moments and in those places, you don't really know what's happening. She was able to lead in such a way that I'm truly going to miss."

The key, Watts said, is keeping an open ear and an even keel.

"I'm a really good listener and I remain calm in stressful situations or heated situations," she said. "I have the calmness about me so I can listen to problems and negotiate them out."

White, who has had stints at nearly every level of the game, said he speaks from experience when he said Watts has everything she needs to be successful at MUW.

"She has the mental fortitude to be able to handle the pressure of playing at the next level," he said. "That's not easy to come across. Everyone wants to play at the next level until it comes time to actually put things into action. She has that ability."

Athletic ability: check. Maturity and leadership ability: check. And if impressed by Watts in the former two categories, stick around for her academic record. Those numbers don't lie either. Watts, "the epitome of a student-athlete" as lauded by interim athletic director Brett Voss, has a 4.0 grade-point average and a 5.0 weighted GPA. She will earn an honors diploma when she walks across the graduation stage and the Russellville National Honor Society president has taken over a half dozen AP courses and multiple dual-enrollment courses available to her. All of these accomplishments are in addition to the numerous awards she's won and the myriad of school clubs she's participating in.

It must be asked how a two-sport athlete like Watts (she played basketball, too) finds the time.

"Time management is a skill that I had to learn very early in high school," Watts said. "I have a calendar in my room with every test, homework due date, ball game, and club meeting. I also have to set reminders to make sure I am where I need to be on time. Organization is definitely key when keeping up with all of my extracurricular activities."

It should come as no surprise then that Watts already has a plan in place for her future. After serving as a volunteer student athletic trainer and taking numerous health occupation courses while at Russellville, Watts intends to major in chemistry pre-med at MUW and then further her education from there.

"After completing my degree in chemistry, I plan to either go to medical school or pursue a degree as a physician assistant," she said.

MUW, which competes at the NCAA Division III level, is located in Columbus, Mississippi, and just a couple hours drive away from Russellville. Watts said the proximity from her hometown and the "home feel" she got at MUW were reasons she chose the Owls. And what does Watts expect of herself when she gets there? More of what got her there in the first place will do nicely, thanks.

"I want to be in the classroom, I want to keep my academics up still," she said. "I want to be a leader on the court, like I was here, I want to be a leader there, too."

Your Support would be Greatly appreciated

# Doug Aaron

Franklin County Commissioner

## District 2

# PROBATE JUDGE BARRY MOORE



**WORKING FOR & REPRESENTING FRANKLIN COUNTY EVERYDAY!**

## GRANTS SECURED FOR FRANKLIN COUNTY

- \$12 million through the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation & Improvement Program (ATRIP)
- \$1.2 million Mar-Jac Industrial Access Grant
- \$823,808 Pilgrim's Pride/Southern Homes Industrial Access Grant for CR44/244
- \$292,919 Road Gear/Mike Green Industrial Access Grant
- \$200,000 in Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grants
- \$300,000 in Community Development Block (CDBG) grants
- \$575,000 in Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) grants

## SERVICE IN AND FOR THE COMMUNITY

- Currently serving on the Budget/Personnel Committee for the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG). Served as Chairman of the Board from Oct. 1, 2016 - Sept. 30, 2017
- Served as District 1 Representative for the Alabama County Commission Association for the following counties: Franklin, Colbert, Lauderdale, Marion, Winston, Lamar, Fayette, and Walker
- Currently serving on the Northwest Shoals Community College Foundation Board
- Currently serving on the Northwest Alabama RC&D Council Executive Board
- Active member of VFW Post 5184
- Active member of Russellville's Rotary Club

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR VOTE & SUPPORT IN THE  
MARCH 5, 2024 REPUBLICAN PRIMARY**





Inside: Candidate profiles for all local contested races, article explaining Alabama Amendment One and sample ballots for Republican and Democratic Primary

FRANKLINFREEPRESS.NET



# ELECTION

# 2024 *Guide*



# Civic involvement, experience at the core of Moore's reelection campaign

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

Franklin County Probate Judge Barry Moore is one of those elected officials who you'll see outside of the courthouse as much as in his office.

Moore, who has served as probate judge since 2007, can be seen at most community and civic events across Franklin County.

There's no secret formula to being active in the community he represents, as Moore explained.

"I am at events whether it's an election year or not," Moore said. I tell people I treat every year as an election year. We're here to work with the people and being active in the community is part of the responsibility of being in office in Franklin County. And that responsibility goes beyond just an election year."

Moore was elected in 2012 and 2018, and now he's asking Franklin County voters to re-elect him for another term in the March 5th Republican Primary. Never one to look beyond the present, Moore says that's how he looks at his time in elected office.

"I'm looking for the opportunity to serve the people of Franklin County for this term and I've always taken it one term at a time," Moore said.

In addition to Franklin County voters, Moore attributes his political success to his family as well. His wife Deedra is a retired teacher who works part time for AIDT.

Their daughter Ashton, an elementary school student when Moore took office in 2007, is now employed by Garver Engineering after earning a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

As Chairman of the Franklin County Commission, Moore said he's proud of the commission's accomplishments, including bringing home more than \$12 million home to improve Franklin County roads and bridges through the Alabama Transportation and Improvement Program, the result of a team effort with Franklin County municipalities.

But there's much more responsibility vested in the Franklin County Probate Judge than serving as the commission chairman.

"That's what gets the most publicity, but a lot of people may not know the things we do on the probate side of the office," Moore said. "That includes recording deeds, mortgages, driver's license renewals, hunting/fishing licenses and boat stickers, county business licenses, probating wills, administration of estates, guardianships/conservatorships, adoptions and mental health commitments."

Another responsibility of the probate judge is to serve as the county's election manager. With Moore running for re-election this year, that responsibility falls on probate office employee Mary Scofield.

Moore said he's always tried to be professional and fair in dealing with the public, making sure to follow the law.

"I do enjoy helping the people of Franklin County in whatever issues the citizens have, but you have to follow the law, especially on the probate side," Moore said. "You have to go by the law, so it's not easy to tell someone 'no' but I try to do that with professionalism and respect."

Moore believes his 17 years' experience makes him the most qualified candidate to serve as probate judge.

"It's important for our citizens to have someone fair and knowledgeable to preside over probate court cases and I'm certain my tenure over the past 17 years reflects this," Moore said.

Moore is a member of North Highlands Church of Christ. He's served as Quartermaster for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5184. And he's retired from the Alabama National Guard, 115th Signal Battalion with 23 years of service, including a one-year deployment to Iraq.

Some of his goals for Franklin County include building an animal shelter large enough to adequately service the county.

"We've hired an architect and we'd like to get that building up as quickly as possible, but it requires bidding out and construction, so it will take some time," Moore said. "We've received a lot of public input and concern on this issue."

When it comes to grant funding, Moore said his experience working with federal and state officials and serving on the NACOLG and Northwest Alabama RC&D Board of Directors has helped build working relationships and opened up opportunities for grants to benefit Franklin County.

Another significant accomplishment Moore mentioned was the commission's approval to use approximately \$5 million in American Relief Plan Act funds to complete the build out of high-speed, fiber-optic broadband across Franklin County.

"We were charged with using this money as an investment for our county. And we as commissioners felt this was the best investment for the citizens of Franklin County for now and in the future," Moore said. "This will lead to people working from home, more industrial recruitment, helping students with school work and many other ways."

# Passion for serving Franklin County at heart of Miller's Probate Judge campaign

John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press

There have been some significant life changes in Jason Miller's life since he announced his candidacy for Franklin County Probate Judge last summer. He and his wife Belinda welcomed a new baby girl, Gracie, last month, the couple's fourth child.

His business, Miller's Affordable Furniture, celebrated its 28th anniversary, including 21 of those under his Miller's leadership.

But one thing that hasn't changed is Miller's passion for Franklin County and his desire to work to make his home county a better place to live and work. It's that dedication that motivated Miller to give up his seat as Franklin County Commissioner for District Two in order to run for probate judge. And one of his plans if elected is to make accessibility and information more readily available to the citizens of Franklin County.

"I plan to improve the transparency issue in county government," Miller said. "I would like to live stream our meetings, move meeting times to the evening and change the format to two meetings per month with a work session 20-30 minutes before the meeting.

"That will cut down on last minute agenda items and retroactive hiring which goes right to the issue of transparency," he added.

Miller was appointed to represent District Two on the commission in August 2016. He ran for the position a few months later and won the general election, as he did once again in 2020. Miller is running for the Republican nomination for Franklin County Probate Judge in the March 5, 2024, primary. His involvement with the Republican Party runs deep, as Miller serves as Franklin County's member on the Alabama State Republican Executive Committee. After each state meeting, Miller returns home and reports to Franklin County citizens (through interviews with the Franklin Free Press) what happened at the state level.

When Miller announced he was running for probate judge, he presented Franklin County voters with a 'fast five' list of five steps he plans to implement 'immediately' if he's elected. They include a State of the County address each year to review the county's annual audit and plans for the Franklin County Commission in the coming year.

He's also been a vocal opponent of landfill expansion in Franklin County, an issue he's heard the most about from Franklin County citizens.

"I take the job of representing the people of Franklin County very seriously. I always have," Miller said. "When you hear from the amount of people I've heard from about this issue, I think you owe it to the people to let them know where you stand on an issue.

"You've got to follow the law, which allows for a petition to be filed that goes before the commission. And I'll respect and follow the law, but as a representative of the people of this county I feel like expanding landfills is not something they want," he added.

In January, the commission approved a contract with a Florence architect to design a new animal shelter for Franklin County, tentatively planned to be located next to the Franklin County Jail.

"I think the commission made the right step in moving forward with constructing a new animal control facility. But we need to take another step further and hire a deputy specifically to enforce current state laws on animal cruelty. And we need to try and educate our youth on the importance of responsible pet ownership," Miller said.

If Miller is elected as Franklin County Probate Judge, he plans to close the furniture store to fully dedicate himself to the office. It's been a busy eight months of campaigning, and Miller appreciates his father and employees for keeping the business open while he's meeting with voters.

"Luckily, I've got a support system with my dad being at the store, and Judd, and our family has really helped us out," Miller said. "I've tried to do the things I've needed to do campaign wise during the day since they have the store covered."

Miller and his family attend Friendship Missionary Baptist Church and he and Belinda are actively involved in their children's sports and other community activities. He's a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association.

Miller is passionate about working to improve Franklin County and he's asking voters to give him the privilege of serving as their probate judge.

"As a lifelong Franklin County resident, I really do care about what happens here. I am excited about what the future holds for Franklin County and I want to continue working for our citizens as Probate Judge/Commission Chair," Miller said.

# Fair, equal treatment for all a foundation for McKinney's judicial campaign

--Tell us what you'd like voters to know about you personally, including family, career, personal interests, civic involvement, etc.: I have been involved in the Main Street Russellville program since moving here and am presently chairman of the board. I am on the Russellville Hospital Foundation Board of Directors and Russellville Hospital Board of Ethics.

I was recently appointed City Attorney for the City of Red Bay. I have been a rec league baseball, basketball and soccer coach over the years. I am married to Julie Herring, RHS 1994 graduate, and we have one son who attends Russellville Elementary School.

My inlaws are David and Evyonne Herring of Russellville. David's parents are the late Harold and Sarah Herring of Gravel Hill/Russellville and Evyonne's parents are the late Wayne and Martha DeFoor of Phil Campbell/Russellville. David is the former chairman of ALFA in Franklin County.

--What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking? Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office? I graduated from the University of Alabama School of Law and have practiced law for 26 years. I am a former prosecutor and have been a guardian for children for decades both in Georgia and Alabama. I practice in the District Court of Franklin County and represent both children and parents. Not being from here uniquely qualifies me as being beholden to no one and able to offer independent rulings. Finally, as a parent of a child currently in the school system, I will strive to serve the best interests for all children in the county so they have the ability to learn and succeed.

--From campaigning the past few months, what have voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those once elected? The people of Franklin County have expressed they want change, plain and simple. They want transparency and want to believe that things are fair and equal, especially in the court system.

--Do you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so, what are the offices you sought and/or served in? This is my first time running for public office in any capacity.

--You are running in the Republican Primary. Tell us why you chose to seek office as a Republican and describe any involvement you've had at the local, state or federal level in Republican politics. I am a lifelong Republican since 1992. I mainly vote Republican because it represents the conservative ideals that I agree with. That being said, I evaluate each local and national candidate independently and like many others, I am disappointed in the choices we are left with.

--For incumbents: What are the primary accomplishments made during your tenure in office? For first time candidates: What goals and/or priorities will you make should you win your election? The answer is too long for here but I have a platform I have discussed on my Facebook profile at [facebook.com/mckinneyforfranklincounty/](https://www.facebook.com/mckinneyforfranklincounty/). In short summary, I would like to 1. institute community service for all criminal defendants. 2. have quarterly conferences with teachers and school personnel in order to meet the needs of the juveniles in the county including exploring alternative school options. 3. make criminals post bonds for serious offenses before they are let out of jail—especially if they are repeat offenders.

--How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citizens contact you with questions or concerns? My office will be open to everyone as much as reasonably possible just as long as there is time to conduct the business of the court.

--How do you define the job duties of the office you're seeking? It is a public servant position. As a public servant, I will treat ALL people fairly and respectfully no matter who they are, what they do or who they know. In a summary of the position, this court handles all juvenile court matters in Franklin County as well as misdemeanor offenses. It also conducts small claims court and evictions, etc., but juvenile matters and misdemeanors make up the largest share of the duties of the office.

--Tell us something (funny or lighthearted) most people don't know about you. It can be a hidden talent, funny story or just something quirky about you. Yes, I am not from here but my wife and I chose to live here and raise our family. I was raised in Columbus, Georgia and spent my childhood on the banks of Lake Eufaula and the fields of Dothan where my grandparents/extended family lived. Being outdoors is my favorite.

--Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain separate, while others strongly disagree. How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office? Faith is my personal compass and I am a member/regular attender of Tharptown Baptist Church. I believe my faith in Jesus Christ and the directive to love everyone, including tough love, will allow me to operate within the law and serve the citizens of Franklin County.

# 'MOORE,' From Page 10

In 2022, a Franklin County businessman filed a controversial application to expand a private landfill to collect household waste from other counties and states with the State of Alabama. That process also involved the applicant filing with the Franklin County Commission as well. The applicant eventually withdrew the application, so the commission did not have to make a decision.

Unlike his opponent, Moore has not publicly stated his personal opinion about possible landfill expansion in Franklin County. His reasoning relates, once again, to making sure he follows the applicable law.

"There are laws the county commission is required to go by, and I will always do the best of my ability to follow that law," Moore said.

But he did share his insights when it comes to performing the duties of his job.

"As probate judge and chair of the county commission, I use conservative values and common sense principles while executing my duties and responsibilities. I continue to be a diligent official and will continue making it a priority to represent the men and women of Franklin County by listening to their concerns and trying to resolve any issues when possible," Moore said.

"Being probate judge and chairman of the county commission is more than just a job for me. It's a way to give back to a community I've been a part of my entire life. I would very much appreciate your support and vote for the Republican nomination during the March 5th primary," he added.

## Voters to decide one amendment on March 5th ballot

*John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press*

When Alabama voters go to the polls for the March 5, 2024, primary elections, they will also vote on one constitutional amendment.

Amendment One will appear on all ballots, regardless of whether the voter casts a ballot in the Republican or Democratic Primary.

The language of Amendment One reads as follows: Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama 2022, to amend Section 71.01 authorizing the Legislature to sign and transmit local laws or constitutional amendments before the transmission of basic appropriations.

Section 71.01 of the Alabama Constitution prohibits any bill or law from being considered by the House of Representatives or Senate before budgets are approved by the Legislature and sent to the Governor, unless an additional vote is approved by the House and Senate of at least a three-fifths (3/5ths) vote.

Essentially, the Constitution requires the Legislature to pass a budget and send it the governor for signature before it can consider any other legislation.

If voters approve Amendment One, the Legislature may vote on and approve local laws or local Constitutional amendments even before the budget is approved.

Local laws are those which are not classified as general, special or private laws. While general laws apply to the entire state, a local law only impacts the residents of a particular county or counties.

The same is true for a local Constitutional Amendment. An example of a local Constitutional Amendment for Franklin County came in 2018 when voters were asked to consider extending the county's one-cent sales tax (with 75% going to the two school systems in Franklin County and 25% to the Franklin County Commission for road and bridge improvements) for a 30-year period.

Previously the one-cent tax was considered by Franklin County voters every two years.

Under the 2024 amendment, the Legislature could approve local legislation and clear the way for local amendments to be placed on the November general election ballot.

The Legislature has frequently used the three-fifths rule to usher through bills before approval of a budget, a procedural step called the Budget Isolation Reduction.

Why a Constitutional amendment is needed is something advocates of Amendment One must explain to voters. Count the Association of County Commissions of Alabama Executive Director Sonny Brasfield as one who supports the amendment.

"Local legislation is designed to deal with a problem in a particular county that's different from problems in neighboring counties. We think legislators ought to be able to bring those bills at any time and not be restricted by this budget isolation vote," Brasfield told a Birmingham television station last week.

Whether Alabama voters agree remains to be seen.

# Franklin County native Sumerel plans 'open door' policy if elected District Judge

1. Tell us what you'd like voters to know about you personally, including family, career, personal interests, civic involvement, etc.

My name is Jamie Sumerel, I was born January 20, 1981. My parents are Kenny and Bobbie Sue Sumerel. I grew up in Russellville, Alabama and graduated from Russellville High School in 1999. As a child I loved spending time at Cedar Lake fishing, digging worms and getting into all kinds of mischief. During my summer break from school, I split time between my grandparents' homes while my parents worked. Part of my time was spent with my grandparents W.E. and Bertie Taff on Taff Dairy in Phil Campbell and the other time was spent with John and Lena Sumerel on the banks of Big Bear Lake fishing for crappie. I played football for Russellville Middle and High School from 1994 through 1998. After high school, I attended the University of Alabama where I graduated in the spring of 2003 with a Bachelor of Science in Commerce & Business Administration. In 2008 I passed the bar examination after graduating from Birmingham School of Law and began practicing law in Franklin County at the law firm of Bedford, Rogers, Bowling & McReynolds, P.C. I am married to Amiee Lynn Sumerel and we have one adult son, Blake Tyler Pruitt.

I am a past board member, and I am currently serving as the Vice President of the RCS Education Foundation. Most of my spare time is spent walking the hills of Bankhead or Bear Creek looking for a big deer or fishing for whatever fish I can get to bite. I am a member of Russellville First Baptist Church and have been since I was a senior in high school.

2. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking. Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office?

First and foremost, I am a lifelong resident of Franklin County, Alabama. I grew up in Russellville and have spent my life in Franklin County and know the values of Franklin County residents, I understand what is expected from their judge. After

## Franklin voting locations include three two-precinct polling places

*John Pilati  
Franklin Free Press*

The March 5, 2024, Alabama primary elections are fast approaching and a few polling places have changed from previous elections.

There are three 'polling centers,' where voters from two different precincts will vote. There will be clear markings to direct voters where to vote for their specific precinct.

These polling centers will be at the A.W. Todd Centre in Russellville, where voters at the Franklin County Courthouse and Electric Warehouse precincts will vote, Tharptown Baptist Church, where voters from the Saints Crossroads and Tharptown precincts will vote, and Waco Baptist Church, where voters from the Newburg and Waco precincts will vote.

Listed below are the voting locations for all Franklin County precincts, including addresses.

- (1,001) Union: Union Community Center, 5988 Hwy. 93, Russellville.
- (2-1,002) Russellville District One: Russellville High School, 1865 Waterloo Road, Russellville.
- (2-2,003) Russellville District Two: College Avenue First Baptist Church, 521 College Ave. N, Russellville.
- (2-3,004) Russellville District Three: A.W. Todd Centre, 201 S. Washington Ave., Russellville.
- (2-4,005) Russellville District Four: Chucky Mullins Center, 442 Hamilton St., Russellville.
- (2-5,006) Russellville District Five: A.W. Todd Centre, 201 S. Washington Ave., Russellville.
- (3,007) Frankfort: Frankfort Missionary Baptist Church, 7676 Hwy. 49, Russellville.
- (4,008) Pleasant Site: Pleasant Site Volunteer Fire Department, 2785 Hwy. 90, Red Bay.
- (5,009) Red Bay: Red Bay Community Center, 202 5th Ave. SW, Red Bay.
- (6,010) Vina: Vina Fire Department, 79 Church St., Vina.
- (7,011) Belgreen: Belgreen Fire Department, 4325 Hwy. 524, Russellville.
- (8,012) Hodges: Hodges Community Center, 1942 Al. 172, Hodges.
- (9,013) Phil Campbell: Phil Campbell Community Center, 132 Sherri Bryce Drive, Phil Campbell.
- (10,014) Rockwood: Fellowship Hall, 7570 Hwy. 36, Russellville.
- (11,015) Mountain Star: 4067 Hwy. 56, Russellville.
- (12,016) Saints Crossroads: Tharptown Baptist Church, 5140 Hwy. 48, Russellville.
- (13,017) Tharptown: Tharptown Baptist Church, 5140 Hwy. 48, Russellville.
- (14,018) Halltown: Halltown Community Center, 265 Strickland Road, Red Bay.
- (15,019) Lawlers: Gravel Hill Fire Department, 3673 Gravel Hill Road, Phil Campbell.
- (16,020) Waco: Waco Baptist Church, 31141 Hwy. 724, Russellville.
- (17,021) Jonesboro: Jonesboro Baptist Church, 5061 Waterloo Road, Russellville.
- (18,022) Spruce Pine: New Community Center, 9312 Hwy. 22, Spruce Pine.
- (19,023) Churntown: Cornerstone Church, 15 Block Church Road, Phil Campbell.
- (20,024) Newburg: Waco Baptist Church, 31141 Hwy. 724, Russellville.

graduating law school, I immediately began to practice in Franklin County and have continued to practice in Franklin County, Alabama to this day. Specifically in the District Court of Franklin County, I have been the primary Juvenile delinquency attorney for over 10 years. Not counting other counties of practice, I have handled over 1000 juvenile cases since I began to practice law. Also, as part of my practice, I represent the Franklin County and Colbert County Department of Human Resources. In representing both departments, I have handled numerous non-support child support cases, dependencies, CHINS and termination cases. Further, in the District Court of Franklin County, I have handled over 1200 district criminal cases and numerous district civil, traffic, custody and small claims cases throughout my years of practice.

My years of practice in the District Court of Franklin County and handling every type of case that the District Court handles gives me the foundation that any newly elected judge should have.

3. From campaigning the past few months, what have Franklin County voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those once elected?

Over the past twelve months of hanging signs, attending events and speaking with individuals, I have been able to speak with a large cross section of our Franklin County population. Each community is dealing with generally the same issues. Most people have asked me how to deal with the drug problems that are so prevalent in our community. As your District Judge it is my opinion that you deal with drug addicts on a case-by-case basis. I do not believe that every drug addict will benefit from a rehabilitation facility. I have had numerous clients that begged to go to rehab and the sole reason that they wanted to go was to be able to get out of jail. On the flip side, I have represented individuals who had addiction issues that thrived in a rehabilitation setting and have become very successful. The bottom line, as the Judge, there needs to be communication with the alleged to determine whether a longer stay at the Franklin County Detention facility is warranted or if the alleged is being truthful with themselves and would benefit from some type of rehabilitation services.

Another concern I hear is the rate of juvenile crime. I see this all too often since I represent 99% of the juvenile delinquents in our great county. The biggest issue that our Juvenile Court has is lack of funding from the State. This is an issue because it really limits the number and scope of programs that are available to the Juvenile Probation Officer's and the Juvenile Judge. As your District Court Judge, I plan to expand the resources of the juvenile court by way of grants that are available for certain programs and getting our community more involved. When juveniles are not held to a standard of accountability, they tend to get into more trouble. With the right programs in place within our communities, juveniles would be exposed to the leaders in our community, juveniles would be able to talk with our leaders and develop a respect that currently is not there.

4. Do you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so, what are the offices you sought and/or served in?

I do not have any prior experience running for an elected office or serving in an elected position.

5. You are running in the Republican Primary. Tell us why you chose to seek office as a Republican and describe any involvement you've had at the local, state or federal level in Republican politics.

I am running as a Republican because I was raised by a farming family that believes in a more conservative approach to life that is backed by Christian values.

6. For Incumbents: What are the primary accomplishments made during your tenure in office? For First Time Candidates: What goals and/or priorities will you make should you win your election?

7. How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citizens contact you with questions or concerns?

I have always had an open-door policy as an attorney, and I do not plan to change that once I am elected. If someone has an issue to speak about, my door will be open to discuss anything within the confines of the law.

8. How do you define the job duties of the office you're seeking?

The District Court Judge in Franklin County has many hats. Not only does the District Court Judge maintain all the roles that are normal to District Court, but in Franklin County, the District Court Judge also is tasked with the duty to be the Juvenile Court Judge as well. The District Judge handles pre-indictment bonds, pre-indictment bond revocations, preliminary hearings, Aniah's hearings, misdemeanor trials, traffic trials, non-support child support hearings and trials, custody trials between unwed couples, small claims trials, civil disputes less than \$20,000.00, juvenile delinquency, juvenile dependency, juvenile CHINS and Termination of Parental rights trials, just to name a few of the duties of the District Judge.

9. Tell us something (funny or lighthearted) most people don't know about you. It can be a hidden talent, funny story or just something quirky about you.

At one point in my life I truly believed that I had the talent to quit my day job and fish for a living. Obviously, in hindsight, that was a terrible plan. But a man has to dream, right??

10. Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain separate, while others strongly disagree. How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office?

As a human being, I believe politics and religion should be kept separate. I do not bring up the topic of politics when I am at church. I am a Christian and as a Judge you cannot forget your faith. Whether it is scripture from the New Testament or the Old Testament, you are constantly reminded of stories from the Bible in the practice of law. If elected, I will not forget the teachings of the Bible, however the teaching will have to be used within the confines of the law.

# Please Vote Jamie Sumerel



Thank You to all my family, friends and supporters for all that's been done for me over the past 12 months while I have campaigned. But the election is not over. The most important date is Tuesday, March 5th.

I ask for your continued support and for your vote for Franklin County District Judge in the March 5th Republican Primary.

★★ JAMIE ★★  
**SUMEREL**  
Republican Primary  
**DISTRICT JUDGE**

PD POL ADV BY JAMIE SUMEREL CAMPAIGN PO BOX 1094 RUSSELLVILLE, AL 35653

# Accountability and transparency the linchpin of Baker's campaign for Commission District One

1. Tell us what you'd like voters to know about you personally, including family, career, personal interests, civic involvement, etc. I am Curtis Baker; my wife Tiffany Baker and I have three children. Our children are Austen,

Natalie, and Millie. My wife and I were both born and raised in Franklin County. I have worked at R. Baker, Inc. For 24 years. I have also owned Curtis Baker Trucking for 20 years. My wife works for the Franklin County Board of Education in the Special Education Department at Phil Campbell Elementary School. As a family we enjoy all things to do with the outdoors, especially hunting, fishing, and camping.

2. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking. Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office? As I have worked for the public most of my life I understand how to cooperate and listen to people and help them find a solution to the problems that they face. In business you must always plan ahead. I take pride in trying to foresee the problems before they happen and find a solution that will last and not just be a temporary fix.

3. From campaigning the past few months, what have Franklin County voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those issues once elected? I have yet to meet anyone over the course of my campaign that does not appreciate and want the truth. With me as your District 1 Commissioner, that is how it will always be truthful. The land fill has been a hot topic and I have been very open with my opinion on it. From day one if you hire me as your commissioner, I will have a goal to make sure no one will get us over a barrel, and we get all that we can out of your tax dollars.

4. Do you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so, what are the offices you sought and/or served in? I ran for the Franklin County Board of Education in 2022 and lost by thirteen votes. During that campaign, my desire to serve Franklin County only grew stronger.

5. You are running in the Republican Primary. Tell us why you chose to

seek office as a Republican and describe any involvement you've had at the local, state or federal level in Republican politics. I am seeking election as a Republican because my conservative pro-God, pro-life, pro-gun beliefs do not align with the absolutely crazy left-wing democrats.

6. What goals and/or priorities will you make should you win your election? Accountability and transparency will be a priority. My goal is after we are a few months into my term the voters can say "We hired the right man".

7. How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citizens contact you with questions or concerns? My phone is always on. Call, text, or email. 256-366-4995 bcurt51@gmail.com

8. How do you define the job duties of the office you're seeking? As a commissioner, you have a duty to equip the department heads throughout the county with the personnel and funds to serve the citizens of Franklin County. It is your job to be a good steward of the taxpayer's money. You can never get complacent and believe we are doing good enough. We can always do better, and as a county we can be better.

9. Tell us something (funny or lighthearted) most people don't know about you. It can be a hidden talent, funny story or just something quirky about you. I have a huge soft spot for children. That is why I will always help our public schools whenever possible. The harsh truth for some children in Franklin County is that their time in school is the best part of the day.

10. Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain separate, while others strongly disagree. How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office? Absolutely my faith will factor into my decision making as your commissioner. Proverbs 3 Verse 5-6 says "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

## What to expect from Curtis Baker

- **Honesty • Integrity**
  - **Transparency**
  - **Cleaner, Safer Franklin County**
- **A man who will tell you the truth even if it is not what you want to hear.**
- **A good steward of the taxpayers' money to ensure we get all we can for every dollar.**



**CURTIS BAKER**  
**Franklin County**  
**Commissioner,**  
**District 1**  
*Republican Primary*

# Murray to seek Guidance from God when decision making as Commissioner District One

1. Tell us what you'd like voters to know about you personally, including family, career, personal interests, civic involvement, etc.

My name is Michael Murray. I have lived in Franklin County my whole life. I have been married to my wife, Kathryn, for 31 years. We have two children, Madison and Grayson. They are both graduates of Russellville High School and are attending college.

I have had a career in automotive repair for 31 years and have had my own automotive business for 25 of those years. I also have a combined 16 years in school bus transportation, six years as a bus driver and six years as a bus technician and four years as the shop foreman.

As far as personal interests, owning a business and keeping the school buses running keeps me pretty busy. But I always found time to spend time coaching and watching my kids play sports in high school and now in college. So I'd say my greatest enjoyment is spending time with my family and friends.

2. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking. Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office? As a business owner, I have experience with budgets and estimates. I have been serving the community as a business owner for 25 years. Then in the last 10 years with the bus transportation system, I assisted Donald Borden in purchasing new buses for the Franklin County Schools. Then with Dr. Johnny Cleveland, I helped to secure funds to add air conditioning to all route buses. Through bus transportation, I also have experience with budgeting for repairs and upkeep for the school transportation department.

3. From campaigning the past few months, what have Franklin County voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those once elected?

After speaking with the citizens of Franklin County, the biggest concerns are the new landfill proposal and road conditions. As an Alabama citizen, with children and family, there is concern over the cost of tax payers' dollars it takes to monitor a landfill. So I am active in researching the landfill proposal and concerns. In the meantime, if elected, I would be working on ways to improve recycling to cut down on waste coming in to the landfill now.

At my business the last 17 years, I have been active in finding ways to improve recycling. I installed a waste oil heater to heat my shop. I also dispose of my recyclable metals. As a county commissioner, if elected, I will be willing to work to find ways to improve recycling for Franklin County. Finding these improvements will help reduce waste entering the landfill now.

Growing up with a father who retired with 38 years in road construction and resurfacing and knowledge of most road conditions in the county through my work with bus transportation, as a commissioner I would be willing to work with the Franklin County Highway Department to secure funds in order to help with road repairs and upkeep for the safety of school buses and citizens.

4. Do you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so, what are the offices you sought and/or served in? N/A

5. You are running in the Republican Primary. Tell us why you chose to seek office as a Republican and describe any involvement you've had at

See 'MURRAY,' Page 16

# Inspired by his grandfather, Sparks hoping to serve others as District One Commissioner

1. Tell us what you'd like voters to know about you personally, including family, career, personal interests, civic involvement, etc.

I graduated from Mt. Hope High School in 2007. I earned an Associate Degree in Occupational Technology, majoring in machine shop.

I own and operate four broiler houses, run a cattle farm, work for G&G Steel in Russellville and sell real estate part-time. My wife Haley and I have three boys and a girl on the way. We are members of Tharptown Baptist Church. I enjoy using my free time to be with my family. I also love to deer and turkey hunt.

2. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking. Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office?

I was encouraged by my grandfather, Billy Sparks, to get involved with my community. He was County Commissioner for District One and he is my inspiration to run for elected office and serve the people of Franklin County.

3. From campaigning the past few months, what have Franklin County voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those once elected?

One of the most discussed is the situation with the Franklin County Landfill. I do not support having a multi-state landfill in our county. As far as our county's garbage, we need to take care of our own and I believe that's fair.

4. Do you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so, what are the offices you sought and/or served in?

This is my first time to run for elected office.

5. You are running in the Republican Primary. Tell us why you chose to seek office as a Republican and describe any involvement you've had at the local, state or federal level in Republican politics.

My conservative beliefs and principles are consistent with the Republican Party. The Republican Party's platform that includes family values, protection of life and traditional marriage are values I believe in.

6. For Incumbents: What are the primary accomplishments made during your tenure in office? For First Time Candidates: What goals and/or priorities will you make should you win your election?

My goals and priorities are to be honest and straightforward when dealing with all citizens. If elected to represent Franklin County District One, I will use common sense judgment and do what is best for our great county, to leave it better for our kids and future generations to come.

People who know me know my work ethic and I'll take that with me into the county commission. Being young, running my own business, operating and maintaining a farm, I think I'll bring something new to the county commission—fresh, young leadership. I may be young but I believe I'm mature beyond my age. I'd like to see more young people involved in local government. They have a vested interest in it.

7. How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citizens contact you with questions or concerns?

I am going to be accessible. I put my number on Facebook and it's easy to contact me.

8. How do you define the job duties of the office you're seeking? The county commission operates the day-to-day business of the county. Decisions made by the commission impact not only the day-to-day lives of Franklin County citizens, but also its future generations.

9. Tell us something (funny or lighthearted) most people don't know about you. It can be a hidden talent, funny story or just something quirky about you.

I love riding horses. I used to rope in high school for the Mt. Hope school roping team. I received a rodeo (partial) scholarship to Troy University in team roping.

10. Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain separate, while others strongly disagree. How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office?

My faith goes with me everywhere I go. I'm not scared to pray about tough decisions and let the Good Lord lead me. And at the end of the day, I'll trust His decisions and won't have to second guess that. Faith first is how I live. I'm very blessed and I count my blessings every day. I feel the Lord put me in this situation for a reason.

# Michael Murray

# Commissioner District 1

# MURRAY, From Page 15

the local, state or federal level in Republican politics.

I am running as a Republican because I value the beliefs that our country was founded on. I hold reverence to God, family and hard work and I want to fight for those who hold the same beliefs. The Republican Party represents these values in Washington, D.C., and I want to represent these values locally in Franklin County. As a small business owner, I understand how important it is to be hard working and to have integrity in everything I do.

6. For Incumbents: What are the primary accomplishments made during your tenure in office? For First Time Candidates: What goals and/or priorities will you make should you win your election?

One of my goals for office would be to see the economic business sector develop and grow to provide more jobs and revenue for our county. Another is to make decisions that will benefit Franklin County.

7. How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citizens contact you with questions or concerns?

I serve the community through my business, M&G Automotive. That would be the best way to contact me for questions and concerns at 256-332-3420.

8. How do you define the job duties of the office you're seeking?

The county commission is elected by the citizens to oversee the operation of our county. It is the commissioner's job to develop a short term and long term plans for budgeting. The commissioner has to use the county budget to maintain public health, safety, and quality of roads. It is also the commissioner's duty to create policy that supports the county economically.

9. Tell us something (funny or lighthearted) most people don't know about you. It can be a hidden talent, funny story or just something quirky about you.

One thing most people don't know about me is that I love to cook. I like to surprise my kids with breakfast when they are home from college. When the kids were growing up, I would make sure that any of their friends staying at our home had something to eat too. During the holidays, my wife and I would cook something for everyone to make sure no one left hungry. This Christmas my kids got me a new Blackstone griddle that I have been enjoying experimenting with.

10. Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain separate, while others strongly disagree. How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office?

I firmly believe that religion plays a huge role in politics. If elected, I plan on taking every issue that we face to God for guidance. Our freedom to follow God's commands should not be taken for granted, and I believe that God will provide the answer to every problem that is laid at his feet.

# Eady looking to use experience in construction and road maintenance as District Two Commissioner

1. Tell us what you'd like voters to know about you personally, including family, career, personal interests, civic involvement, etc.

I have been married to Angela Eady for 30 years. We have two children, both graduates of Russellville High School. Sierra is currently working on her PHD in Mechanical Engineering at Auburn. Grayson is working toward a business degree and is a member of the track team at Samford University.

I work at Eady Contracting in Russellville. I have a long history in the construction and maintenance of roads and drainage. I am a member of the Franklin County Water and Soil Board and I enjoy anything outdoors.

2. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking. Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office?

I am a state licensed contractor. I have been self-employed since the age of 19. I have many years of experience in construction and maintenance of roads and managing a budget. I feel that I can bring ideas and experience to Franklin County to benefit our infrastructure and citizens.

3. From campaigning the past few months, what have Franklin County voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those once elected?

In speaking with the citizens of our great county, I have heard concerns about the landfills, animal control and road conditions. I would get the county on a recycling program to cut down on landfill waste. I will fully support a no-kill animal shelter.

With my experience in construction, I will work with our county engineer and our hard-working county highway employees to improve our roads.

4. Do you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so, what are the offices you sought and/or served in?

I have never run for public office but I'm excited about the possible opportunity to serve the citizens of Franklin County.

5. You are running in the Republican Primary. Tell us why you chose to seek office as a Republican and describe any involvement you've had at the local, state or federal level in Republican politics.

I have always been a supporter of the Republican Party. I believe more than ever we need to have conservative values and put our county and country first.

6. For Incumbents: What are the primary accomplishments made during your tenure in office? For First Time Candidates: What goals and/or priorities will you make should you win your election? N/A

7. How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citizens contact you with questions or concerns?

If I am elected, the citizens of Franklin County will be able to contact me at any time regarding concerns via phone, text, email, mail or at meetings.

8. How do you define the job duties of the office you're seeking? My goal as commissioner will be to serve the citizens of Franklin County in order to improve their lives as well as the communities they live in.

9. Tell us something (funny or lighthearted) most people don't know about you. It can be a hidden talent, funny story or just something quirky about you.

We foster stray and rescue dogs for the Brown Dog Coalition.

10. Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain separate, while others strongly disagree. How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office?

I am a strong believer in God and in doing what's right. I will rely on God to guide me in my decision making for the benefit of Franklin County and the citizens therein.

*Jeff Elledge's*  
**CREDIT CARS**  
**WE FINANCE NO CREDIT**  
  
**SLOW CREDIT BAD CREDIT**  
**Down Payments As Low As**  
**\$800\* to \$2,200\***  
 \*According to inventory and any prior history with this dealership.  
**2506 Woodward Ave • Muscle Shoals**  
**256.383.7979 • 256.710.3711**



# District Two candidate Aaron a veteran of dealing with governmental operations, grant funding

1. Tell us what you'd like voters to know about you personally, including family, career, personal interests, civic involvement, etc. Married to Deb Taff Aaron. Together we have three children and four grandchildren. Graduated Phil Campbell High School in 1975. Pipe fitter with Local 760 for 25 years. Managed water systems for 19 years. I enjoy hunting and fishing and am a member of North Highlands Church of Christ.
2. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking. Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office? I have many years experience in managing day-to-day operations as well as conducting meetings and seeking government grants and other financial institutions, along with dealing with government rules and regulations.
3. From campaigning the past few months, what have Franklin County voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those once elected? 1. Landfill expansion. We are already in the landfill business so I feel we need to focus ore on maintaining the landfill we have. I am not in favor of an independent landfill expansion. 2. County roads. I feel we need to develop a plan to maintain our county roads and also seek funding for major road projects.
4. Do you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so, what are the offices you sought and/or served in? First time to seek an elected office.
5. You are running in the Republican primary. Tell us why you chose to seek office as a Republican and describe any involvement you've had at the local, state or federal level in Republican politics. I chose the Republican Party because I feel they are the most conservative and closest to my religious beliefs.
6. For incumbents: What are the primary accomplishments made during your tenure in office? For first time candidates: What goals and/or priorities will you make should you win your election? N/A.
7. How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citizens contact you with questions and concerns? I will be available by cell phone or email.
8. How do you define the job duties of the office you're seeking? Overseeing Franklin County operations and seeking fundings for projects.
9. Tell us something (funny or lighthearted) most people don't know about you. It can be a hidden talent, funny story or just something quirky about you. I'm great at barbecuing and sampling new recipes.
10. Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain separate, while others strongly disagree. How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office? If elected, my religious faith will have an impact on all decisions made.

# Ayers: Being a good listener a key for an elected official

1. Tell us what you'd like voters to know about you personally, including family, career, personal interests, civic involvement, etc. I'm Heath Ayers. My wife is Amy Swinney Ayers. Son, Jacob Ayers and his wife Morgan and their son Benton. Daughter, Kaylie Hamby and her husband Dalton and their son Leighton and soon to be born daughter Kaisyn. Interests include old cars and trucks and motorcycles.
2. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking. Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office? I like to help people. I will listen to what is going on. What most people need is someone that will listen and work with them. This is what my current job consists of... listening to the members, addressing their concerns and coming up with a solution.
3. From campaigning the past few months, what have Franklin County voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those once elected? I plan to listen and get them answers and keep them informed. Then, I and the other commissioners can work together and figure out the best way to reach back out to them.
4. Do you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so, what are the offices you sought and/or served in? Yes. I have been Guard, Vice President, and now serving as local President of the United Steelworkers Local 200.
5. You are running in the Republican Primary. Tell us why you chose to seek office as a Republican and describe any involvement you've had at the local, state or federal level in Republican politics. My faith. I have not had any involvement in local, state, or federal politics.
6. For Incumbents: What are the primary accomplishments made during your tenure in office? For First Time Candidates: What goals and/or priorities will you make should you win your election? I will work with the other commissioners and judge to make sure the people of Franklin County know what's going on and make sure the people are heard when they have a concern.
7. How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citizens contact you with questions or concerns? I will make sure my cell phone number will be out there where anyone can get it.
8. How do you define the job duties of the office you're seeking? Commissioners are to oversee the county's management and administration, and to keep the county and people's interests at heart at the state and federal level also. Us as a committee to come up with short-term and long-term plans that will best benefit Franklin County.
9. Tell us something (funny or lighthearted) most people don't know about you. It can be a hidden talent, funny story or just something quirky about you. Something funny? A lot of friends ask have I lost my mind for running for county commissioner.
10. Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain separate, while others strongly disagree. How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office? Everyone is entitled to their own opinion. But, as a Christian we have to ask ourselves what is God's will and pray God's will be done. My four F's in life are: 1.) Faith; 2.) Family; 3.) Friends; 4.) Franklin County.

# Business ownership, budget management assets for Hovater in commission candidacy

1. Tell us what you'd like voters to know about you personally, including family, career, personal interests, civic involvement, etc. Graduated from Russellville High School, have been married for 34 Years to Kathy Blankenship Hovater, I'm a lifelong resident of District 2 in Franklin County, we have three grown children and four grandchildren.
2. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking. Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office? I have been running a business for over 25 years, one that I started and have been blessed with growth over the years, but I understand how to manage money and making the best use out of the resources you have and how to get along and interact with people. Working with the public as I have it has helped me get a better understanding of the best way to meet the different needs of people and how different things are important to different people
3. From campaigning the past few months, what have Franklin County voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those once elected? People have not asked me a lot of questions as I have been out and about, but I want to assure everyone that if I'm elected I will do my very best to make the decisions based on what is morally right and what is best for all the people of Franklin County. I think we all agree that if we can make Franklin County a place that will be desirable to work live and play and not to allow anything in that would be a negative for our County as things that have been presented before.
4. Do you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so, what are the offices you sought and/or served in? I have never run for a public office before but as I have mentioned before I feel like running a business helps me with planning and working with a budget and working with others.
5. You are running in the Republican primary. Tell us why you chose to seek office as a Republican and describe any involvement you've had at the local, state or federal level in Republican politics. I feel like my values are more in line with the Republican party on many topics and are far from the values of some things the Democratic party endorses.
6. For incumbents: What are the primary accomplishments made during your

- tenure in office? For first time candidates: What goals and/or priorities will you make should you win your election? N/A.
  7. How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citizens contact you with questions and concerns? I will be available to meet, text or speak to anyone with a concern or recommendation on how things might be made better.
  8. How do you define the job duties of the office you're seeking? I think a commissioner has to be willing to listen and keep their eyes open and look around their district for ways that improvements can be made and seek any financial resources that could be made available such as grants or any equipment or tangible things and to work with other commissioners for a common goal of improving the County moving forward. I feel like the employees of the County should be treated well and be proud of the jobs that they do.
  9. Tell us something (funny or lighthearted) most people don't know about you. It can be a hidden talent, funny story or just something quirky about you. I really am a pretty transparent person and what I feel like is normal, as for my family they may not agree. My wife has kidded me so many times when I would be starting a new job or project and in my head I will make every move that is part of that job she can tell I'm thinking about it. She will laugh and say do you have it done yet and I will say yes you should see how good it looks. LOL
  10. Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain separate, while others strongly disagree. How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office? I do believe in always doing what is right and I never want to pretend that my faith in Christ will not help me make my decisions. I am proud to say I'm a Christian and if someone would not vote for me for saying that I would tell them that is their right and me stating that I am is my right. I feel like if we will keep God as our guide we can never go wrong.
- For I know the plans I have for you, " declares the Lord " plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

# Landfill issue the primary issue for District Two candidate Cummings

1. Tell us what you would like voters to know about you personally, including family, career, personal interest, civic involvement, etc.?

I am David "Cory" Cummings. I am running for District 2 County Commissioner. I am married to Jessica Cummings. We have 2 children, Katie Brooke and Brandt Cummings. I am a 25 year employee for Norfolk Southern Railroad. I am currently the craft trainer for the Sheffield Terminal and also the co-chairman of the Sheffield Railroad Yard safety committee.

My personal interests consist of spending time with my family, hunting, fishing, gardening.

2. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking? Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office ?

In my career I hold a leadership position as a craft trainer. In that position I must train, instruct, monitor, and provide on the job feedback and often it does need to be instantaneously. I am required to document progress as well as document any mistakes that occur and develop a plan that will aid these individuals to become fully certified conductors. These plans are to ensure they understand areas that need improvement as well as steps they need to take to improve themselves. Additionally, as a safety committee co-chairman, we are asked to handle safety sensitive issues promptly. I am thorough in the decisions and duties that I conduct. Attention to detail is imperative and no one detail can be overlooked. These duties will be an asset to my role as commissioner.

3. From campaigning the past few months, what have Franklin County voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those once elected?

The primary concern that I have had voiced to me is the landfill. I have heard them, and I am in agreement that we need to protect Franklin County. We have some of the most beautiful natural resources here with our lakes. We have to make it a priority to preserve those. I am not interested in landfill expansion, nor am I interested in having any trash brought into our county.

I do think we need to begin thinking ahead of some of the upcoming issues we have with our own county trash management. One option I have thought about for our county is a transfer station. We have rail services that run right through our county. If we had a transfer station we could load our trash into a rail car and that opens up the option for us to have our own trash shipped out

## Experience serving the public a cornerstone of Hester's re-election bid for District Four

1. Tell us what you'd like voters to know about you personally, including family, career, personal interests, civic involvement, etc. I've lived in Franklin County all my life. I've been married for 44 years. I have 2 children, Adam and Amy, 3 grandsons, and a great grand daughter to come in July. I worked at Tiffin Motorhomes Inc. for 33 years. My son and I own a business in Red Bay installing windshields in motorhomes.

2. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking. Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office? I've worked for the public all my life. I worked in the service department at Tiffin Motorhomes for 33 years listening to peoples' problems and helping solve those problems. And now owning my own business helps me with the budget of Franklin County.

3. From campaigning the past few months, what have Franklin County voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those once elected? Concerns are mostly roads and when are they going to get Broad Band.

4. Do you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so, what are the offices you sought and/or served in? I've been a commissioner for Franklin County for the past 8 years and I've worked for Tiffin Motorhomes at the service center dealing with solving their problems since 1987. These problems are on motorhomes that can cost up to \$800,000.00. I've been a deacon at the Freewill Baptist Church in Red Bay for several years.

5. You are running in the Republican Primary. Tell us why you chose to seek office as a Republican and describe any involvement you've had at the local, state or federal level in Republican politics. I've been a republican all my life. I do like what the republican party stands for.

6. What are the primary accomplishments made during your tenure in office? When I became a commissioner, we had about 30 roads that have been turned into gravel. I think about 25 of those have been resurfaced plus some other roads have been resurfaced. More roads have already been approved for this year. The Broad Band project has been a big accomplishment for the County's' future in growing.

7. How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citizens contact you with questions or concerns? The citizens can contact me anytime like they have the last 8 years. They can call the commission office or on any other media forums the county has my number is 256-810-9974.

8. How do you define the job duties of the job you're seeking? It's considered a part-time job, but you are on call 24 hours a day. I have several jobs as a commissioner. I help with the budget. I turn in work orders and other problems to the right office. I cut trees out of the road and clean out culverts when needed.

9. Tell us something (funny or lighthearted) most people don't know about you. It can be a hidden talent, funny story or just something quirky about you. I enjoy many things outside, such as hunting, gardening, and especially flowers.

10. Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain separate, while others strongly disagree. How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office? I am a Christian and believe in Jesus Christ. I pray daily for our country and county problems. I pray especially for our leaders, military, police, fire fighters, schoolteachers, nurses, and doctors. I pray for the leaders of the county and citizens to work together to make our county a better place to live. Like this election, its God's election. I'm just a small part of it. I pray that God's will be done, not mine. Thanks.

and could be taken to just about anywhere in the contingent U.S. This would essentially take care of Franklin County residents trash permanently. Trains run through the county daily. Trash would not have to be stored. It could be loaded into a rail car daily. 1 rail car holds (70-80 tons) approximately 3 times the amount of a tractor trailer.

Being proactive in developing a plan for our county is essential. We can not wait until the problems are pressing issues. While time is on our side, a plan needs to be put together and implemented. If I am elected as District 2 county commissioner, I will work to make sure that the county financial decisions are what is in the best interest of all county residents. I think it is important to have a 5 year or even 10 year plan in place and look at what is currently a priority and what things will soon become a priority, and plan for the future.

The second concern I am asked about is the improvements in our roads. As commissioner we will have to work together and acquire as much funding and grant money we can to address the issues that are pressing. I think there needs to be plans in place that will allow the commissioners to make decisions that are in the best interest for the future of our county.

4. DO you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so what are the offices you sought and or served in?

5. You are running in the republican primary, tell us why you chose to seek office as a republican and describe any involvement you have had at the local, state, or federal level in republican politics?

The Alabama Republican party aligns with my personal beliefs, morals and values. I believe in working hard and individual rights. My involvement with local government stems from my late grandfather Bob Lois Cummings and father Gary Cummings. Both have served in local government and my dad, Gary Cummings currently serves in the local government as city councilman. I have been around local government most all my life and most importantly, with my father for the past 16 years.

6. For incumbents: what are the primary accomplishments made during your tenure in office?

For first time candidates: what goals and or priorities will you make should you win your election?

One of the things I would like to address is the times of the Franklin County Commissioner meetings. I think meetings should be held in the evenings so that residents who want to attend can do so without missing work. One other option could even be to have meetings live streamed. Meetings/agenda should be convenient and accessible to the residents of Franklin County.

As stated previously, I would start working on a solution for Franklin County trash management.

My priorities as a commissioner would be the concerns of the residents and how we can best address them. I believe my role as commissioner is to be an advocate and voice for the residents.

7. How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citizens contact you with questions or concerns?

I have put my phone number out before. Here it is once more, 256-810-9313. I will be glad to take any phone calls or even text messages from Franklin County residents. If I am elected as district 2 commissioner it is my goal to be the voice of the residents of Franklin County. I want to hear from you and I want to work with and for you all!

8. How do you define the job duties of the office you are seeking?

Manage the county infrastructure, roads, assist in financial decisions for the county accounts and bills, operate on a balanced budget and ensure there is not any unnecessary spending but also to ensure that each entity that is dependent on the county commission receives appropriate and fair funding. I will apply for grants that are available to our county. I think it is equally important to work and research the best options to try to get the best bang for our buck.

9. Tell us something funny or lighthearted most people do not know about you? It can be a hidden talent, funny story, or just something quirky about you?

I enjoy cooking and grilling. It is something I started at a young age and just have continued over the years.

10. Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain separate, while others strongly disagree? How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office?

Faith, morals and values are the compass for who I am. These together will guide me in any decision made day in and day out.

**For updates on news and sports, visit us online at [www.franklin-freepress.net](http://www.franklin-freepress.net)!**

# Clark brings 34 years experience in public sector to bid for Commission District Four

#1-Tell us what you want voters to know about you personally, including personal interests, civic involvement, etc.

I am Tracie Clark from Red Bay and I am running for Franklin County Commission District 4. I am happily retired from the City of Red Bay as of May 21, 2021 where I worked as Revenue Officer for 34 years. I am a graduate of Red Bay High School class of 1982 with honors and graduated from North West Junior College in 1984 with an Associates in Business degree. I have also received certification at the University of Alabama Continuing Education classes as a Certified Municipal Revenue Officer. I am married to Jeff Clark who works at Tiffin MotorHomes. I have two children Trey Bolding (Olivia) and Britan Crow (David). I also have one grandchild Chloe Crow who is two years old. My roots run deep in Franklin County. My Daddy was Johnny Hargett and my Mother was Lucille Hovater. My grand- parents were ST (Sidney) Hargett and Lurley Duncan and LD (Lenord) Hovater and Bertha Gates. My Daddy had five brothers and three sisters. My Mother had six brothers and four sis- ters. I have kinfolk all over Franklin County! I am presently a member of the Franklin County Chamber Board of Directors, Franklin County Cattlemen's Association, Red Bay Tree Commission, Red Bay Civitan Secretary, Red Bay Garden Club Vice President, Red Bay Christmas Parade Committee, Franklin County Seekers of the Past and the Red Bay Lions Club. I am the past chairman of the Red Bay Founders Fest and past board member of North Alabama Mountain Lakes Association. I was also the past treasurer of the Red Bay Tip Off Club and the past secretary of the Red Bay Lions Club as well as a member of the Franklin County Bicentennial Board.

#2- What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking? Specifically, how does your background and experience make you the best qualified candidate for the office? I have 34 years of experience in the public sector as an employee with The City of Red Bay. As a staff member, I was directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the city, and regularly gathered the data, did the research and provided anything that the Mayor and Council needed to make decisions and set policy. The years that I worked for the city I was the Water and Gas Clerk as well as the Revenue Officer. In city Government I have worked on dealing with collections of all taxes, street department, Garbage and Sewer as well as handling the Fire Department and Park and Recreation office duties. I am no stranger to local government! It has been a part of my life for 34 years.

#3-From campaigning the past few months, what have Franklin County voters shared with you as their primary concerns or issues for your office and how do you plan to address those once elected?

Property Tax: Property taxes going up is always a concern. But they fund our schools, libraries, police and fire departments along with public works, such as roads, parks, and playgrounds that are essential to our communities. Property tax is very important to the county's millage rate, but that does not make it easier to pay when due.

Roads and Bridges:I believe that we need to implement a local road and bridges safety plan for our county roads. Safer roads and streets will save lives. That is a goal we can all share to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries. Franklin County needs better roads. We also need to keep the right of ways trimmed back and also bush hogged.

Ambulance service: I am very concerned about our ambulance service in Franklin County. It has been controversial for years with issues arising due to ambulance short-ages and violation of the minimum number of ambulances that must be in service in Franklin County at any given time. Franklin County needs dependable ambulance service for the citizens of Franklin County and right now we do not have one. This will be one of the major concerns that I hope to revise. Ensuring that the residents of our county have access to the best healthcare services is very important to me. When a loved one is hurt or having medical issues, like a heart attack or stroke, we want ambulance response time to be immediate. Oftentimes, it is a matter of life and death the current response time that we are getting here in Franklin County is not acceptable.

Fire Department: It is also time for us to take a closer look at the Fire Departments role in our county and why we all need to step up and support them in any way we can. Fire Department ratings lower insurance for property owners. We need to work on our ratings and also have big- ger fire hydrants. We need to work to extend bigger water lines so we can put in bigger hydrants. I have worked with the Fire Department in Red Bay paying bills and working with the volunteers. I have the utmost respect for our Fire Departments in the county and I thank them for their service. I know how much it costs for turn out gear and to have the trucks and equipment serviced and up to code.

Employment Turnover: We also need to look into the reason why we have so much turnover in County employees. It takes a team to run a county and we need great employees to do that. I have a lot to learn but I am up for the challenge.

Homeless: The people of Franklin county are concerned regarding homelessness and I believe no one should have to live on the street or in a violent household. There are volunteers and those we serve work together to address the effects of homelessness, poverty, mental and physical illness abuse and addiction. We need programs that empower the most vulnerable among us to improve their quality of life, housing, health and safety; and to become active par- ticipating citizens.

Stray Dogs: Our County has a very bad stray dog problem and that will be one more thing that I hope to address if elected. The County needs to tackle the issue head on. We need to have a Collect Neuter Vaccinate and Return (CNVR) program. Fosters are greatly needed until a rescue commitment is secured. There is still much to be done. Save our strays of Franklin County!

Quarry: I am very sympathetic for the residents in the area of the proposed quarry. From what I understand the Franklin County Commission has no role in permitting the process of a quarry. The permitting is done through the State of Alabama and ADEM.

Tourism: One of my missions is to better the Franklin County Tourism. Franklin County you will find a variety of attractions for every type of person from the tourist to the explorer to even the relaxer. In the 2020 Census Franklin County population totaled over 32,000 people. We need to promote tourism in Franklin County, it brings in tax dollars. Franklin County is very fortunate to have Bear Creek Lakes that make up over 8000 acres. We need to promote camping, fishing, rafting, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, boating and rental of cabins. The Hodges Equestrian Park is made up of 50 miles of riding trails, arena for rodeos and campsites. The Dismals Canyon is a 85 acre Natural Conservatory that is a National Landmark. We also have the Bay Tree Council of Performing Arts and the Historic Roxy Theatre, the King Drive Inn, Red Bay Family Fun Park, Red Bay Museum, Spruce Pine Museum along with the North Alabama Hallelujah Trail (which includes First United Methodist Church Red Bay and Mt Pleasant Methodist Church in Russellville.

Landfill: First and foremost I hope and pray the landfill owner will not revisit this issue. I love this County and I consider it one of the most beautiful places on God's green Earth. We have four gorgeous lakes for recreation and flood control. We need to pre-serve them and the 647 square miles that make up Franklin County. As a commissioner, I will research and try to find other options for any of the county's future waste disposal needs and try to amend its solid waste management plan accordingly. Our county needs to recycle and I will try my best to make that program accessible to the county residents. As well as looking into an incinerator that would gen- erate more revenue and not be dangerous to the people and the land in Franklin County.

Meetings: If elected I will try to move all public meetings to no earlier than 6:00 pm on week- days, so that Franklin County citizens might actually be able to attend the com- mission meetings. If elected I will try to have all commission meetings live streamed and keep available for county residents to watch and refer back to. If elected I will try to ensure that the Commission post their meeting agenda 72 business hours in advance of all meetings, any last minute meeting agenda changes or additions must be posted 24 business hours in advance and post the commission meeting minutes and supporting documents within days of holding the meetings, not weeks, all on a user friendly website that citizens can easily access and download from easily. If elected I will try to ensure the Commission creates, maintains, updates and regularly reports on a Five Year Strategic Plan- one that informs all county residents on our county's direction on all resi- dents will have input on before projects start. I would like for the County Commission to also make use of Advisory Committees composed of county citizens, thereby tapping into expertise and input available within the county. If elected I will try to seek a trans- parent County Commission who will keep Franklin County clean and beautiful for gen- erations to come.

#4 – Do you have any experience either running for elected office or serving in elected office? If so, what are the offices you sought and/or served in? I am the Vice President of the Red Bay Garden Club. I am the Secretary of the Red Bay Civitan Club. I am a Director on the Franklin County Chamber Board. Past Secretary Red Bay Lions Club. Past Treasurer of Red Bay Tip Off Club. Past Board Member of North Alabama Mountain Lakes Association.

#5- You are running in the Republican Primary. Tell us why you chose to seek office as a Republican and describe any involvement you've had at the local, state or federal level in Republican politics. I am very proud and excited to be running for the Republican nomination for Franklin County Commissioner District 4. My interest in politics is driven by a strong belief in the United States Constitution and our current lack of following the constitution in this country. I would love to work for the citizens of Franklin County as Franklin County Commissioner District 4. I hope that I can be the change that Franklin County needs! I was motivated by a desire to continue improving the quality of life in Franklin County. We have a rich heritage but it is my goal for us to have an even richer future.

#6- For incumbents: What are the primary accomplishments made during your tenure in office? For first time candidates: What goals and/or priorities will you make should you win your election? Thank you for giving me the opportunity to answer these questions for the citizens of Franklin County. I am fortunate that I have walked in similar shoes of the citizens of Franklin County. My work ethic is what truly defines me and I look forward to us working together. Franklin County is blessed beyond measure, don't miss an opportunity to experience it! Franklin County is a hidden gem! If elected I will make sure that your vote will count. A vote for me is a vote that I will work hard for you!

#7 - How will you make yourself accessible should you win elected office? How will citi- zens contact you with questions or concerns? If I am elected as your Franklin County Commissioner District 4, I will work hard to ensure that the county's needs are met and that our voices are heard. I will be accessible to all members of this great county and will work hard for you. If you have any questions or would like to speak with me please feel free to give me a call at 256-436- 6809. I'm retired! I will work hard to make sure that your calls are answered and your needs are addressed.

#8 -How do you define the job duties of the office you're seeking? The overall respon- sibility of the Franklin County Commission is managing and administrating county oper- ations as a governing authority; develop and manage county budget, develop a long term strategic plan with county goals for successful growth and revenue generated while maintaining the county infra- structure like roads, bridges, broadband and parks; to ensure public safety and promote economic development and attracting commercial investments and representing the interest of the people; to develop a fiscal management policy in areas like investments, loans, and bonds; to hold county commission meetings that are open to the public; to oversee the county personnel system as well as oversee- ing county departments like waste management; while approving all county contracts; to communicate with independently elected officers and officials to address issues and attend training and conferences. The Franklin County Commissioner must carefully con- sider proposals and projects that come before them for their action. I will do the work required to make these decisions. I will research the request, work with the staff to deter- mine economic impacts, get forecasts for results revenue, citizens affected, impact on our beautiful farmland and our lakes and get all the data and information together to make the best decisions for you.

#9- Tell us something (funny or lighthearted) most people don't know about you. It can be a hidden talent, funny story or just something quirky about you. I started hauling hay at 12 years old, driving a stick shift in the floor pick up. I have my CDL license from when I drove a school bus as a substitute bus driver for Franklin County School and the alter- native school. I have also worked in the lunch room as a substitute as well as being a substitute teacher. I also mow, weedeat, pressure wash and clean up rental property. I also have a garden, and can/freeze our crops. I have worked on repairing fences and have painted a cattle trailer. I can also drive a trac- tor! While in high school I worked at Sonic Drive In delivering food to cars and at Lance Garment preticketing shirts. After col- lege I worked at Tidwell Motor Coach as A/P Secretary. I am not afraid of hard work!!

#10- Finally, we hear so much in our world about how politics and religion must remain sepa- rate, while others strongly disagree. How will you use your faith should you be elected? Do you believe your faith should be a guide in decision making in elected office? The motion of whether or not politics and religion should be kept a part is highly controversial in today's world. While religion has often been ignored as an important political factor, it is becoming increasingly clear that it plays a substantial role in world politics. I believe it is necessary for religion and politics to remain united. I will take my faith to work with me. I believe that your faith and values are



# Jason Miller

## PROBATE JUDGE

---

### March 5 Republican Primary



*Please  
Vote for My  
Daddy!*