



Doug Welborn Brought
Candidates Together for
QUALIFYING
at Central City Hall
See Page 8

September 2026 • Vol. 29 No. 8 • No. 510 • 20 Pages • CentralCityNews.net • Central City News on Facebook • centralcitynews@hotmail.com • 225-921-1433

Central Will Elect New Mayor Tuesday, Nov. 3

Four Enter Mayor's Race



GENO GUERCIO
Businessman



AARON MOAK
Metro Councilman



LON VICKNAIR
Retired Navy Officer



DESPO "D'ANN" WELLS
Central City Council

Incumbent Mayor Evans
Decides Not to Run for
Second Term as Mayor
Of City of Central, LA

CENTRAL - With the decision by Central Mayor Wade Evans not to seek reelection, four candidates stepped forward to seek the office during qualifying in July. The candidates spoke at the Chamber of Commerce of East Baton Rouge Parish Tuesday, Aug. 25. The first of the candidates, **Geno Guercio**, a veteran of 40 years in business, said drainage and educa-
See **CANDIDATES** on Page 11

Key Local Races Facing Voters in Central

Candidates for Police Chief



Roger Corcoran
(R)

Paul Kimball
(R)

Larry "Lew" Walters, Jr.
(R)

City Council - Dist. 3



Hannah Brown
(R)

Dave Freneaux
(R)

School Board - Dist. 1



Jason Leaphart
(R)

Jeffery LaCour
(D)

Justice of the Peace - Dist. 3



LaShawn Goodwin
(D)

Mark Miley
(R)

Henrietta Williams
(D)

CENTRAL - Leading up to state-wide elections on Nov. 3, races for U.S. Senate, Congress, and Mayor of Central may get most of the coverage, but there are many other important races on the ballot. In the City of Central, we have a hot race for Police Chief, an election for one unfilled seat on the Central City Council, and another

race for one seat on the Central Community School Board. There are also races for District Court, Family Court, Justice of the Peace, and Constable. In the race for Chief of Police, incumbent Chief Roger Corcoran has attracted two opponents — Paul Kimball and Larry "Lew" Walters, Jr. Both are long-time law

enforcement professionals. Five of the seven members of the Central City Council qualified for reelection and were unopposed. Newcomer Richard Venable qualified for election to the Council seat held by D'Ann Wells, who is running for Mayor. He was unopposed. City Councilwoman Dr. Kim Fralick decided not to seek reelection.

On the first day of qualifying, Hannah Brown stepped forward to seek the seat. She was followed by former Councilman Dave Freneaux, who decided to run for the seat, which he held before Fralick. Four incumbent members of the Central School Board qualified to run for reelection and were unopposed.
See **KEY LOCAL** on Page 13

Coach Simoneaux on Central Wildcats

In Exclusive Interview,
Central's Head Coach
Tells What to Expect
From His Team This Fall

Woody Jenkins
Editor

CENTRAL - Central High head football coach David Simoneaux has plenty of reason for optimism this season. Last year's team, which finished 9-3 and traveled deep into the state playoffs, is returning essentially the same on both sides of the football. Just bigger, faster, and more experienced than last year! Central opens the regular season with Acadiana Sept. 4 at
See **COACH** on Page 3



LAST THURSDAY'S SCRIMMAGE against Madison Prep at Wildcat Stadium

2026 Central High Varsity Football		
Aug. 28	Jamboree @ EA	A
Sept. 4	Acadiana	H
Sept. 11	Denham Springs	H
Sept. 18	John Ehret (HC)	H
Sept. 25	West Monroe	A
Oct. 2	Ouachita	H
Oct. 9	Zachary*	H
Oct. 16	OPEN	O
Oct. 23	Catholic*	A
Oct. 30	Liberty* (Sr Night)	H
Nov. 6	Woodlawn*	A
*District 4-5A Games		
Head Coach: David Simoneaux		
Principal: Brandon LaGroue		

15 Candidates Vying For Voter Attention In Two Congressional Seats in EBR Parish

CENTRAL - Voters in East Baton Rouge Parish will vote for Congress Nov. 3 in one of two reapportioned districts — the 6th District, which is very similar to the old 6th District represented by Garret Graves, and the 2nd District, which extends from North Baton Rouge down through the River Parishes to New Orleans.

Central, Zachary, St. George and South Baton Rouge are all in the 6th District. Predominantly black areas in North Baton Rouge and the inner city of Baton Rouge are in the 2nd District.

Areas along Hooper Road west of the Comite River are in the 2nd.

The 6th District leans heavily Republican. The Republican Party of East Baton Rouge Parish has endorsed Sen. Rick Edmonds and Monique Appeaning, whereas the Louisiana Republican Party has endorsed Sen. Blake Miguez. As we go to press, Gov. Jeff Landry is trying to undo the endorsement of Miguez.

On the Democratic side, there are three candidates, former Metro Council member Chauna Banks, Lindsay “Rubia” Garcia, and Pat Forbes. Garcia apparently had visions of plowing new ground as Louisiana’s version of AOC. However, the entry of Banks into the race appears to have closed that door. Some staunch conservatives such as Stephen Wagley and Larry Davis III are hoping to catch fire and break out of the pack.

Louisiana’s 6th Congressional District Candidates



Monique Appeaning (R)



Chauna Banks (D)



Rufus Craig (Libertarian)



Larry Davis, III (R)



Rick Edmonds (R)



Patrick “Pat” Forbes (D)



Lindsay “Rubia” Garcia (D)



Michael Mebruer (R)



Blake Miguez (R)



Stephen Wagley (R)

Louisiana’s 2nd Congressional District Candidates



Lisa Ballay (Libertarian)



Walter “Rocky” Beach (No Party)



Troy A. Carter, Sr. (D)



Renada “Honey” Collins (No Party)



Rev. Peter Williams (R)





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Coach: We're Bigger, Faster, Stronger

While the Coach Isn't Saying It Directly, Team Looks Very Strong for 2026 Football Season

Continued from Page 1

at Wildcat Stadium. Coach Simoneaux is also the Athletic Director. He has responsibility for 1,600 students, more than 600 of whom participate in the school's athletic program, which includes 24 sports.

The coach, who has won State Championships as a player at Parkview and as a coach, says this year's Wildcat team will have strong leadership.

Offense. The starting quarterback will be Max Gassiott who finished last season strong and is expected to be improved this year. He's up to 190. For college, he will likely attend Nicholls State.

Tristan Rose will return as a running back, one of three outstanding ball carriers this season. He was strong down the stretch last season. He has an offer from Southern.

Landon Crochet will be the center, his third year as the starter. Landon improves every year. He's intelligent, consistent, and relentless and a coach on the field.

Austin Adams is back and should be strong at right guard.

At left tackle, Kaeden Shows stands 6-5 and weighs 290, a returning starter.

Kaleb LeBouregois, left guard,



Central Coach David Simoneaux

6-2, 300 should be outstanding.

At wide receiver, Brody Diel is a coach's dream. He stands 6-3, 190.

Marcus Watson caught 15 passes last year and should double that this year. He is looking at Houston.

Tight end A. J. Parks is a big boy, 6-1, 220. Strong in the weight room. A first year starter but with a lot of experience.

Defense. Defensive end Jaydon Garnett, 3rd year as a starter. He previously started on offense but has moved to defense. He has an offer from Dartmouth. With his GPA and ability, he has a lot of po-

tential. He's a "big old boy." Noseguard Ja'Mareon Jackson started as a sophomore and is returning. He squatted 500 lbs. recently. He's 6-0, 280.

A number of other will play including John Robinson, Lorenzoe Williams, and Evan MacKinnon.

At linebacker, Camden Rankin comes in at 5-11, 195, but is like a block of granite. Good speed, good play calling.

Also at linebacker, Lane Billings, 6-0, 210 is a wrecking ball.

Another linebacker is Emil Ruffini, a first year starter, dynamic, tough.

Secondary. Cornerback Davonte Sanders is a returning starter. He's 5-9, 175, made a lot of plays.

The other cornerback is Malik Nixon, a first year starter. May be headed to Nicholls.

Third year starter safety Marvin Joseph is a 6-0, 210 animal. Coach Simoneaux says he's one of the best players he's coached. He will also get a lot of carries on offense.

Dylan Thompson played cornerback last year and is back again.

Kicker. Nathan Hunter is a second year starter. He added 20 pounds this year. Coach Simoneaux says, "One of the toughest kids I've ever coached. He fits in because he works so hard."

Return Specialists. Will include Marvin Joseph, Brody Diel, Marcus Watson, and Tristan Rose.

Coaches this year include:

- Zach Morris, alumnus and 4th year coach

- Robbie Yellott
- Sam Kennerson
- Joel Ward
- Joey Jarreau
- Corey Landry
- Chance Atkins

The season opener against Acadiana will feature a match up against Acadiana head coach Doug Dotson, former head coach at Central. The following week, Central will host Denham Springs, followed by John Ehret, also at Wildcat Stadium.

2026 Central Private Varsity Football Schedule

Aug. 27	Northlake (Jamboree)	H
Sept. 9	St. Thomas	A
Sept. 11	Ascen. Christian	A
Sept. 18	St. John	H
Sept. 25	Centerville	A
Oct. 2	Highland (HC)	H
Oct. 9	Ben Franklin*	H
Oct. 16	Kentwood	A
Oct. 22	E. Feliciana	H
Oct. 30	Varnado (Senior Night)	H
Nov. 6	Catholic PC	A

* Indicates District games
Head Coach: Cole Holden
Principal: Dana Russell
Athletic Director: Scott Shaffett



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Jeff Landry Continues to Bully His Way Through His Term

State GOP Endorses Blake Miguez in Sixth, Governor Is Outraged, Trying to Reverse It

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MONIQUE APPEANING
Republican Candidate for Congress
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Let's Finish What We Started.

Landry's Payback Started By Firing Party's Consultant, Threatening Members of State GOP Executive Body

Woody Jenkins

Editor

BATON ROUGE - Gov. Jeff Landry's attempts to bully state legislators and other political leaders into submission is well known at the State Capitol. Disagree with him on just about anything, and he will have you or your spouse fired, you will lose the base of your political support, or find your private business has lost a valuable contract.

That's just the way he operates.

Now the governor is twisting the arms of leaders of the Louisiana Republican Party, who had the audacity to endorse someone he dislikes.

Last Sunday, the Executive Committee of the state party voted to endorse Sen. Blake Miguez for Congress from the new Sixth Congressional District. The governor reportedly hit the ceiling!

He was furious and immediately ordered the firing of the state party's long-time political consultant, Rhett Davis, who is actually a loyalist of the governor.

Now the governor's people are twisting the arms of members of the State Executive Committee to get them to reverse their decision and withdraw Miguez's endorsement.

The Louisiana Republican Party has an unusual endorsement process. There are no forums, no questionnaires, no candidate interviews, and no participation by the party's rank and file.

Instead, candidates can be endorsed when a majority of the members of the State Central Committee residing within a district petition the party's Executive Committee to endorse a candidate running in that district. Then the Executive Committee of the party meets, sometimes by Zoom, and votes on whether to endorse.

Last Sunday, the Executive Committee of the Louisiana Republican Party met by Zoom and voted to endorse State Sen. Blake Miguez for Congress. One source said the vote was 5-0.

That put Sen. Miguez in a strong position. He already has more than \$4 million on hand. That's more than all other candidates combined.

Having the money is no guarantee of victory, as we have often seen. However, it certainly doesn't hurt. When combined with the endorsement of the State Republican Party, Miguez is in a stronger position as the race enters the home stretch to Nov. 3.

Now the governor is reportedly on the warpath to get the State Executive Committee to reverse themselves and endorse no one.

The governor has been gunning for Blake Miguez for the past two years. Perhaps because Miguez, a strong conservative, is independent-minded and can't be controlled by the governor. Or perhaps Landry sees him as a possible challenger in the governor's race next

year. Whatever the reason, Landry is going all-out to stop Miguez from being elected to Congress.

Landry has been threatening the members of the party's State Executive Committee and has reportedly given some of them "one last chance to correct their mistake" before he goes after them in earnest.

It will be interesting to see if the Executive Committee caves and bows to the governor's demands. People usually do.

Members of the Louisiana House and Senate have reportedly tired of Landry's constant threats and bullying. Many say they don't like him and are genuinely angry over his temper and his dictatorial way of governing. They say if you vote against him on anything, you will pay a heavy price.

Short-term, the bully usually gets his way. But, at a certain point, people have enough and they find a way to stop the bully, neutralize him, and remove him from his position. Don't be surprised if legislators and party leaders find ways to undermine the governor between now and election day in 2027.

★★★

Here in East Baton Rouge Parish, the Republican Party at the local level has endorsed Sen. Rick Edmonds and Monique Appeaning for the Sixth Congressional District. The process at the parish level involves the candidates being invited to speak at the Ronald Reagan Newsmaker Luncheon, asked to complete a detailed questionnaire to learn how they will vote if elected, and being interviewed by the Parish Executive Committee one on one.

Then a majority of the Parish Executive Committee, which is elected by the Republican voters at the time of the Presidential primary, vote on whether to endorse the candidate.

Earlier this year, Sen. Rick Edmonds and Monique Appeaning went through that process, emerged with flying colors, and were endorsed.

Meanwhile, Sen. Miguez, who is a solid conservative, declined invitations to address the Reagan luncheon and declined to fill out the Republican Party's questionnaire.

The parish party's rules forbid it from endorsing Blake Miguez simply because he has not gone through the endorsement process, despite being invited to participate several times.

Now we'll see if the State Party's endorsement of Sen. Miguez sticks. If it does, he will be in a stronger position. But even then, the race will be far from over. There are some good candidates in the field, and we will see what they can do.

NOTE: Central City News editor Woody Jenkins also serves as chairman of the Republican Party of East Baton Rouge Parish.

Republican Party of East Baton Rouge Parish has endorsed
Monique Appeaning
Rick Edmonds
for Congress
Sixth District of Louisiana

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ST. GEORGE LEADER
Vol. 6 • No. 5
910 North Foster Drive
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Archives: CentralCityNews.net (access is free)
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The Leader was founded April 30, 1998. The Central City News was founded April 21, 2005. They merged May 4, 2006. The South Baton Rouge Journal began publication in 1989. It resumed publication as the Capital City News on Aug. 16, 2012, with Vol. 21, No. 1. It has become the St. George Leader. The North Baton Rouge Journal began on August 11, 1966 and went on hiatus in 1976. It resumed publication as the Istrouma Journal on April 6, 2017.



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Justice Jeff Hughes and wife Lisa with daughter Alyssa

District Court Orders Newspaper to Pay \$300,000

The Advocate Found Guilty of Defamation
In Suit by Supreme Court Justice Hughes

Jury Found Newspaper
Falsely Accused Judge
Of Unethical Behavior
And Did So with Malice

Woody Jenkins
Editor

PLAQUEMINE - It took seven years and hundreds of hours of work by his legal team, but Louisiana Supreme Court Associate Justice Jeff Hughes was vindicated Monday night by a 12-member jury in the case of *Jefferson Hughes v. Capital City Press*. This was a defamation case filed in the 18th Judicial District and tried before Judge Kevin Kimball.

The jury found **The Advocate** had defamed Justice Hughes and did so with malice. It awarded him court costs and \$300,000.

In a long series of articles and in-house editorials in 2019, **The Advocate** newspaper in Baton Rouge alleged that Justice Hughes had engaged in unethical behavior 20 years earlier when he was a district judge in Livingston Parish.

I was called as one of three expert witnesses in the case. I was qualified by the judge as an expert in journalistic practices and journalistic ethics. In that capacity, I reviewed multiple articles about Justice Hughes, which appeared in the print or online versions of **The Advocate**. In my search, I found stories in **The Advocate** where the newspaper had these things to say

- about Hughes:
- “A scoundrel”
 - “A mockery of justice”
 - “Sordid conduct”
 - “Betrayed the cause of justice”
 - “Grotesque misconduct”
 - “Unsuitable for the job”
 - “Placed his prejudices above legal principles”
 - “A judge’s misbehavior”
 - “Significant lapses”
 - “The most notorious beneficiary of unethical judicial behavior”

Such statements are very rare in newspapers. All of the pejorative language was filed in the record, but the jury was only asked to rule on one editorial published by **The Advocate**. The question asked by the judge in the case was whether that editorial constituted defamation and what was the monetary value of the defamation. In response to those questions, the jury found defamation and damages of \$300,000. The jury was not given the opportunity to assess damages for the other articles.

At the root of all of **The Advocate**’s negative stories about Justice Hughes was a single allegation. The allegation was that as a district judge in 1999, he presided over a trial when the attorney for one of parties was his girlfriend.

The first article, which was published June 23, 2019, took up half the front page of **The Advocate**. It was entitled, “An Obvious Source of Bias” and went on for four pages.

The article relied heavily on legal experts who said, “A judge carrying on a romantic relationship with counsel in a case over which he exercises control should recuse himself, and it isn’t a close call.” They quoted a legal expert as saying, “It’s a classic conflict of interest, an obvious source of bias.”



They quoted other legal experts who agreed.

The problem is, the evidence showed that then-District Judge Hughes never tried a case when his girlfriend was counsel for one of the parties, and **The Advocate** knew that to be the case, because it had reported on one occasion that she was off the case in August 1998, long before the alleged conflict of interest occurred. Nevertheless, they returned to the lie and repeated it over and over, even after Justice Hughes himself provided the court documents to the newspaper showing the attorney was off the case in August 1998.

It was also notable that in the newspaper’s time line of Judge Hughes’ alleged conflict of interest, the withdrawal of the attorney from the case in August 1998 was omitted.

To make things worse, **The Advocate** refused to print a retraction even after Justice Hughes presented them with the facts from court records. Then three years after **The Advocate** had the facts and a new Managing Editor, the newspaper attached an Editor’s Note to the online version of the old article. The note said the attorney was off the case in August 1998.

This in no way served as a retraction or made up for the damage the judge had suffered.

With the newspaper unwilling to make things right and with no one

except a court having the power to do so, Hughes had no option but to file suit.

The court qualified Keith Fisher as an expert in judicial ethics, legal ethics, and constitutional law. He found that Judge Hughes did nothing wrong or unethical in the case in question. The court qualified Dr. Leekene Malin as an expert in mass media, public relations, and media ethics. She testified that **The Advocate** in its series of articles on Justice Hughes failed to comply with the Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists, the Associated Press, or the Public Relations Society of America.

The Advocate offered no experts to testify under oath in court.

Inherent in the jury’s decision was the finding that **The Advocate** acted with malice.

★★★

It should be noted that **The Advocate** made much of an apology letter Justice Hughes wrote in connection with the case, but that letter had nothing to do with **The Advocate**’s false charge that he tried the case with his girlfriend as legal counsel for a party.

★★★

Congratulations to the judge and his legal team — Caleb Didriksen, Erin Bruce Saucier, Barry Marionneau, and Chuck Hughes.

Hughes has been on the bench since 1990 and is apparently the longest-serving judge in Louisiana. During that time, he has handled many thousands of cases, some of which have touched the lives of all our citizens. His record is admirable. Not perfect because everyone makes mistakes. But admirable.

Hopefully, this ends a sad period — seven years when this good man and his family were subjected to public scorn and ridicule for something that never happened.

The editor of **The Advocate** has retired and is no longer there.

The Advocate could appeal the decision, and so could Justice Hughes, but it would be better if the jury’s verdict ends the matter, so that everyone can move on.

While the damage to Justice Hughes was much greater than the judgment in the case, at least the record has been set straight, and his good name has been cleared.

Ronald Reagan Newsmaker Luncheon

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Division B



Winston DeCuir, Jr. Justin DeLaune

District Judge 19th JDC
ES 1, Division L



Elzie Alford Jermaine Guillory

District Judge 19th JDC
ES 1, Division M



ReAzalia Allen Allison "AJ" Sabine Vernon Thomas

BATON ROUGE - All 15 District Court judge-ships in the 19th Judicial District (East Baton Rouge Parish) are up for election Nov. 3. Be-cause of mandatory retirements and a new reap-portionment plan, the district court is likely to have a more conservative tilt.

The current court has 10 judges who come from majority black districts and five from a majority white district.

Voter registration in the parish is 47 percent white and 44 percent black.

Under the new reapportionment system, seven judges will be elected from District 1, a Democrat-leaning majority black district, and seven judges will be elected from District 2, a Republican-leaning majority white district. The 15th judge will be elected parishwide.

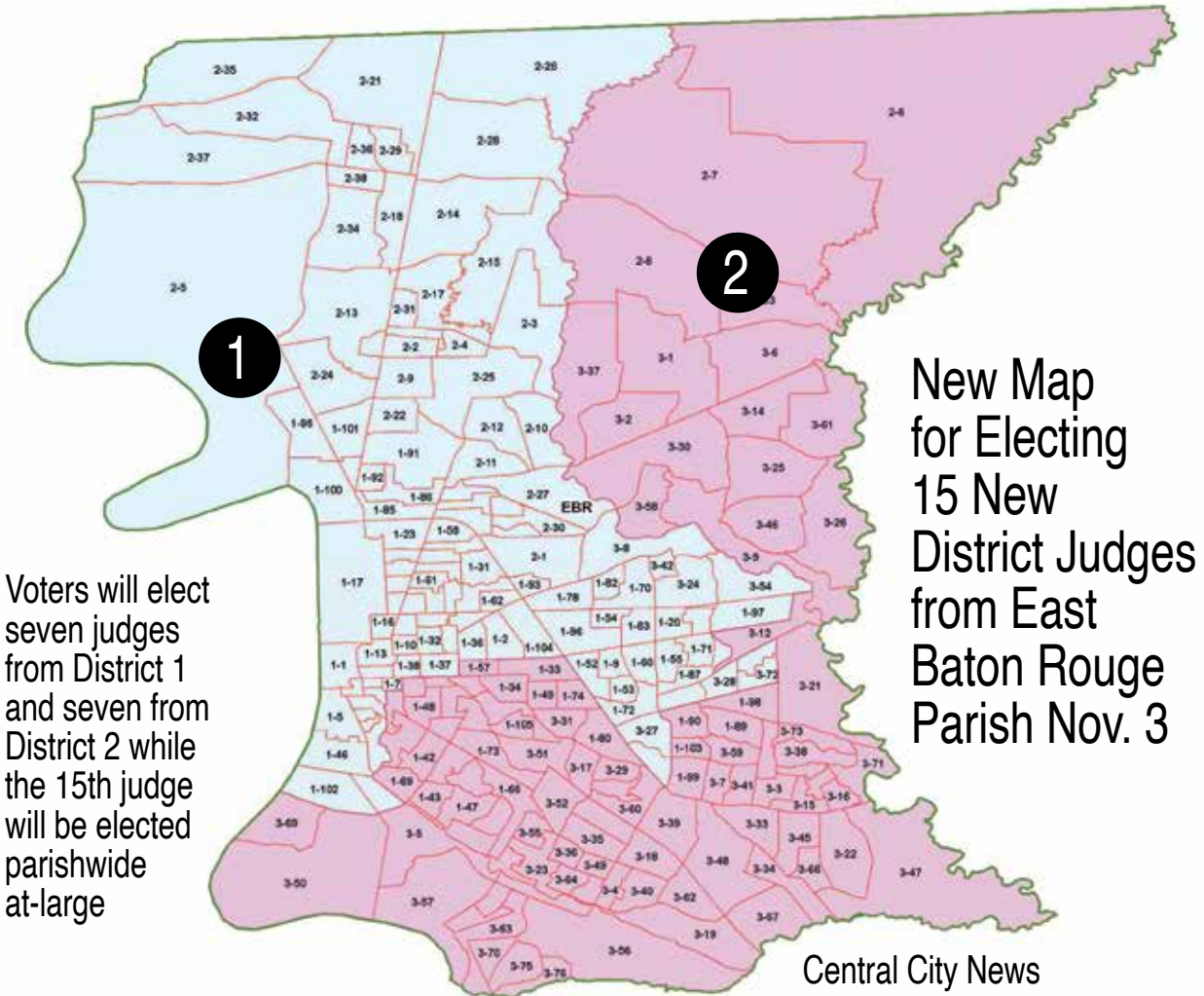
Ten incumbent judges were unopposed for reelection, and two of the five vacant seats have only one candidate. As a result, there are only three judgeships still to be decided in the parish Nov. 3.

In District 1, which includes Baker, Zachary, and all of North Baton Rouge except Central and Pride, two judgeships will be decided, Di- vision L and Division M.

Division L — Attorneys Elzie Alford and Jer- maine Guillory are running for Division L from District 1.

Division M — Attorneys ReAzalia Allen, Allison “AJ” Sabine, and Vernon Thomas, also from District 1.

Parishwide Division B — Perhaps the most interesting race will be the parishwide race for Division B featuring Winston DeCuir, Jr., a Democrat, and Justin DeLaune, a Republican.



Candidates for Family Court Judge

Family Court Judge
Division A



Joseph Cataldie Judge Caulette "Twin" Guillard

Family Court Judge
Division C

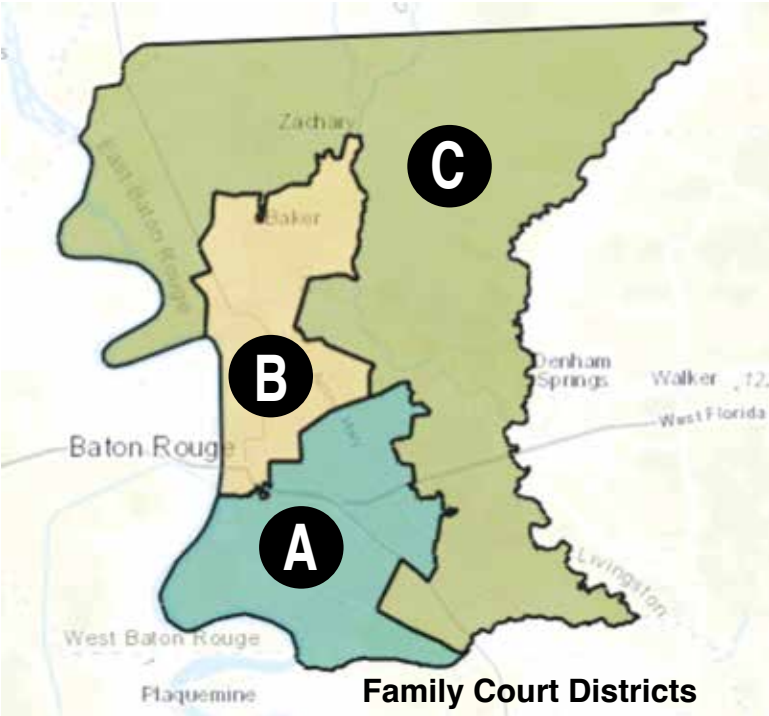


Lawrence "L.T." Dupre Wendy Edwards Morice

BATON ROUGE - Four Baton Rouge area attorneys are vying for two seats on the East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court in the election Tuesday, Nov. 3.

In Division A, incumbent Family Court Judge Caulette “Twin” Guillard is be- ing challenged by Baton Rouge attorney Joseph Cataldie. The election will be a rematch of the May 16 special elec- tion when Guillard defeated Cataldie to fill the vacancy left by the retirement of Family Court Judge Pam Baker in 2025.

This area includes South Baton Rouge, Melrose, Villa Del Ray, Broadmoor,



Sherwood Forest, South Baton Rouge, and the western part of the City of St. George.

Division A has two Family Court judges. The other judge, Kyle Russ, has served since 2023. He is unopposed for re- election this fall. Also unopposed is Family Court Judge Erika Green, who was reelected from Division B, a district which includes downtown, Baker, and parts of North Baton Rouge.

In Division C, Zachary City Prosecu- tor L.T. Dupre and Baton Rouge attor- ney Wendy Edwards Morice are running to replace Family Court Judge Charlene Day who took office in 2011 and has reached the mandatory retirement age.

This district goes from the northwest part of East Baton Rouge Parish near Port Hudson all the way to St. George in the southeast corner of the parish. It includes the cities of Zachary and Central and the eastern part of the City of St. George.

Since only two candidates are running in each race, no runoff will be necessary.

Clerk of Court Doug Welborn Holds Qualifying at Central City Hall



COUNCILMAN BRITON MYER (left) with his wife Chelsea and their two children after qualifying. Lon Vicknair (left/center), his wife Rebecca, their children, and Clerk of Court Doug Welborn. Councilman Aaron McKinney with Clerk of Court Doug Welborn and Aaron’s wife Hannah and their four children. Chief Roger Corcoran (right) with Gabrielle Savoye, Clerk of Court Doug Welborn, and Whitney Wilson.



CANDIDATE FOR CHIEF OF POLICE Paul Kimball (left) with his family after qualifying. Candidate for Mayor Geno Guercio (center) talking with Doug Welborn. Brandon Abadie (right), administrator of elections for East Baton Rouge Parish, qualifies Kenny Wall for the Central Community School Board. He was unopposed in District 3. In the background is Fred Sliman, campaign manager for Paul Kimball.



BRANDON ABADIE (left) with the Clerk of Court’s Office qualifies Central School Board member Michael Hooper who was unopposed in District 6. Metro Councilman Aaron Moak (right/center) during qualifying with John Swearingen of Doug Welborn’s office. Hannah Brown (right) with her family after qualifying to run for Central Council District 3.



SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER MIKE DAVIS (left) was unopposed in District 5. School board member Jason Leaphart has opposition in District 1. Chief of Police Roger Corcoran (center) with Doug Welborn. Councilman at Large Joshua Roy (right/center) was unopposed. Councilwoman D’Ann Wells (right) is running for mayor of Central.



LEAH VECK (left) was unopposed for School Board District 2. Councilman Tim Lazaroe (left/center) who was unopposed with Richard Venable who will be the new councilman for District 4. Henrietta Williams (center), candidate for Justice of the Peace in District 3, with her son Caleb. Dwayne Rogers (right/center) and Lee Russell (right) are running against each other for Constable from JP District 2 in the Pride and Baywood area.

Candidates for Central City Offices Nov. 3

Mayor, Chief of Police and Central City Council Districts

Candidates for Mayor of Central



Geno Guercio



Aaron Moak

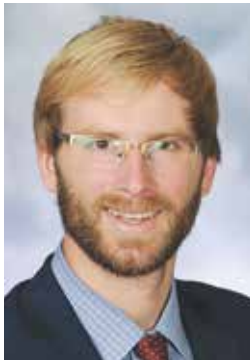


Lon Vicknair



Despo D'Ann Wells

Council District 5



Briton Myer
UNOPPOSED

Council District 4



Richard Venable
UNOPPOSED

Council District 3



Hannah Brown



Dave Freneau

Council District 1



Tim Lazaro
UNOPPOSED

Council District 2



J.D. Lavergne
UNOPPOSED

Council-at-Large



Aaron McKinney
UNOPPOSED



Josh Roy
UNOPPOSED

Candidates for Central Police Chief



Roger Corcoran



Paul Kimball



Larry "Lew"
Walters, Jr.

Central School Board Districts

On Nov. 3, 2026, Central voters will elect a new seven-member School Board composed of one member elected from each of seven single-member districts. Current board members Roxanne Atkinson and David Walker are term limited and will not be running for re-election. By the time qualifying ended, only one district had more than one candidate. In District 1, incumbent Jason Leaphart will face challenger Jeffery LaCour.

District	Representative	Status
1	Jason Leaphart, Jeffery LaCour	Incumbent, Challenger
2	Kenneth Wall	UNOPPOSED
3	Leah Veck	UNOPPOSED
4	Nick Carmena	UNOPPOSED
5	Mike Davis	UNOPPOSED
6	Michael Hooper	UNOPPOSED
7	Carol Norwood	UNOPPOSED

The Central Community School District was created as a result of an amendment to the Louisiana Constitution approved by voters statewide, in East Baton Rouge Parish, and in Central in 2006. The interim school board was appointed by Gov. Kathleen Blanco in January 2007. They selected Mike Faulk as district superintendent. The first employee hired was Coach Sid Edwards. The new board officially took over the existing schools in the district on July 1, 2007, and schools in Central opened in August 2007. Voters in the district chose the first elected board that fall. Today, the Central Community School System is one of the highest performing in Louisiana. It operates five schools. The district superintendent is Dr. Jason Fountain.

Candidates for Mayor of Central Tackle Issues at Chamber of Commerce of EBR

Continued from Page 1

tion are the issues of greatest importance to the people of Central.

Guercio reviewed his 40 years' experience serving on the Self-Insured Fund Board and how it broadened his business experience.

He has also been in business for himself for 40 years, specializing in high end remodeling. During that time, he served as president of the Baton Rouge Homebuilders.

Guercio was involved with the late Rep. Clif Richardson as the people of Central worked to start the new City of Central, using DEMCO as their home base.

During the Great Flood of 2016, he helped rescue people, including former Baton Rouge Police Chief Wayne Rogillio.

Guercio said he will be the people's Mayor and do the right thing.

Metro Councilman **Aaron Moak** reviewed his lifelong interest in the Central community starting when he joined the Junior Fire Program at age 13. He said he later worked full-time as a fireman. During his time off, he got in the IT business, which is now 30 years old.

He recalled being an early member of the Central Area Business Association and served three years as president. He always wanted to be part of their annual Christmas parade and was one of the early supporters of incorporating the City of Central.

He was on the first elected Central City Council, where he served



CANDIDATES FOR MAYOR • Lon Vicknair • Geno Guercio • Aaron Moak • Despo “D’Ann” Wells

three terms.

When Mayor Wade Evans decided not to run for reelection, it created an opportunity for him to run.

He spoke with pride of his service on the Metro Council.

Central City Council member **D’Ann Wells** recalled that she was named Teacher of the Year at Central Middle School and then served as principal at Galilee Baptist Academy, where she was able to earn state approval for the school.

She later returned to teach in the public schools in Livingston Parish in order to get back into the state retirement system.

She said people in Central are concerned about over development, and she does not want to overcrowd our streets.

She said she is proud of the fact that the current Central City Council has embarked on a \$17 million drainage improvement plan.

On the other hand, she expressed concern at recent changes that make it easier to build new developments and that reduced requirements.

“I want to keep Central Central,” she said and emphasized that she doesn’t want to overburden our school system, which is one of Central’s best features.

Lon Vicknair recalled moving to Central when he was eight years

old and growing up here. He graduated from Central High in 1999 and began a career in the U.S. Navy, which led to his serving all over the world during 13 deployments.

“I’ve seen the bad, and that’s not what we want in the USA,” he said. He rose from a seaman to one of the highest ranking enlisted men in the service and then to an officer.

In the Navy, he had roles of increasing responsibility and functioned at the executive level for the last half of his service. Upon retirement, he returned to Central and worked as an energy executive supervising projects across the

See CENTRAL on Page 16

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About Me

- Resident of Central for 33 Years
- Coached Little League - Jackson Park and Lovett Road Park
- Business Owner for 40 Years
- Chairman, Residential Licensing Board of EBR for Nine Years
- LA Home Builders Association SIF Trustee 30+ Years
- 1990 President, Baton Rouge Homebuilders Association

Top Priorities

- Education
- Drainage/Roads
- Safety (School & Public)
- Audit
- Represent All People

GENO GUERCIO
FOR MAYOR OF CENTRAL

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Geno Guercio

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Key Local Races In Central Deserve Voters' Attention

Continued from Page 1

posed. Incumbent school board members Roxanne Atkinson, who is board president, and Dr. David Walker, the vice president, were barred from running again by term limits. Leah Veak qualified to run for Walker's seat and was unopposed. Ken Wall qualified for Mrs. Atkinson's seat and was also unopposed.

The only contested school board race will be between incumbent member Jason Leaphart and challenger Jeffrey LaCour. This sets up a rematch from four years ago.

In the race for Justice of the Peace from District 3, which includes all of Central and extends all the way into the Mid-City area of Baton Rouge, incumbent Mark Miley has two opponents — LaShawn Goodwin and Henrietta Williams.

In the race for Constable from JP District 3, incumbent Gordon Hutchinson has competition from Chris Johnson and Sheila Freeman.

In the race for Constable from JP District 2 (Pride), Dwayne Rogers and Lee Russell are seeking the post.

Constable, JP Dist. 3



Gordon Hutchinson, Jr.

"Chris" Johnson

Sheila Freeman photo not available

Constable, JP Dist. 2



Dwayne Rogers

Lee Russell

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FOR MORE THAN 25 YEARS, Winston DeCuir, Jr. has earned a reputation for integrity, fairness, and steady leadership. He brings extensive experience in litigation including representing LSU, Southern University, the City of Zachary and a host of local entities in complex matters.

Outside the courtroom, Winston and his wife, Jennifer, have raised three children: Winston III; William; and Mary. They are active in both Sacred Heart and St. Aloysius Catholic Church.

ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 3

EARLY VOTING IS OCTOBER 20 - 27

(THE DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN THIS ELECTION IS OCTOBER 5)

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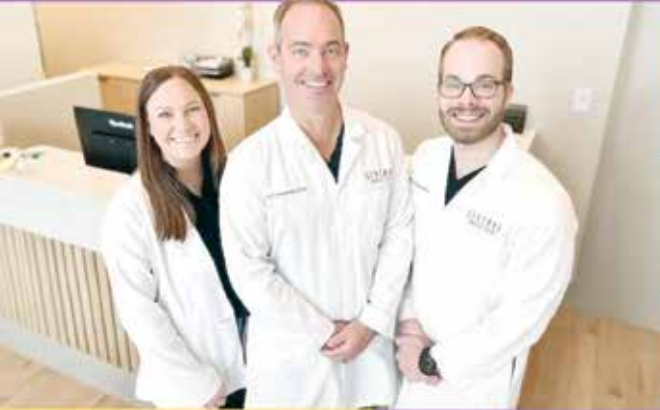
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Central City News Editor Launched His First Newspaper 60 Years Ago — on August 11, 1966

Editor Woody Jenkins Reminisces about His Newspaper Career that Spans 1950's to 2020's

BATON ROUGE — In July 1966, Woody Jenkins was in a good position for a budding young journalist. At age 19, he already had a year's experience as an announcer and newsmen at the CBS affiliate in Baton Rouge, WAFB-TV. Channel 9 was the dominant station in the market with 60 percent of all households in the Capital area tuned in for the six o'clock news. Before that, he had a year under his belt as a newsmen at WLCS, the top radio station in the Baton Rouge market. He was producing newscasts and some of his stories were running nationwide on AP.

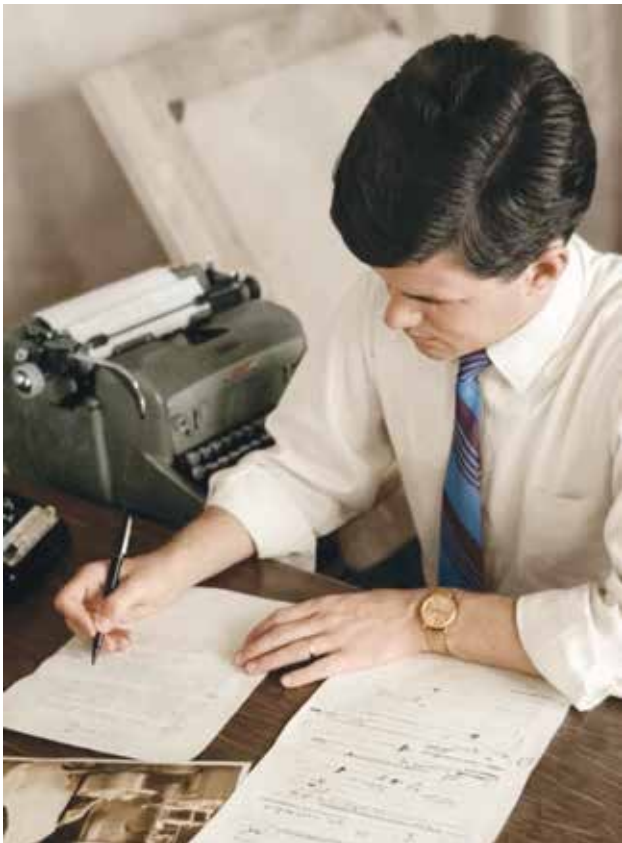
These weren't his first ventures into journalism. He had been the newspaper editor at Fairfields Elementary in 1957 at age 10 and started a literary magazine at Prescott Jr. at age 13. Writing and publishing seemed to be in his blood.

"I had visions of someday being CBS's national news anchor like Walter Cronkite."

But that dream came tumbling down in late July 1966. "I was also the conservative columnist at the Daily Reveille and getting in as many hours as I could at the station to pay for school. One night, I signed WAFB-TV off the air at 2 a.m. and went out to my car in the station parking lot, only to find it had been broken into. I had been to the cleaners and the laundry mat. All my clothes were in that car, except what I had on my back. To my shock, the thieves had stolen every piece of clothing I owned!"

"The next morning, I went to my boss at the station to tell him what happened and to ask for a raise. I had been at the station for a year and I was still making \$1.73 an hour — not enough to pay my meager bills. I asked to be raised to \$2 an hour. I thought I was a cinch to get it, especially with my sad story about having to buy clothes. To my surprise, my boss leaned across his desk with a scowl and said, 'A raise! We were thinking of firing your ass!'"

See 60 YEARS on Page 16



Woody Jenkins editing the **North Baton Rouge Journal** in 1968. He and future wife Diane founded the **Journal** Aug. 11, 1966. Seven years later in 1973, he used that typewriter to write the Declaration of Rights of the Louisiana Constitution.



North Baton Rouge Journal was printed 1966-1969 by the **Baton Rouge News Leader**, Baton Rouge's black newspaper.



Large dailies like the **Advocate** stuck with low quality letterpress. The **Journal** was in the forefront of offset printing.



Handsetting type for headlines for the **Journal**. Headlines were run on a proof press, then to paste-up sheets.



Business manager **L.E. Wallace** picking up **North Baton Rouge Journal** from **News Leader's** printing plant.



In 1968, radio pioneer **Gene Nelson** of WLCS gave up his role as the voice of the Istrouma High Indians, and turned over the job to Bob Furlow, the station's program director. Both were graduates of Istrouma High. In 2019, Central City News editor Woody Jenkins became the Voice of the Istrouma Indians in the tradition of Nelson and Furlow.



Woody Jenkins and **Diane Aker** on the **Journal's** first birthday, Aug. 11, 1967.



The North Baton Rouge Journal went to 10,000 households weekly.



Dr. A.O. Goldsmith, dean of LSU Journalism School, presenting award to the **Journal**.



Istrouma coach **Big Fuzzy Brown** retired in 1967 after winning nine state football titles.



I-110 was under construction in 1968, and the U.S. was in the midst of Vietnam War.



Buckskin Bill was in his 14th season on WAFB. He began his long-running show Aug. 15, 1955.



The Journal was the first to propose single-member districts for the Metro Council in 1968.

New Board Members for Bank of Zachary

ZACHARY – Bank of Zachary is proud to announce the appointment of three distinguished business and community leaders to its Board of Directors: Edward I. Daniel IV, Thomas E. “TEM” McHugh III, and Mark J. Milton.

The addition of these professionals reflects the bank’s ongoing commitment to strong leadership, strategic growth, and community-focused service throughout the region.

“We are excited to welcome Edward, TEM, and Mark to the Bank of Zachary Board of Directors,” Mark Marionneaux, Bank of Zachary President and CEO, said.

“Their diverse experience, business insight, and dedication to our communities will bring tremendous value to the bank as we continue serving our customers and supporting the growth of our region.”

Daniel is owner and president of Daniel Forestry Services, Inc., a company specializing in reforestation and wetland restoration projects throughout the region. He also serves as member-manager of EL Farms, LLC, an innovative cattle



Edward I. Daniel IV



Thomas “TEM” McHugh



Mark J. Milton

and hardwood seedling operation in Amite County, Mississippi, and member-manager of Que Pasa, LLC, a restaurant located in St. Francisville. A lifelong resident of West Feliciana Parish, Daniel and his wife, Leslie Ayres Daniel, have three children: Edward V, Clayton,

and Alex. McHugh recently retired following a distinguished 20-year career as an executive with Verizon. He also owns McHugh Consulting, a company dedicated to helping business optimize sales for growth, and is a partner in Veranda Horizons, a

travel company focused on creating exceptional travel experiences for its clients. McHugh and his wife, Stephanie Daigle McHugh, have been married for 35 years and are proud parents of three children, Haley, Thomas, and Kenlee, and grandparents to Mary Ellis Odom, Miller James Odom, Thomas McHugh V, and Amelia McHugh.

Milton is part-owner of Buffalo Electric, where he has provided leadership and oversight for the past 27 years. In this role, Milton is responsible for strategic operations management, business development, client relations, and financial and regulatory oversight, helping to guide the company’s continued growth and success within the industrial electrical industry. Originally from Baker and now residing in Slaughter, Milton and his wife of 38 years, Charlotte, are parents of four children, Logan, Dylan, Kade, and Kendall, and grandparents to Madeline Milton, Hayes Milton, and Scottie Kate Milton.

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Central Mayor Candidates Tell Their Story

Continued from Page 11
country. In early 2025, he accepted Mayor-President Sid Edwards’ invitation to serve as Chief of Staff in the Mayor’s office. This allowed him to learn much more about local government. Over the past 17

years, he has held responsibilities where “the buck stops here”!
He said he is proud to have played an important role in securing a major pay raise for Baton Rouge City Police. One of the biggest needs today is for a new Parish Prison.

This platform is based on

- Christ
- Commerce
- Crime
- Community

Questions from the audience centered on fire protection and fire rat-

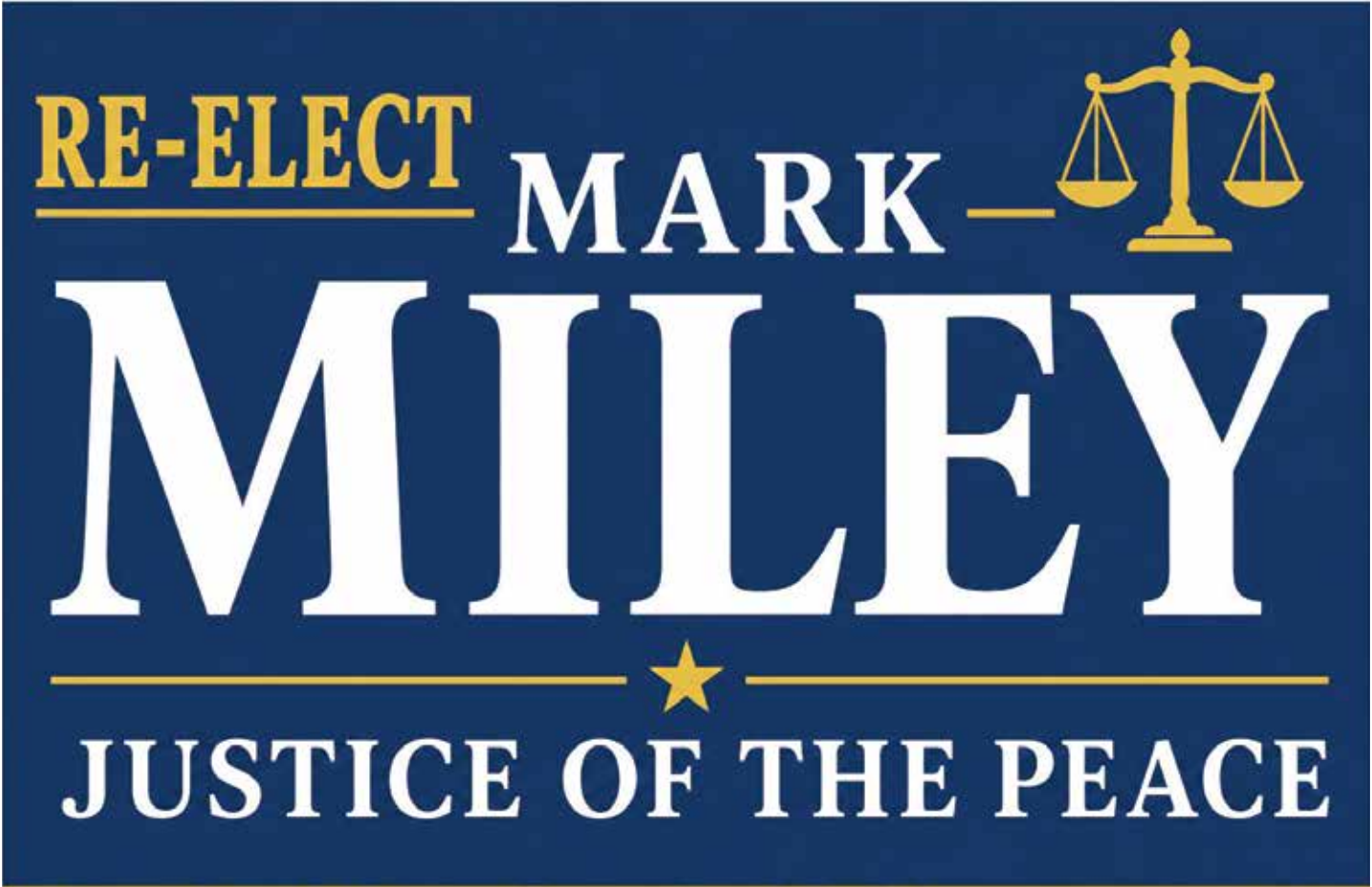
ings, whether Central should break away from BREC, road improvements, and the pace of development in Central. Vicknair said infrastructure needs to precede development. Moak said we need to get concessions from developers.



60 Years of Media Experience

Continued from Page 14
“Suddenly, I had a flash of reality. Being on WAFB-TV in the 1960’s was a very heady experience. Everybody was watching, and everywhere I went people knew me. But suddenly I understood the reality of my situation. I was just a low paid employee at a big TV station. I was expendable and could be easily replaced. There would be 100 other guys waiting to take my place.”
“That night I went to my girlfriend’s house. Diane Aker and I started dating when we were sophomores at Istrouma High School and never dated anyone else. That night we did some dreaming and some planning. Diane was also working

at WAFB-TV in traffic, writing advertising copy. We were both sophomores enrolled in the LSU School of Journalism.”
“When I was 15, I asked my dad what he thought I should be when I grew up. I thought I could do anything but wasn’t sure what I wanted to do. I’ll never forget his advice.”
“My daddy said, ‘Find something you love and do it! You’re smart enough to make money doing what you love. Find a need and fill it. Be your own boss. If you work for someone else, you’re working to achieve their dream. Have your own dreams and work everyday to achieve your dreams. Do what you love, son, and you’ll never work a day in your life!’”
“That night Diane and I thought about our community, North Baton Rouge, and realized that none of the media in Baton Rouge cared much about North Baton Rouge and certainly didn’t cover what happened there. We knew we wanted to start a newspaper — at age 19!”
“We pooled our money, \$300, and found a printer who would work with us, Land Printing, owned by Kenny Land. He published the black newspaper, the **News Leader**. We were quite a team — black Democrats and white Republicans working together everyday in the 1960’s to serve our communities!”
“I walked up Scenic Highway, then Plank Road, then Choctaw, Winbourne, and Airline, knocking on the door of every business, asking people to advertise with us. I asked them to take a chance and pay cash in advance for their ad, so I could pay the printing bill. It was a crazy sales pitch but honest. Amazingly, they said yes! We rented a small office on Chippewa behind Dunlap Drug Store. We had enough advertisers to print 10,000 copies of that first paper. I hired three kids from the neighborhood to ride with me and throw the **North Baton Rouge Journal** in every driveway in the Istrouma area.”
“People loved it! And the advertisers kept on advertising. We were going to school full-time at J-School and working full-time afternoons and evenings. The paper grew from 10,000 free circulation to 5,000 paid circulation.”
“In 1969, Diane and I graduated from LSU and knew we wanted to go to law school. There was no way to go to law school and work the kind of schedule we had. So we put the newspaper up for sale. Within two weeks, we had a buyer. We sold the paper for \$30,000, and that money paid most of our expenses for both of us for three years at the LSU Law School.”
“We were on our way in life!”
“I’ve often thought about my daddy’s words — ‘Do what you love, and you’ll never work a day in your life!’ I honor my father but he lied! For the past 60 years, I’ve done what I loved, but over those years, I’ve worked by tail off. I’ve probably worked an average of 70 hours a week! I can’t wait to see him in heaven and ask why he told me that.”
“I imagine he’d say something like, ‘Oh, yeah, I was joking about the not working part! You mean you believed that? Hahaha.’”



Central School System’s 20th Convocation



LISA DRAKE (left) from “Capturing Kids’ Hearts” was the surprise guest speaker at the 20th Central Community School System’s annual convocation. Central High School’s Talented Art students performed with Mr. O’Banion (center). Supt. Jason Fountain (right) delivered a message to teachers and support staff.



SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER Nick Carmena (left) applauds Dr. Fountain’s message. Mazi Gains (left/center) leads the Pledge of Allegiance. Central High senior Carrie LeBlanc (center) welcomes everyone to the 20th Annual Convocation. Lisa Drake (right) sharing her story with teachers, administration and support staff workers.



Central Wildcats Hosted Madison Prep For Preseason Scrimmage August 20th



HEAD COACH DAVID SIMONEAUX (left) is looking forward to a great season! Week One the Wildcats will take on Acadiana Sept. 4 at Wildcat Stadium. Homecoming will be Sept. 18 against John Ehret High School. CMS Night at Wildcat Stadium is Oct. 2. Central takes on Zachary Oct. 9 which is Alumni Night/Biddy Night. Senior Night is Oct. 30.



Central High Scrimmage against Madison Prep

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THE CENTRAL WILDCATS finished the 2025 season 9-3 and made it to the third round of the state playoffs. Their only losses were to Catholic, Lafayette Christian, and to Zachary in the playoffs (after beating Zachary in the regular season). Most of the 2025 Wildcat team is returning this season on both offense and defense. The coaches expect great things.



Photos by Jolice Provost of Central City News

Lon Vicknair Launches Mayor Campaign With Large Croud at Trade Construction



CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR LON VICKNAIR (left) with his wife Rebecca at the Campaign Kick Off. June Dupuy, Betsy Hooper, Tommie Morden, and Bennie Payne (center). In photo at right, Will Easley, founder of Trade Construction Company (at left in photo) with Central’s Justice of the Peace Mark Miley.



SHANE DEDON AND WAYNE MESSINA (left) enjoying the kick off party. Lon Vicknair (left/center) with Crystal Marie. Lon’s daughter Riley (center) is proud to support her dad for mayor! Cindy McAllister and Leah Veck (right/center). Lon’s campaign manager Zach Kilshaw and Randy Anglin (right).



SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT ROXANNE ATKINSON (left) with Rebecca Vicknair and Tami Anglin. Madelyn Shilling and Kristen Stanley with Rebecca Vicknair (left/center). Harry and Louise Rauls (right/center). Rebecca Vicknair, school board member Carol Norwood and Lon Vicknair (right).



THE VICKNAIR’S (left) with Diane Duplesses. Chad Robertson and Rebecca Vicknair. Central City News editor Woody Jenkins (right/center) with Lon and Rebecca. Lon (right) with Cindy McAllister, Lon, Cyndi Wolfe, and Randy Anglin (right).



Anniston (left) holding Lon Vicknair flyer. Bennie Payne (left/center). Lon talks with Doug and Jeanie Barnett (left/center). Jolice Provost and Valerie Jero (right/center). Lon Vicknair (right) told his plans for Central and answered questions.