

**BACKGROUND For #1– Right now there are 3 attorneys per misdemeanor court (1 chief, 2 others), and 1 Misdemeanor chief over it all. There are 3 “teams” of attorneys for District Courts. I believe there are 3 attorneys staffing 3 courts on one team, and 2 attorneys staffing 2 courts on the other team. Additionally, there are 4 attorneys in the crimes against children section, 6 in “special crimes” (civil and criminal), 5 in appeals, and 3 in Juvenile. (These numbers might be slightly off, but are generally correct.)**

**1. What do you think about the current structure/staffing of the ADAs? Would you shift attorneys around?**

I feel that the staffing of Assistant District Attorneys (ADAs) needs to be increased. Right now, there are 57 ADA's employed in the DA's Office. There is a 58th prosecutor slot that has been approved, but not funded yet. You are correct with the Misdemeanor staffing, but a little off on the Felony trial teams. There are three trial teams in District Court. There are two teams of 3 ADA's that cover 2 District Courts; and one trial team of 4 ADA's that cover 3 courts. I am not a big fan of this structure. I believe that there should be two attorneys assigned to each District Court. I feel that when you have ADA's assigned to each court, the dockets move faster, ADA's know their cases better, the execution of justice moves faster, and your ADA's are more prepared. It is a more efficient system and widely utilized throughout Texas.

After talking to prosecutors in the Aggravated Sexual Assault Unit on multiple occasions, I feel they could use another prosecutor. Their cases are extremely intense and very time consuming to prepare for trial. I will work closely with the Commissioners on how to best achieve these personnel goals. I would not hesitate to use every avenue I have to ensure we have the proper staffing. This would include the acquisition of available grant funding, something I have experience in obtaining. In fact, I am the only candidate with management experience in a District Attorney's office, and when I managed a specialized felony unit we were very successful at prosecuting our cases and managing our human and financial resources.

Collin County has grown tremendously since I moved to Plano in 1993. With that growth comes more crime. Through fiscally conservative and responsible management, we can insure we have enough resources to ensure justice and to protect the public in general. We need to ensure that Collin County remains a safe and desirable place to live, and with strong law enforcement and an active District Attorney we can do that.

**2. What do you think about the criminal special crimes section? Would you make changes in that section, and if so, specifically how?**

In general, I do not feel that the DA's office first priority should be to investigate crimes. That is the job of the police investigators. I know there are special exceptions to this policy, where the DA's Office has special knowledge and training on certain types of offenses, such as white collar crimes. Those cases should be assigned on a case by case basis. If elected, I would take a greater in-depth look at the structure of the special

crimes unit, as with every section in the DA's Office, and reevaluate its effectiveness and needs. As I said earlier, I want two prosecutors assigned to each District court. To accomplish this, it will be necessary to make adjustments to the current staffing structure.

### **3. Will you get in the courtroom and actually try cases? Why or Why Not?**

Anyone who knows me knows that I am not a politician who will just sit behind a desk drawing a paycheck. I am the only candidate in this race who has extensive jury trial experience, with over 190 jury trials taken to a verdict as a prosecutor. Of the cases I took to trial, I had a 98% conviction rate. I am a skilled prosecutor and I don't think I should just shelve those skills, but I have to balance that with the time commitment managing and training will take up.

Because of that, especially at the beginning, I do not expect to be in the courtroom trying cases on a daily basis. Not to mention there are plenty of excellent prosecutors who need to be left to do their jobs. I do however expect to second-chair trials occasionally in order to help our junior prosecutors develop their trial skills, especially in the misdemeanor courts. Training and mentoring the Assistant District Attorneys will be a priority for me.

### **4. In general, what changes would you be making if you became District Attorney?**

If I am elected, Collin County will have the best trained prosecutors in the state. During my 11-year tenure as a prosecutor, I trained prosecutors and police officers throughout the state. Even after I entered private practice, I was sought after to provide training to prosecutors, and it has been my privilege to do so. Having the best-trained prosecutors will not only help us be more effective in the courtroom, it will also boost morale and reduce turnover in the DA's office, making the time spent on training a good and necessary investment.

I will establish and maintain close, respectful relationships with our local and regional law enforcement agencies, many of which have endorsed my candidacy. Because of my qualifications, I have been endorsed by the McKinney Police Association, the Dallas Police Association, Denton County Sheriff Benny Parkey, the McKinney Fraternal Organization of Police and the Dallas Fraternal Organization of Police.

One thing I can promise is that I will prosecute cases based on the law and the evidence, just as I did for 11 years as an Assistant District Attorney. Political considerations will have nothing to do with it. If elected, I will not owe any favors to powerful politicians and I will be free to always do what is right for the Collin County citizens. I will not waste the precious opportunity of serving as our DA as a political stepping stone. This job does not have to be a figurehead position and I will not treat it as one.

I will work hard, I will be pro-active, and I will fight to keep my community safe. I will fulfill my oath as a prosecutor to seek justice. I will stand behind my performance as I always have and I will always remember that my boss is every taxpayer in Collin

County. I serve at their pleasure and every dollar will be managed, safeguarded and utilized for its most efficient use. The citizens of Collin County deserve nothing less.

**5. Right now, only three people in the District Attorney's office have authority to dismiss a case. The misdemeanor division chief for misdemeanor cases, the first assistant for felony cases, and of course, the elected District Attorney. What do you think of this policy? Would you allow misdemeanor court chiefs and or felony court chiefs to dismiss cases they feel should be dismissed?**

If we are doing our job right and with better screening of cases, dismissals should be unusual. One of the main reasons to requiring approval for dismissals is for management to both be aware of the dismissal and while also making sure that dismissals are based on the law and the evidence and not improper considerations. I do feel that the court chiefs should have the power to do what they feel is necessary to ensure that justice is done, whether it be dismissing or reducing a case.

**6. Current DA John Roach recently proposed using funds to purchase weapons and body armor for the Investigators in the office. What do you plan on doing with these weapons, and will your investigators continue to train to be a emergency security staff for the court?**

My understanding is that these weapons have not and will not be purchased. I do not foresee a need at this time to train and equip the investigators as emergency security staff.

The DA investigators are licensed peace officers who carry guns and need certain training to maintain their peace officer licenses. Any other courses or training that would be a benefit to the county and its citizenry would be approved on a case-by-case basis. The Sheriff is in charge of courthouse security, but I do feel that the District Attorney's Office should be included in the discussions and planning of any emergency situation policy.

**7. Do you have any plans to expand or develop alternative/deferred sentencing programs? What programs have you seen or heard of that you would implement?**

Diversionary dispositions can be effective for some first-time non-violent offenders, by providing them a strong incentive to straighten up their act. If such a person chooses to get on the right track with supervision from the county's hard-working Community Supervision officers, diversionary dispositions avoid high costs to the taxpayers. I believe the Pre-Trial Diversion program that is currently in place should be expanded for certain first-time non-violent offenders.

Being the Chief of the DWI Prosecution Unit, I witnessed firsthand the amazing results a DWI court has been able to achieve. I am a firm believer in DWI courts and will actively support these types of courts as well.

**8. What lessons should the Collin County District Attorney learn (if any) from Dallas County's experience with their Innocence Commission?**

We are fortunate to not have had the kind of problems they have had in Dallas County in this regard. Going forward, it is most important to have the proper screening

of cases. Anyone who knows my 11-year record as a prosecutor knows that I have always upheld my oath as a prosecutor to seek justice. After all, my experience is that of a professional prosecutor, not a politician. I have always decided whether to pursue charges based on the evidence and the facts of the case, without letting political considerations come into play. If elected, I will be accountable to the law and the citizens of Collin County.

**9. Do you believe our indigents are well served and fairly treated in our “Indigent Defense Plans”? What changes to the plans might you recommend to the Board of Judges?**

In Collin County we are fortunate to have capable judges to oversee our Indigent Defense Plan. Our judges ensure that we follow the law regarding the legal defense of indigent defendants. This is important because ineffective defense counsel can cause problems on appeal and cost taxpayers even more money in the long run. At the same time, it is important to always be responsible stewards of the taxpayer’s money. I feel that the Board of Judges has done a good job in putting into place Collin County’s Indigent Defense Plan.

**10. Would you bar defendants from open pleas before a judge if a plea agreement cannot be reached, or would you reserve the right to object if you thought the judge might be more lenient than your plea offer was? Which level of prosecutors in the office would be allowed to make this decision?**

In general, I believe defendants who want to plead guilty to the charge against them, should be allowed to enter a guilty plea. This is because guilty pleas avoid the necessity of a trial which takes up the time of the jury members and extra cost to the taxpayers. The DA’s office should generally not bar defendants from entering open guilty pleas, except for extraordinary circumstances.