

Candidate believes experience a must

By Tom Betz
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The Republican primary race to replace District Judge Jack Burr pits an experienced Goodland lawyer with 25 years in practice against a young attorney from St. Francis and a young county attorney from Colby in Thomas County.

Republican voters from the entire district — Thomas, Sherman, Cheyenne, Wallace, Rawlins, Sheridan and Logan counties — will decide the winner in the primary on Tuesday, Aug. 5.

Scott Showalter, 48, who has lived in Goodland since 1973, is running for the District 2 position in the 15th Judicial District.

Because of a combination of the county and district judge positions more than 30 years ago, County Clerk Janet Rumpel said, state law requires the person holding this district judge position to live in Sherman County.

Showalter said he believes his experience as a city judge in Kanorado and assistant judge in Goodland, and his 10 years as Sherman County attorney gives him the experience to be a good judge.

Showalter said a judge does not have a lot of flexibility in determining if a person is going to jail, as that is determined by the sentencing guidelines passed by the legislature.

"It is only after the person has committed another infraction that the judge has some discretion," he said. "Standardized sentencing was the objective of the state Legislature.

"It has advantages and disadvantages. In a small community, you would think the judge would be able to determine how much time to sentence a person for a crime. However, the other side is that if you committed a crime in Wichita, the penalty should be the same."

Showalter said as district judge, he could wind up deal-

ing with any case in the seven counties, but as normal practice Judge Burr has handled cases in Sherman and Cheyenne counties. He said he understands that Burr is one of the longest serving district judge in Kansas. He has been the administrative judge for the district for the past 12 years.

Many cases in Cheyenne and Wallace counties are covered by magistrate judges elected in those counties, but with the combination, the district judge in Sherman County handles all the county cases plus cases from other counties in the district.

Showalter said state law calls for having one judge per county, though this provision has been under assault from the eastern part of the state. Legislators would like to move judgeships from less-populous counties to the east, where they have a heavier caseload, he said.

Showalter said the dockets are going down in some of the counties, but that Sherman County has stayed pretty consistent. He said Thomas County dropped from 400 cases three years ago to 300 last year.

Showalter has practiced law in Sherman County for 25 years. In his work as county attorney he handled 2,600 cases, he said, and assisting County Attorney Bonnie Selby, he has been part of 406 felony cases. He said he has served as assistant county attorney for Wallace, Thomas and Sherman counties.

"I have tried more than 70 jury trials, argued appeals before the Kansas Court of Appeals and Kansas Supreme Court," he said.

As court trustee, Showalter handles more than 1,000 domestic law cases each year, ranging from paternity to child support and maintenance collection.

He said about one-third of the cases the district judge hears are criminal, and the other two-thirds involve domestic issues



Showalter

and civil law.

"I believe that experience related to the job should be a critical factor," he said. "The experience I have I believe will give me some insight. I have been at this for 25 years, which is more than twice what the other two candidates have combined.

"This is my home. I feel I have a good record and am proud of what I have done."

Showalter agrees that judges are insulated to a degree, but that is so they are able to make decisions on the evidence presented — the facts and the law — and need to keep the other factors out of the pending decision.

"The Legislature should make the laws," he said. "I do not agree with judicial activist who are substituting their opinion for the law. There is a real concern that the judiciary need to understand their role and that judges are not to be creating law, but to be interpreting it."

Showalter said he has heard from a lot of people as he has been out campaigning door-to-door.

"I appreciate all the kind words from the people I have seen over the past 60 days," he said. "I think going door-to-door is kind of a new process for campaigning for district judge, but think it is important to give the people a choice."

Female attorney running for judge

By Patty Decker
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District Judge Jack Burr of Goodland will not to seek another term in the second position of the 15th Judicial District — opening the door for three candidates, so far, to vie for that seat.

Thomas and Logan County Attorney Andrea Wyrick, Scott Showalter of Goodland and Kevin Berens of St. Francis, all Republicans, have filed for the position. It will then be up to voters in an seven-county area at the Aug. 5 primary to decide which Republican candidate is the best qualified to run for Burr's seat.

"If elected," Wyrick said, "I am going to miss serving as the county attorney."

After practicing many areas of the law through past and current employment and in every courtroom in the 15th Judicial District, she believes she is qualified for this next step. Wyrick has also maintained a private practice in Sharon Springs, Goodland and Colby.

However, Wyrick said she doesn't think what she has done is all that makes for a good judge.

"I believe character stemming from life experience and personal beliefs makes a good judge," she said. "It's who you are — and I have tried my entire life to live out integrity."

Although she admits she is not perfect and has made mistakes, she said she is continually learning from the past and hopes to pass her personal beliefs and importance of character on to her children.

"Who I am when no one else is looking is the kind of character



Wyrick

I am talking about and I think a judge must possess this."

In her capacity as the county attorney, Wyrick said she wanted to further the educational and prevention needs of the schools.

"My office has promoted the 'Computer Cop' that helps parents maintain an active role in their children's life by monitoring what they are exposed to on the internet," she said.

She also promotes youth with the addition of a student-aid in her office each year she has been the county attorney.

Other ways she has promoted helping young people understand the legal system has been through school visits, teaching a class on juvenile justice at Colby Community College, serving as a speaker at the National Honor Society's induction ceremony and serving on a panel to address teen drug and alcohol abuse issues.

"Following the lead of Judge (Mark) Tema at in Logan County, I revived Law Day for fifth graders by conducting a mock trial in order to learn about our judicial system," she said.

Wyrick, 33, was born in Norton/Long Island, graduating from Abilene High School in 1993. She attended Taylor University in Upland, Ind., a Christian liberal arts college with a double major in international business and Spanish.

As an exchange student, she spent time with a family in San Jose, Costa Rica, attending school at the University of Costa Rica and interning in an economic support organization for

new businesses.

When she returned from her travels, Wyrick enrolled and graduated in 1999 from the University of Tulsa (Okla.) Law School.

Her first job out of law school was as the general counsel at Petroleum Wholesale, Inc. in Houston, Texas.

She then moved to Kansas City, Mo. and worked with Shook, Hardy and Bacon Law Firm. She passed her law examinations (bar) in Texas, Missouri and Kansas.

Wyrick found her way to Colby in 2002 when she decided she wanted to be closer to family.

She and her husband, Travis, who she met the first year of law school, have three children: Cole, 6; Seth, 4 and Anakin, 18 months.

-St. Francis News-

Weekend guests of Casey and Lezlie McCormick were Travis Hilt and friend Sam from Kansas City. Saturday and Sunday guest swere Michael McCormick and Debbie Osborne from Lakewood, Colo., the returned Joey McCormick home from his visit to Denver.

St. Francis News

Sylvia Queen was a Tuesday, July 8, and Sunday, July 13, visitor of LaVera Beringer.

Thursday evening, July 10, LaVera was visited by Pastor Farmer.

House guests of Wilma Lampe last Tuesday were Leah Lehrburger and Laura Firman and daughter, Ella, all of Denver.

They treated grandmother to lunch at Park Hill.

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Scott Showalter
 Republican

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 @ the St. Francis High School

Provided FREE of charge to our students!

Dr. Miller will also have physicals offered for the minimal cost of \$15 at the clinic. The cost will be payable at the time of the physical, so it won't go to your medical insurance.

As a reminder, all students 7-12 need to have a physical on file in the office before participation in sports, cheer or pom.

Health Fair
August 15th, 2008
2 - 6 p.m. MST
General Health Panel
 Is being offered for a discounted price of \$30
PSA is an extra \$10
 Valued at more than \$200

Lab personnel will be available in your community as follows:
Benkelman: July 23rd & 30; Aug. 6 at DCH lab (starting at 6 a.m.)
Haigler: Aug. 4th at the Haigler Ambulance Barn (6 - 10 a.m.)
Stratton: July 22nd & 29th at the Stratton Clinic (6 - 10 a.m.)

All times are local times.

If you are unable to make the dates above, please call for an appointment.

For the accuracy of the test, you will need to be fasting (nothing to eat or drink) for 12 hours. *Payment is due at the time of service. This may not and will not be billed to your insurance, Medicare or wellness plan and may not be applied to your deductible.*

Please call Dundy County Hospital at 308-423-2204 ext 2229 if you have questions.

Dundy County Hospital
"Caring For Our Community"
 1313 North Cheyenne Street
 Benkelman, Nebraska
 Website: bwtelcom.net/dch

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Musicians, Singers,
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Prizes will be awarded to all participate.

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Cards will reach them at:
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