

Sherry Simmons for County Commission, District 3

Candidate Qualification / Position Statement For Coalition for a Better Memphis Website

The CBM will post your completed statement on our website, www.bettermemphis.org, exactly as it is submitted. It is important that your information be complete – please use extra space if needed and feel free to attach a resume or any supplemental information. Is questionnaire is also located on the website www.bettermemphis.org under the tab “Candidate Ratings Guide.” Please email the statement to peggy@bettermemphis.org or Fax 901-752-0743 by March 4, 2014.

Name: **Sherry Simmons**

Website: **Facebook page is Elect Sherry Simmons. I do not have a website.**

Candidate for: **County Commission, District 3**

Why do you believe you are qualified for this position?

I am a steadfast conservative candidate for County Commissioner, District 3, who has taught over 4,500 students to be better communicators through speaking, reading, and writing on an intelligent level. I have stressed the importance of civic duty and service to the community that nurtures them. For 35 years as an English teacher, literacy coach, and librarian, I have reached the highest level of professional status that a teacher of English can hold, a Nationally Certified Teacher of English, and I also hold an Information Specialist Certification from the Tennessee Department of Education. I have a Masters degree in English Education and Reading, and I am currently in a doctoral program at the University of Memphis. I am a member of Ellendale Baptist Church and a founding member of the Bartlett Exchange Club. Recognizing the importance of civic organizations and their positive influence in the community, I am a member of Partnership Lakeland; Bartlett and Lakeland Chambers of Commerce; and a proud member of the Senior Centers of Bartlett and Lakeland. As a resident of Shelby County and Bartlett for many years, I have served my entire professional life in Shelby County Schools and literacy foundations in the county and the state of Tennessee. I participate actively in community events, neighborhood watch programs, and homeowners’ associations while inspiring others to do likewise. In my years as an educator, new teacher mentor, and media specialist, I thrive in a fast-paced and data-driven environment while using exceptional interpersonal and communication skills. My professional and civic organization encompass a variety of stakeholders who have vision to promote the people who live in Shelby County at large while helping to preserve the unique qualities of the municipalities that make us diverse. As an educator, I reflect continuously on what works and what does not work; set the climate of control with my words, tone, and actions; and keep the mission and vision clearly focused while reaching our goals.

Name three specific things you would like to accomplish if elected:

Education, economic development, and elder care are the three greatest issues facing Shelby County. **Education is the umbrella over every other issue. Without successful public schools, new businesses will not consider Shelby County as a place to begin.** The teaching profession needs strong representatives who have leadership qualifications on local government boards to be the voice of the students and the profession. Pre-K programs must be included in local school board budgets. Citizens who recently voted “no” to include funding for pre-K education have never been in an urban kindergarten class where many children do not know their

colors, the proper spelling or pronunciation of their names, or how to count to ten. Citizens must realize that a literate society starts with the birth of the child and if that child happens to be born in poverty, he will be less likely to have the early literacy foundation needed to learn. Pre-K programs must be funded by local, state, and federal funds to improve the literacy rate. The teaching profession is the one group of professionals who have taught all other professions to be successful. An equal chance at early literacy success for all children is my soapbox as an educator.

Secondly, the Board of Commissioners should project themselves as the unified task force and source of motivation for improved economic development. The media portray the Board of Commissioners as combative and argumentative with one another and that image is not helpful when a collected and cooperative Board is needed to move our economy forward. Diplomacy, respect, and trust are needed so that steadfast business owners and new business developers will see thirteen people who are encouraging their success. While I cannot change the personality of other commissioners, I can set the climate for civility so that economic development and success can be held as our common goal. We must work together for Shelby County and make everyone want to be a part of the solution to combat poverty and improve the economic status of our citizens in every municipality. Inherited poverty is the cause of most learning problems and crime. Schools are the one place where urban children receive hope to move out of the poverty they have inherited. Highly motivated business professionals are the fountainhead of inspiration to cleanse the crime and poverty from our children's lives. We can do this by giving them opportunities to help others. The solution for giving hope to children in poverty is to make them feel empowered to be a part of the solution to improve their lives. The most beneficial way to make children a part of the solution is to involve them in service learning projects where they are helping people in their community to have better lives. When children see themselves as the solution, they learn. Longitudinal studies have proven that children who are involved in real-world, real business learning opportunities are more likely to graduate from high school, show significant gains in academics and attendance, and continue the service to others after graduation. The business community can change its level of participation in the lives of public school children. As members of business oriented service learning programs, students spend planning time, service time, and reflection time with mentors to learn what strategies are working and what needs to be changed. This kind of time management and reflection produces children who can set priorities and think on the highest level. We need to produce community problem solvers who see themselves as the answer to the economic and social problems that plague them.

Thirdly, the issue of elder care is important to me and all people in Shelby County. There are many senior villages organized in Shelby County already that offer residents a variety of services that make life better, safer, and more affordable. The development of these areas will become even more critical in the next decade. Walkable communities with nearby stores, activity centers, and medical services are important. The municipalities in Shelby County should encourage senior villages as a complement to the many amenities in the area. The issue of elder care and the security of our most deserving residents is foremost on my agenda and I hope to be part of a task force and research study that will bring public awareness, public funds, and improved opportunities for elder care.

Have you ever been delinquent on your property taxes? **No**

Have you declared bankruptcy? **No**

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? **No**

Coalition for a Better Memphis

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List other elected positions you have run for and the outcome of the election: I was elected as the secretary of the Shelby County Republican Party Steering Committee and served for two years when Bill Giannini was the chairman.

Current Employment

Company: **Shelby County Schools** Length of Employment: **35 years**

Brief Job Description: Currently I am the library Media Specialist at Raleigh-Egypt High School. My duties include asset management of over two million dollars of technology, library circulation, teaching academic research, and testing coordinator for the unbelievable number of state tests required. Duties in past years have included teaching AP Lang and Literature, math, English 7-12, reading, speech, general science, creative writing, cheer sponsor, girls track coach, boys soccer coach, coed bowling coach, Knowledge Bowl Coach, Shakespeare Competition Coach, Senior Class Sponsor, Service Learning Coordinator, newspaper sponsor, new teacher mentor, supervising student teachers, adopt-a-school coordinator, literacy coach, ACT coach, Saturday school team, Senior Project Coordinator.

Education Please list all college/advanced degrees attained.

College/University Degree Graduation Year

The University of Alabama, College of Education 1972-1974 GPA 3.5

The University of Memphis, College of Education 1974-1976 Bachelors of Science in Education GPA 3.5

The University of Memphis, College of Memphis 1977-1978 Masters of Science in Teaching GPA 3.5

The University of Memphis 2005- Currently Educational Doctorate Reading Specialist GPA 3.75

Additional information relating to your educational background (optional): **The University of Memphis** 2004. Adjunct in the College of Education teaching master's level class the fundamentals of professional portfolio preparation.

Christian Brothers University 2008-2011 Adjunct teacher in English Department teaching Freshman Comp I and II. Dual enrollment for MCS and CBU.

Academic and Educational Research Depth of study includes Women's Studies, Shakespeare, the Romantic writers, Mentoring New Teachers, teacher retention, Service-Learning, and effective reading strategies in urban education.

How long have you lived in Memphis? I have lived in Memphis/Shelby County since 1974. Where did you grow up? I was born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1954 and lived there during the volatile Civil Rights demonstrations and church bombing in 1963. My highly intelligent parents moved us to Huntsville, Alabama in 1964 where I lived and went to school. My parents were NASA employees (dad was a NASA photographer and mom worked on the Patriot Missile Project). I began my college studies at the University of Alabama in 1972. I am a lifelong learner and am currently seeking a doctorate in education as a reading specialist at the University of Memphis.

I am married to Bobby Simmons. We have six children and nine grandchildren.

Please identify up to five organizations that are actively supporting your candidacy and provide a contact (with phone number) for each.

1. Bartlett Exchange Club, Rick Holland, 508-7583
2. Sheriff Bill Oldham has endorsed me. 901-222-5500.
3. Three Bartlett Aldermen have endorsed me: Bobby Simmons, Bubba Pleasant, and Paula Sedgwick. 901-385-6444.
4. Former County Commissioner and Mayor Joyce Avery has endorsed me. 901-377-3197.

Please list your association memberships and identify any leadership positions you have held in the past.

1. Founding member of the Bartlett Exchange Club.
2. TEA Tennessee Teachers Association
3. Tennessee Council of Teachers of English
4. A.P College Board
5. PARRC assessment coordinator
6. ALA American Library Association
7. LOC Library of Congress, Official Reader

Please list up to 10 current or past civic/community memberships.

Recognizing the importance of civic organizations and their positive influence in the community, I am a member of Partnership Lakeland; Bartlett and Lakeland Chambers of Commerce; and a proud member of the Senior Centers of Bartlett and Lakeland. I have been an active member of the PTA at Bartlett Elementary, Oak Elementary, Ellendale Elementary, Shadowlawn Middle, and Bolton High School. I am also a member of the Lakeland COLA, Neighborhood Watch, and

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the Daybreak Homeowners' Association.

8. Bobby Simmons is my treasurer and he and Jack Simmons are my campaign managers.

Any other information you would like to share with the voters: I will be your full-time commissioner with a conservative voice for the citizens who put me in office. You can contact me by email, cell, or face-to-face and I will continue to have an open door policy to listen to your concerns.