

COUNTY COMMISSIONER DON WALLACE ANNOUNCES RUN FOR PROBATE JUDGE IN 2012

Don Wallace, a small business owner and past Republican chairman announces he intends to seek the office of Probate Judge of Tuscaloosa County in 2012. First elected Commissioner in 2004, he believes there is still much to be done to improve county government. Since the Probate Judge serves as Commission Chairman, he feels his experience as a commissioner and CPA, as opposed to a career politician, would bring a new approach and vision to the office. "While a big bank account is important, we also need to focus on our economy, development of long-term goals, and being more accessible to the public. This job is about serving the people of Tuscaloosa County, not protecting the "good old boy" system. If elected, that's exactly what I will continue to do." says Wallace.

Wallace's vision is be proactive in recruiting business and providing opportunities for growth. "With unemployment near 10%, we must improve the small business climate in Tuscaloosa County. We can do that by reducing unnecessary regulations and offering incentives to develop our small business sector. As Probate Judge, I will be a partner in bringing retail development and opportunity to areas from the riverfront to the county line. This may involve incentives to make property available for economic development, expanding rural water, or just getting government out of the way. I have spent 20 years working with businesses that have difficulty finding employees or face hardships from the regulatory process. They will have an advocate in the Probate Judge if I am elected."

Long-term planning is also critical, Wallace says. "In my first 6 months as Probate Judge, I will work with the commission to develop a 5-10 year plan for Tuscaloosa County. We have to be creative and responsible for our own needs, not always rely on the federal or state government. Developing transportation, schools, and parks to improve economic activity and quality of life should be planned with the help of other local governments. Examples include routing big trucks across the toll bridge, completion of the parkway between Exits 97 and 100, the Patriot Parkway extension, and improvements to Lurleen State Park. There are also plans to develop baseball, softball, and soccer facilities that can be advanced to make Tuscaloosa a tourist destination for tournaments."

With regard to education, school populations have grown significantly. "I will continue to be involved with efforts to meet the needs of our students. Progress has been made, but there are still needs to be addressed, such as a new Brookwood High School and a new Rock Quarry Middle School," says Wallace. "I am also pleased that the children from Holt Elementary are able to use the former Lloyd Wood Middle School, which was available because of the decision to build the Sipsy Valley schools. Other projects can benefit the county economically. "For instance, a middle school at TCHS to replace Riverside can open riverfront property for new shopping and dining venues, which in turn means increased tax revenue for the county. But, it's not just new buildings, it's also about the classroom. We must work to get more of our school's operating budget into the classrooms for things like school supplies, textbooks, etc. to ease the burden on parents and teachers."

Other goals are to promote unity and openness among the commission and the public. “We can do that by involving the full commission in planning and budgeting, publishing agendas in advance, making meetings more accessible to the public, and developing a modern website. As a CPA, my professional experience in dealing with taxes, estates, and business development will allow me to bring a fresh perspective to the daily duties of Probate Judge as it relates to business and individual concerns.”

Commissioner Wallace is proud of the Prescription Discount card that has saved users over \$1 million. “We must continue to work to provide ways to save our citizen’s money in this difficult economy. There are also regulatory hurdles that many face which need to be reviewed. As Probate Judge, we must work to find ways to help our neighbors and make it easier for small businesses to develop. I will be an advocate from the Congress, to the Legislature, and to the City Council to eliminate unnecessary regulations and fees. The Court House is the People’s House and we need to put county government squarely on the side of the citizens. My experience as a small business owner, as opposed to those who have spent a lifetime in government, will allow me to speak with clarity on these issues.”

Politically, Wallace says “The conservative values I support are something I am proud of. I was a founding member of Tuscaloosa County Citizens for Life. I support efforts to properly curtail illegal immigration, the Fair Tax, protecting our Second Amendment, and promoting traditional family values. Term limits are important, which is why I am not seeking the Commission seat after 2 terms. I am a businessman, not a career politician, and I didn’t become a Republican in order to seek a political office. I simply believe my values are best represented in the Republican Platform.” Commissioner Wallace currently serves as a Vice-Chairman of the Alabama Republican Party.”

Don Wallace has had an accounting business in Northport for over 12 years. He is a graduate of Tuscaloosa County High School and the University of Alabama. His wife is Debbie and they have three children, Reagan, Rachel and Bryant. He is a member of the Gideons International and they are active members at Harvest Church. His parents are Wayne and Billie Ann Wallace of Northport, both retired educators of the Tuscaloosa County School System. His brother Russ, is a basketball coach at Buckhorn High School and coached the Pickens County High School team to the last two state titles.