

DA Wilson to Retire; Plugs ADA as Replacement

Written by Steve Frank
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Jerry Wilson, who has served as 24th district attorney for 12 years, announced his retirement at the end of his current term, which ends at the end of next year. In making the announcement, Wilson offered advice for the communities of the 24th district in making the selection of a new DA, and endorsed one of his Assistant District Attorneys for his replacement. His release: I am officially announcing that I will be retiring at the end of my present term. My term will end on 31 December, 2014. At that time I will have served in the District Attorney's Office in the 24th District for 32 years; twenty years as Assistant District Attorney and twelve years as District Attorney. I leave knowing that I will miss the hundreds of friends I have made over these many years, but I look forward to spending more time with my wife Karen and more time trout fishing.

The 24th District is made up of the five counties running down the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains; Watauga, Avery, Mitchell, Yancey and Madison. They are home to the best people in the world. Since I was raised in the Bakersville community in Mitchell County and have many generations of ancestors laying at rest there, I consider it a true honor to have served the citizens of these mountain counties.

Before I step aside, I hope you will allow me one final observation concerning the future. Next year we will be voting for and electing a new District Attorney. If we are to keep our mountain community a safe place to live, work and raise our children our vote must not be based on friendship, kinship or pure partisan politics. Instead, it must be based upon the candidates experience and ability to carry out the duties of this office. When a candidate for District Attorney asks for your vote, ask them what experience they have in the trial of serious felonies such as murder, child sexual assault or kidnapping. Dealing with cases of this sort is not something you look up or learn in a book, it only comes from years of experience dealing with these cases in the courtroom. Ask the candidate what experience they have in Superior Criminal Court. Dealing with traffic tickets and misdemeanors in District Court does not prepare an attorney to take on the duties of District Attorney. Ask them if they are experienced in pre-trial and post conviction hearings in Criminal Superior Court. These are hearings the public is usually never aware of, but they are the "make or break" in many serious criminal trials. Britt Springer, who serves you now as Chief Prosecutor in this district, meets all of these criteria. She is an experienced and able prosecutor; capable of stepping into the job of District Attorney and properly carrying out her duties from day one. She has spent years prosecuting criminal cases at the highest levels, gaining the experience and knowledge which is indispensable to the office of District Attorney. I strongly support and endorse Mrs. Springer as my successor because our community cannot afford an inexperienced District Attorney.