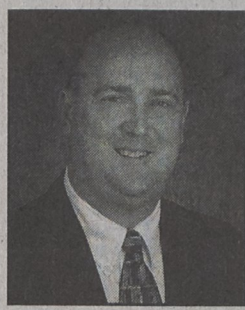


Election 2009

SCHOOL BOARD



PHILLIP GLOVER
Incumbent
BIO: Cleveland Co. native; employed by NC State Highway Patrol since 1988; wife is a 3rd grade teacher in Cleveland County Schools; oldest child in elementary school and youngest child will start kindergarten next year; graduate of East Rutherford High School; degree in Criminal Justice from Isothermal Community College; 1988 graduate of Highway Patrol Basic School; been awarded the 1996 Optimist Club Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, 1997 Region C Trooper of the Year, 2005 Region C Trooper of the Year



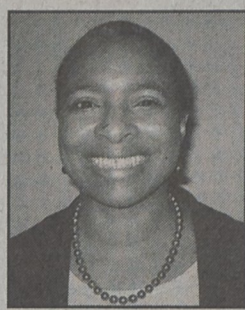
CONNIE P. SAVELL
Incumbent
BIO: KM native; retired third grade teacher from North Elementary; served total of 31 years with Kings Mountain City Schools and Cleveland County Schools; served on Erskine College Board of Trustees 1998-2004, NCAE Board of Directors 2003-2006 and on Cleveland County Board of Education since 2005; Fullbright scholar, taught in England 1988; earned National Board Certification (Middle Childhood Generalist) 2002; 1971 graduate of KMHS; 1975 graduate of Erskine College; earned master's degree in 1980 from ASU



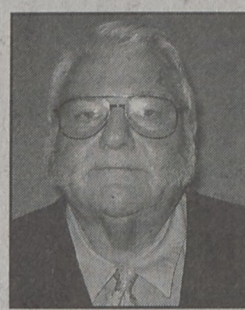
GEORGE LITTON
Incumbent
BIO: Retired after over 35 years in education; U.S. Army veteran; graduate of East Tennessee State Univ., Appalachian State Univ. and UNC-Chapel Hill; has served on the school board since 1996; serves as campaign chairman on the United Way Board of Directors, on the Cleveland County Sports Commission Board of Directors and the executive committee; given the Award of Distinction, Award of Honor and membership into the Scholar's Circle from the NC School Board Association and the Bridge Builder Award from the chamber of commerce; member of Poplar Springs Baptist Church



KATHY FALLS
BIO: A stay-at-home mother, school volunteer, School Improvement Team parent representative, PTO Treasurer and former PTO President; married to Jeff Falls 24 years; three sons: Jordan, 15 (attends KMHS), Brandon, 12 (KMMS), and Zachary, 8 (Grover Elementary); family of "huge sports fans" routing for Carolina Panthers, North Carolina Tar Heels and South Carolina Gamecocks; 1984 graduate of Kings Mountain High; before choosing to be a stay-at-home mom, Falls worked for a local bank and real estate office



YVETTE GRANT
BIO: resident of Bethlehem Road, Kings Mountain; former middle school teacher in math and science; left teaching in New York and pursued a medical career at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine; retired as a Nuclear Medicine Technologist after 15 years. After six years as a successful Mary Kay Business Owner (No. 1 in regional sales), she shifted her focus to family; married to Michael Grant for 19 years; they have four children in four different schools: Zachariah, 9th grade, KMHS; Ezekial, 8th grade, KMMS; Danielle, 6th grade, KMIS; and Jeremiah, 4th grade, Township Three.



EDDIE BENTON
BIO: Eddie Benton resides on Belwood/Lawndale Road in Upper Cleveland County. He is an electrical contractor and is a substitute teacher and volunteer in Cleveland County Schools. He is married with one son and daughter-in-law and has four grandchildren. He is a Sunday School teacher at Olive Grove Baptist Church and a Mason. He earned his GED and served seven years in the US Army, including one year in Vietnam. He was educated at Cleveland and Gaston Community Colleges.



S. DALE OLIVER
BIO: Cleveland County native; lived most of his life in upper Cleveland County; vice president of Fidelity Bank for 11 years; father of two children: Craig, 17, and Courtney, 15; wife Elizabeth employed as a media specialist at Fallston Elementary; Oliver has been active in his church Eastside Baptist, where he has served as deacon and on several other committees; serves on boards for Council on Aging, Cleveland County Social Services, Greater CCS Foundation, Relay for Life (past), Community In Schools, Child Care Connections and has served on Cleveland County Board of Elections.

Where do they stand on the issues?

The Kings Mountain Herald asked all of the candidates, currently running for the three open seats on the Cleveland County School Board, their views on things such as the drop-out rate, discipline in the schools and other issues they believe the board will face in the next few years. Each question is followed by the answers from each candidate, whose names are listed beside their statements in bold.

Q) What do you think are the big issues that the school board will face in the next few years?

Glover - Future budget restrictions from the state will be challenging. I feel sure that our staff will continue to provide a quality education for the students of Cleveland County Schools. The teachers and staff have already proven to strive during the past budget restrictions. We also need to work on the student drop out rate and closing the achievement gap.

Savell - I believe we will continue to face budget issues in the future. Our county is growing and we will need to prepare for that growth with manpower and facilities.

Litton - The budget deficit is the most critical issue the schools will face. The schools are dependent on state, federal, and local funding as we have no other means for funding. We have been informed that any increased funding from the state does not look favorable anytime in the near future and we may very well face even more reduced funding. Our County Commissioners have been very fair with the schools in their support. Meeting the North Carolina ABC and federal No Child Left Behind requirements will always be an issue. At this point our schools have done exceptionally well on every measure of student success. We must maintain our success and strive for even greater gains. Overcrowding at some schools is an issue and the board will need to monitor the enrollments and take action to ensure that students have proper facilities for learning. Maintaining a highly qualified teaching faculty should always be one of our goals. This includes recruiting great teachers and providing staff development for the fine teachers we cur-

rently have. We need relief from a state mandated school calendar that is currently not in the best interests of our students or employees. The NC House has passed some relief but the NC Senate leadership will not even allow the proposed bill come to the senate floor.

Falls - As a parent, I think the biggest issue that is facing the school board is the school budget and the effect that the budget is having on losing teachers and larger class sizes for our students. These things are not good for students and the learning environment. Along with budget concerns other issues include the school drop-out rate, closing the achievement gap and improving academics for all students in Cleveland County.

Grant - The increasing drop-out rate is a critical issue and the need for more parent involvement, although not critical, is important because it's the No. 1 factor in a child being successful at school and life and won't cost the school system a penny. A partnership between parents and the school system is essential to the success of a child.

Benton - Curbing the high drop-out rate in Cleveland County Schools is a critical issue. Taking a close scrutiny on spending should be a high priority of board members and getting our students out of mobile classrooms should be our goal.

Oliver - I feel one of our biggest issues will be to manage budget cuts while providing quality education. Another area to focus on would be to continue looking at innovative ways to reduce the number of drop outs.

Q) What role should the school board play in the future of education in Cleveland County schools?

Glover - The school board plays a very important role. We have a strategic plan that was developed by a group of citizens in Cleveland County. We continue to work to meet the recommendations and goals set by this plan. I hope that following this will make our county school district the top district in the state.

Savell - Three of the Board of Education's functions are: 1. Oversee the education of

students, making sure policies are being followed; 2. Employing the superintendent; 3. Approving the budget.

Litton - The Board of Education has two main functions. The first is to hire a superintendent. We have a great superintendent in Dr. Bruce Boyles and he is providing the leadership we need. The second is to establish policy for the district. We have completed a new policy manual with the assistance of our legal team. Recently the Board of Education authorized the superintendent to develop a "Strategic Plan" for the district with wide input from the county community. This planning team had over 100 citizens, parents, school personnel, and others to help develop strategic plans in six different areas to guide us in the future. These five areas mirror the five state board's goals and also included a facilities plan. The board analyzed the work of this planning committee and adopted a long range plan. This strategic plan should serve us well in the future. We should revisit the plan periodically and update it as needed.

Falls - Teachers need to know that the school board is 100 percent on their side and that means when budget cuts are necessary that the classroom will be the last place affected. The school board must make sure that administration is the first place the cuts should come from. The Cleveland County school board must make sure that all students have the necessary materials needed to be successful including qualified teachers and teacher assistants, books and supplies.

Grant - The Superintendent encourages school board members to visit the schools as well as open communication by teachers to the school board. That is image changing because teachers are on the front line and parents need to hear from teachers what is or isn't working for their children.

Benton - School board members should visit the schools at every opportunity to see the needs and volunteer as tutors or wherever needed. More parent involvement is needed.

Oliver - I feel the school board should continue to fulfill the same role as previously, to work closely with administration to plan for continued quality education.

Q) What do you think about redistricting to be assured that each area of the county has representation on the school board?

Glover - Serving presently on the school board, I represent the entire county and have the best interest of every student. The present county school board represents the county well. I travel throughout the schools in our county to see and hear the needs of our students, parents, staff and schools.

Savell - I personally favor at-large representation on the school board because voters have the opportunity to choose the best candidates from those running for office.

Litton - It is my belief that we should have a seven member school board. Each high school district should have one representative and there should be three at-large members. All members should be voted on by all the citizens in the county. We currently have nine members on the board as was pre-determined. At this time there are two members who live in the Kings Mountain High School District, two members who live in the Shelby High School District, two members who live in the Burns High School District, and three members who live in the Crest High School District. Any change in voting would first have to be approved by the US Department of Justice because we are under the Voting Rights Act and thus may or may not be possible.

Falls - I think redistricting to have area representation would be something the school board should look at. The Department of Justice would have to approve any changes that affect voting.

Grant - Passing one school and busing to another seems to be costly in gasoline for system vehicles but is probably intended to assure equal ratio of student population.

Benton - I am all for redistricting. Why should Crest and Burns school buses have to drive by the city limits of Shelby for students and pass by Shelby High and take students to Burns and Crest?

Oliver - I would support having equal representation from each school zone, however, I strongly feel that it is a joint effort that we

must support Cleveland County Schools as one system.

Q) Some programs were cut due to budget restraints do you think those programs can be reinstated?

Glover - Before reinstating any program, the funding needs to be available. These programs need to be evaluated to ensure that they are needed to ensure a quality education for our students. Savell - I think programs will be implemented into the schedules based on the needs of our students. Currently the prediction is not favorable for the economy, so by the time the economic crisis is over there will be new needs in curriculum and technology and assessments of needs will be made at that time.

Litton - I would certainly hope so. Our most severe cuts were in the area of teaching positions and teacher assistants. We need those positions restored because they are in direct contact with students and allow for more individualized instruction and smaller class sizes. The vast majority of school funding is in the area of personnel and thus cuts hit the personnel area hardest. Our administration has reduced central office personnel over 38 percent over the past few years.

Falls - Any programs that were cut due to budget cuts that affect students should be reinstated as quickly as possible. Hiring teachers and teacher assistants to reduce class sizes should be our top priority.

Grant - The School board is to be commended for continuing the high school Huskins math and science classes this year despite budget cuts by the state and for also finding the money to continue teacher continuing education programs, also cut by the state. Liberal Arts programs are also important, because all kids can't be a wiz at math or science. We also need art classes and vocational classes that will help kids get jobs. I am hopeful that programs that suffered budget cuts last year can be continued and that the community will step in to assure that these programs will be offered to our children. Keep in touch constantly with our elected officials (Senator Debbie Clary and

Rep. Tim Moore are KM residents) and share your concerns for education priorities.

Benton - By looking at cuts in spending I feel like more programs can be added. One way to save money would be to cut off lights left on in playing fields in the daytime and outside school buildings. I would hate to guess how much money is spent for electricity. Some lights burn all summer in bus lots. Another suggestion would be to follow Gaston County's plan in using alternative fuel for diesel engines, including buses and tractors. I would like to see the system purchase the present prison facility when it is vacated.

Oliver - As economic times improve I feel that we can look at each program that has been cut due to budget restraints and add those programs back that add value to the education of our students.

Q) What do you think about discipline in the schools?

Glover - This school year we implemented a new code of conduct. It was developed by a committee of staff, parents and students. It has worked very well this school year. I will continue to work to make sure that our students and staff have a safe environment.

Savell - I think discipline is necessary for students to learn. Last year the Code of Conduct was reevaluated for the county and was updated to provide standard expectations for all our schools. This Code of Conduct guides administrators in dealing with problems that arise and allows for consistent consequences for students.

Litton - Every student should have the opportunity to learn without disruption or fear. Teachers should have the opportunity to teach without disruption. It is our job as school board members to provide for a solid Student Code of Conduct and expect our administration to adhere to that code. I believe our administrators and teachers want and demand a safe and secure learning environment. We have just provided a new Student Code of Conduct for our schools and I was pleased to serve on that committee along with parents and school personnel.

See SCHOOL VOTE, 6C