



Shelby County Board of Commissioners

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JOE FORD

Chairman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

With the close of the 2007 fiscal year, now is a good time to pause and reflect upon the accomplishments of my colleagues on the Shelby County Board of Commissioners. The past year has presented us with a number of important challenges to face. As chairman of the Board of Commissioners during the past fiscal year, I would like to go on record praising my fellow commissioners for their hard work on a number of unprecedented and complex issues.

In September of 2006, the voters of Shelby County elected eight new members to the Board of Commissioners. These new commissioners came from remarkably diverse backgrounds, and nearly all had years of experience in both the public and private sector. For all of their differences, though, all eight shared a passion to serve the citizens of Shelby County diligently with their time and expertise. They could not have come on board at a more urgent time. During the recently completed legislative session in Nashville, the General Assembly mandated that each county and municipal government pass new ethics laws to govern its employees and elected officials. Moreover, in 2006 the Tennessee Supreme Court issued a ruling concerning the Knox County charter that could have significant consequences for Shelby County. These along with a host of other issues required the immediate attention of the Commission in fiscal year 2007.

In response to these extraordinary demands, the Commission set up a total of seventeen ad-hoc committees. Fifteen of these committees have completed their work. Each committee has either presented resolutions for the consideration of the full Commission, or has issued a report on its findings, as in the case of the ad-hoc committee on Juvenile Court. All of this came in addition to the workload of the thirteen standing committees and duties of the full Board. As a result, nearly all of your commissioners have spent many nights and weekends away from their jobs and their families in order to better serve the citizens of Shelby County.

I would like to commend all of my colleagues for a job well done this year, especially our eight newcomers, each of whom has brought a strong work ethic and a multitude of fresh ideas. Specifically, Commissioners Mike Ritz put an enormous amount of effort into crafting the new county-wide ethics ordinance. Commissioner Steve Mulroy chaired the ad-hoc committee on the living wage and was a leading proponent of the now-enacted ordinance. Commissioner Henri Brooks has brought Core City issues to the forefront of the Commission's agenda, where such issues have not normally been addressed. Likewise, Commissioner Brooks and Commissioner Mike Carpenter have worked