

# Nonpartisan Voter Guide

## Mississippi Elections 2018

This Nonpartisan Voter Guide was created by students as a class assignment for POL370, Campaigns and Elections. The Mississippi University for Women does not endorse or otherwise support candidates or political parties competing for public office.

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Did you know that two of this year's elections are nonpartisan? That means your ballot won't include party labels to guide you.

Don't worry. We did your homework.

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The following guide was created by students at “the W” as a service to residents in Lowndes county. It presents nonpartisan information on the candidates in one statewide and three local races:

**US Senate special election**

**Mississippi Chancery Court District 14, Places 2 & 3**

**US House of Representatives District 1**

# US Senate

## Special Election

Each state has two representatives in the United States Senate. These representatives run in statewide elections—so they are accountable to every citizen in every part of the state—and they serve six-year terms.

Usually, Mississippi selects its two US Senators in different years: for example, Roger Wicker was re-elected in 2012 and Thad Cochran was re-elected in 2014. If Thad Cochran had not retired, voters would only be deciding whether or not to retain or replace Roger Wicker. However, Senator Cochran retired in the spring of 2018, triggering a fall special election.

In this special election, voters will choose someone to serve the remaining two years of Cochran's six-year term. The regular election for this Senate seat will be held in November of 2020.

Mississippi law requires that special elections be nonpartisan, so there was no primary election and the candidates are not running as nominees of political parties. This means party labels will not appear beside candidates' names on the ballot. It also means voters will choose among a larger number of candidates than is typical.

There are four candidates: Cindy Hyde-Smith is currently the acting Senator, having been appointed by Governor Phil Bryant to serve in Cochran's place until the special election. Hyde-Smith is being challenged by Tobey Barteo, Mike Espy, and Chris McDaniel.

If no one receives a majority—which is likely—a run-off election will be held on November 27. Absentee voting for the runoff will be held on Nov. 17 and 24.

## Tobey Bartee

Mr. Tobey Bartee is a resident of Gautier, where he served as a city councilman until June of 2017. His mother was an elementary school teacher for 29 years. His father was a civil servant with the Air Force Reserves of East Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Bartee received his B.S. in mechanical engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis and a master's degree in public policy from Vanderbilt University. He has worked for several U.S. agencies involved in national security: as a management consultant for the State Department, an intelligence analyst for the Department of Homeland Security, in the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) for the Energy Department, and in the Navy.

Bartee has focused on one main message: "preserving our country for future generations." He acknowledges that Mississippi has high poverty rates compared to other states. He says students are not ready for the workforce, testing poorly in math and English. To combat the state's high poverty rate, he wants to fix Mississippi's education system and infrastructure.

Mr. Bartee pledges an open a dialogue with local elected officials and Mississippians about what matters most to them. He promises to work diligently to be well informed about every issue that he might encounter as a senator. He promises to defend the Constitution against foreign enemies.

"In his own words: Tobey Bartee v2.," 16 WAPT News Jackson, YouTube, 10/15/18. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAMwUB2QSoo&t=9s>

"My Pledge," Tobey Bartee U.S. Senate One Mississippi. 10/18/18 <http://www.barteeforsenate.com/Home/MyPledge>

Tobey Bartee. Interviewed by Edward Kennelly. 10/09/18.

"Tobey Bartee," YallPolitics, YouTube, 10/20/18. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAQg0hnY2wA>

## Mike Espy

Alphonso Michael Espy was born in Yazoo City. He, his wife, Portia Ballard, and their three children—Jamalia, Michael and Ian—are members of New Hope Baptist Church. He earned a B.A. from Howard University and a J.D. from the University of Santa Clara. He is associated with the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta, Afro-American Sons and Daughters Hospital Foundation, Hope Community Credit Union, the Masons, 100 Black Men of Jackson, Inc., and Feed the Children International Ministries.

He has served as MS Assistant Secretary of State for the Public Land Division and Assistant State Attorney General. He was the state's first African American in the US House of Representatives since Reconstruction. He also broke records as President Bill Clinton's Secretary of Agriculture: the youngest, first African American, and first from the Deep South. He resigned amid an independent counsel investigation into ethics violations related to receiving improper gifts but was cleared of all charges in court.

Espy presents himself as moderate and pragmatic. His record of downsizing the Department of Agriculture and a 1988 endorsement from the NRA are examples. He suggests more cost-effective ways to limit illegal immigration than building a wall and would prioritize spending on education and healthcare in rural communities. With the slogan "Powered by the People," Espy pledges to protect the rights of "ALL Mississippians" to pursue "their life's ambitions." He is supported by Mississippi Building Traders, Mississippi Coalition of Black Mayors, the Mississippi chapters of the American Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, as well as the Congressional Black Caucus.

"Espy, Michael," FEC. <https://www.fec.gov/data/candidate/S8MS00287/>.

"Issues," Mike Espy for U.S. Senate. <https://espyforsenate.com/issues/>.

<http://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2018/sep/19/it-only-matters-what-you-answer-jfp-interview-mike/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/counsels/stories/espy120398.htm>.

## Cindy Hyde-Smith

Cindy Hyde-Smith is a cattle farmer and politician from Brookhaven. She is a member of Macedonia Baptist Church, along with her husband, Michael Smith, and daughter, Anna-Michael.

From 1999 to 2012, Hyde-Smith represented the 39th District in the MS State Senate. She chaired the Agriculture Committee (2004-2012) and served on many other committees, including Appropriations; Corrections; Forestry; Public Health & Welfare; Veterans & Military Affairs; and Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks. In 2010, she switched from the Democratic to the Republican party. In 2011, she won statewide election to become Mississippi's first female Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce. She stepped down in March 2018, when Governor Phil Bryant appointed her acting US Senator. In that role, she serves on the Appropriations; Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; and Rules committees.

Hyde-Smith emphasizes her support for Second Amendment rights, opposition to abortion, and advocacy for the state's defense industry. In the US Senate, Hyde-Smith has voted with President Trump's initiatives 100% of the time. She has praised corporate tax rate cuts as a "shot in the arm" for the economy. In this election, she declined a public debate, citing her busy schedule.

Hyde-Smith has been endorsed by President Trump, Governors Phil Bryant and Haley Barbour, the NRA, National Right to Life Committee, Winning for Women, and others.

<https://www.hydesmith.senate.gov/content/committee-assignments>

<https://votesmart.org/candidate/key-votes/20784/cindy-hyde-smith#.W8qpxbKi3A>

<https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/politics/2018/10/01/here-endorsements-mississippi-elections/1458969002/>

<https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/politics/elections/2018/10/22/what-mississippi-senate-candidates-say-president-donald-trump/1601511002/>

<https://www.wtok.com/content/news/Hyde-Smith-gets-committee-assignments-479336393.html>

## Chris McDaniel

Chris McDaniel is from Ellisville. He is married to Jill Tulos McDaniel and has two children.

Chris McDaniel is a member of Hortman Harlow Law Firm, where his areas of specialization include insurance defense and commercial litigation. He is also a Mississippi State Senator, having represented the 42nd District since 2008. He earned his bachelor's degree from William Carey in 1994 and a JD from the University of Mississippi in 1997, both cum laude.

Chris McDaniel is consistently conservative on policy issues and presents himself as an anti-establishment candidate. At the Neshoba County Fair, Senator McDaniel aimed his criticism at Republicans who rejected Rand Paul's Penny Plan, which would reduce spending. His record is conservative regarding immigration and social values, too. He has a pro-life voting record and voted for Mississippi's 15-week abortion ban. In 2013, he authored the Student Religious Liberties Act, which protects students' voluntary religious expression in Mississippi's public schools. He co-sponsored bills that would have prohibited sanctuary cities in 2016 and 2017.

Though McDaniel has not been endorsed by President Donald Trump, he has attributed this to the influence of establishment Republicans and argued that he "was Trump before Trump."

<http://mississippiconservativedaily.com/chris-mcdaniel-neshoba-county-fair-speech/>

[https://www.governorbryant.ms.gov/Pages/\\_Gov-Bryant-Signs-Mississippi-Student-Religious-Liberties-Act-of-2013.aspx](https://www.governorbryant.ms.gov/Pages/_Gov-Bryant-Signs-Mississippi-Student-Religious-Liberties-Act-of-2013.aspx)

<https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/politics/2018/02/28/watch-chris-mcdaniel-announce-mssen-bid-against-roger-wicker-gop-primary/380551002/>

<http://hortmanharlow.com/attorney-profiles/christopher-b-mcdaniel/>

<https://votesmart.org/candidate/key-votes/69837/chris-mcdaniel>

<http://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2018/sep/14/mcdaniel-black-mississippians-begged-government-sc/>

# US House of Representatives

## Mississippi, District 1

The United States House of Representatives is the lower chamber of the U.S. Congress, and its members are elected for two-year terms. Based on its share of the US population, Mississippi currently sends four Representatives to sit in the 435-member US House.

This election will determine who will represent Mississippi's first district. The first district encompasses the northeastern corner of the state, stretching diagonally from Desoto county down to Winston and including Lowndes (though the district line veers around Oktibbeha and Noxubee counties).

Currently, Republicans represent the state in District 1, 3, and 4. The party also holds the state's two Senate seats. District 2 is the only district represented by a member of the Democratic Party

Trent Kelly is the District 1 incumbent, but two candidates are seeking to replace him. Kelly began representing District 1 in 2015, after Representative Alan Nunnelee died in office, triggering a special election. He won re-election to his first full term in November of 2016.

## Tracella Lou O'Hara Hill, Reform Party

Tracella Lou O'Hara Hill lived in Petal, MS as recently as 2011. Her residence in District 1 is not known, since she has not raised enough money to necessitate filing a Federal Election Commission report. Hill also has no online media presence, and state and local media coverage provides only her name and party affiliation. Her brother, Shawn O'Hara, is the state's most well-known Reform Party figure, having run for office over a dozen times, losing each.

Hill has herself made several unsuccessful attempts to win office. In 2004, she ran for US House in District 4; in 2010, she ran for House District 3; and in 2011, she ran for Lieutenant Governor.

Little information about Hill's policy positions is publicly available. Research into news coverage of events attended by her competitors in past races turned up no information on Hill. Nationally, the Reform party favors fiscal conservatism and increased accountability for abuses of government power. It is hard to know the extent to which the Mississippi affiliate or Hill agree with the positions of the national organization. A 2006 newspaper ad for the Reform Party of Mississippi touted the party's mission as "cleaning up American politics." In 2014, the party's Senate candidate and Ms. Hill's brother, Shawn O'Hara, reached out to Chris McDaniel's supporters after McDaniel lost the Republican party primary to Thad Cochran.

"Platform." Reform Party National Committee, 09/20/2016.  
<http://www.reformparty.org/platform/>

Reform Party of Mississippi. 9 November 2006. *The Woodville Republican*.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=999&dat=20061109&id=OBQzAAAAIBAJ&sjid=nxUGAAAAIBAJ&pg=659,2009907>.

"Reform Party senate candidates discuss vision for Mississippi." 21 October 2014. WLOX. <http://www.wlox.com/story/26851561/reform-party-senate-candidates-discuss-vision-for-mississippi/>

"Termination Report," MS SOS.

[http://www.sos.ms.gov/CampaignFinanceWebScans/Tracella%20Lou%20O'Hara%20Hill%20\(Termination%20Report\)%20December%2012%202011.pdf](http://www.sos.ms.gov/CampaignFinanceWebScans/Tracella%20Lou%20O'Hara%20Hill%20(Termination%20Report)%20December%2012%202011.pdf)



## Trent Kelly, Republican

Trent Kelly lives in Saltillo with his wife of 27 years, Sheila, and their three children, John Forrest, Morgan, and Jackson.

Kelly has served 32 years in the Mississippi Army National Guard as a Combat Engineer. He has received two Bronze Stars; the Combat Action Badge; Bronze, Silver, and Gold de Fleury medals; and other awards. In addition, Kelly has legal and criminal justice experience. He has a private law practice and served as Tupelo City Prosecutor, the North Mississippi Narcotics Unit Forfeiture Attorney, and District Attorney for the 1st Circuit judicial district, managing all felony cases.

Kelly sits on the House Agriculture, Small Business, and Armed Service committees. He chairs the Small Business Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight and Regulations. Kelly emphasizes his support for the armed forces and prioritizes Mississippi's economy and job creation, paying particular attention to Mississippi's agricultural industry. Since his election in 2016, Trent has voted in line with President Trump's preferences roughly 92% of the time. One notable break with the President was a vote for the USA RIGHTS Act of 2017, a bipartisan effort to limit warrantless searches of American citizens' communications under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

Kelly has sponsored nine bills in the House. One of these, naming a post office building in Oxford, was passed into law. Kelly's most recently sponsored bill (H.R. 5494) aims to ensure veterans benefit from the Small Business Act's subcontracting limitations. His proposal with the most cosponsors (H.R. 5121) would expand eligibility for TRICARE Reserve Select. He has received the NTU Taxpayers' Friend Award and NRF Hero of Main Street Award.

<https://www.congress.gov/member/trent-kelly/K000388?pageSort=documentNumber%3Aasc&q=%7B%22sponsorship%22%3A%22sponsored%22%7D>

[https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/trent\\_kelly/412673](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/trent_kelly/412673)

[https://twitter.com/RepTrentKelly?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](https://twitter.com/RepTrentKelly?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor)

<https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/congress-trump-score/trent-kelly/>

## Randy Wadkins, Democrat

Dr. Randy Wadkins is from a family of educators based in Iuka, Mississippi. He received his B.S. and PhD in chemistry from the University of Mississippi. Wadkins specialized in cancer research at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital before returning to “Ole Miss” in 2004 to become professor of chemistry. In 2015, Dr. Wadkins served as an AAAS Science and Technology Policy fellow for Rep. Steve Cohen (D).

Wadkins decided to run for Congress because he disagreed with the voting record of Representative Trent Kelly and believes President Trump has created anti-science policies. Wadkins plans to stand up for science in Congress and better represent the state.

Wadkins emphasizes four key policy areas. He pledges support for public school funding—including increases to teacher pay—and 21st century education programs, such as instruction in computer coding languages. Wadkins sees the “brain drain” as a problem for all Mississippians and believes the solution is to have higher paying jobs and better employment opportunities. He plans to achieve this goal by promoting “21st-century jobs in Mississippi, such as aerospace, tech, and renewable energy jobs.” Additionally, Wadkins is a supporter of “Medicare for all” and through his experience as a congressional fellow “[he] has seen first-hand how the healthcare system is flawed from the top down.” With regard to criminal justice reform, Wadkins advocates an end to the “school-to-prison pipeline” and seeks the “decriminalization of marijuana.”

<https://www.wadkinsforcongress.com/about>

Interview by John McGee. October 4th, 2018

Korte, Andrea. 13 August 2018. “AAAS S&T Policy Fellow Joins Other Scientists in Bid for Congress,” <https://www.aaas.org/news/aaas-st-policy-fellow-joins-other-scientists-bid-congress>. Accessed 10/22/2018.

# Mississippi Chancery Court

## District 14, Places 2 and 3

Chancery Courts are trial courts with jurisdiction over a wide range of legal issues many people encounter. They handle divorce; custody, adoption, and guardianship of minors; and wills and estates. They try cases involving fraud, contract law, property rights, sanity, and even the constitutionality of state laws. Most of the time, these cases are tried without a jury, and chancery judges decide the outcome.

The state of Mississippi is divided into 20 Chancery Court districts. Each district's Chancery Court is composed of between one and four judges, depending on the size of the district. Judges are elected to four-year terms. The elections must be nonpartisan, so candidates cannot use party affiliations in their campaigns and the ballot will not indicate party attachments.

District 14 encompasses Chickasaw, Clay, Lowndes, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, and Webster counties. The district is further divided into three "places," with one judge selected from each.

Ahead of this election, all three District 14 Chancery judges announced their retirement, so the 2018 election will usher in an entirely new court. Places 2 and 3 each contain portions of Lowndes County. Three candidates are competing to replace Chancellor Jim Davidson in Place 2: Gary Street Goodwin, Carrie A. Jourdan, and Joseph N. Studdard. Paula Drungole-Ellis and Roy A. Perkins are vying for Place 3, which has been served by Senior Chancellor Dorothy Colom.

## Gary Street Goodwin, Place 2

Judge Gary Street Goodwin lives in Columbus with his wife, Kathy. They have three sons—B. Jay Nelson, Daniel Goodwin, and Phillip Goodwin—and attend First Presbyterian Church, where Judge Goodwin serves as Deacon.

Goodwin has a bachelor's in economics and political science from Mississippi State University and a J.D. from Ole Miss. With nearly 40 years of experience as an attorney, he has worked as both Lowndes County prosecutor and public defender. His private practice handles cases involving family law, and he has experience with property law too. In *Citizens for Equal Property Rights*, Goodwin represented property owners challenging a Lowndes zoning ordinance before the Mississippi Supreme Court. He was voted "Among the Best Attorneys" in the 2018 reader's choice Best of the Triangle poll conducted by the *Commercial Dispatch*.

Goodwin also has judicial experience. He is a judge on the Columbus Municipal Court, which handles misdemeanor offenses, including local laws and traffic violations. As Municipal judge, he also presides over the Drug Court, and recently invited the public to a graduation ceremony for the rehabilitation program. Goodwin has also served as a Administrative Hearing Officer for the Lowndes County School system for over 20 years. In this role, he presides over disciplinary hearings, reviewing evidence and testimony before making recommendations to the Board of Education. In this role, too, he appears in Mississippi Supreme Court records. In *Colvin v. Lowndes*, the Court reprimanded the School Board for ignoring Goodwin's recommendation of leniency and instead expelling a New Hope Middle School student, uniformly praised by teachers, who brought a multi-tool (scissors, a nail file, and a cuticle knife) to school.

Goodwin says a "judge should ... have the patience and understanding to grasp the personal difficulties of life which bring people to court."

<https://www.facebook.com/electgarystreetgoodwinchanceryjudge/>

<https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp2/114/504/2343329/>

<https://caselaw.findlaw.com/ms-supreme-court/1045542.html>

## Carrie A. Jourdan, Place 2

Carrie A. Jourdan lives in Columbus. She has volunteered with My Book to increase Lowndes County children's literacy and participated in the Educators are Essential event organized by the Columbus-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce Education Committee.

Jourdan studied at MUW before completing a bachelor's and law degree at LSU. Licensed in both Louisiana and Mississippi, she has over 20 years of experience. Her law practice specializes in family law, and she was the Palmer Home's Custody Attorney in 2016. She also served as a Lowndes County public defender.

In 2008, Jourdan made history when she recruited the Innocence Project to help her exonerate a death row inmate using DNA evidence—the first such case in Mississippi. Their work resulted in exonerations for two separate murder convictions prosecuted by former Lowndes District Attorney Forrest Allgood using questionable forensic evidence. They convinced MS Attorney General Jim Hood to get involved, and he used DNA evidence and a confession to prosecute another man for both crimes. In 2011, the county's Circuit Court chose not to reappoint Jourdan as public defender. While Circuit judge James Kitchens cited her failure to visit clients routinely in jail, Jourdan told the *Commercial Dispatch* it was due to her support for Scott Colom's successful campaign to replace Allgood as District Attorney.

Announcing her candidacy, Jourdan cited her professional experience as well as her "life experience as a young, divorced Mom [and] an adult daughter to older parents." In 2017, Jourdan publicly celebrated domestic abuse reforms made to the state's divorce laws. She also supported the Innocence Project's #GuiltyPleaProject campaign, expressing concern about the number of defendants pressured into signing a plea deal. She has stressed the need for more civility between divorcees with children and pledged to "do everything in her power to discourage this type of behavior," including the establishment of a family mediator program.

<https://www.facebook.com/carrie.jourdan.5>

<http://www.cdispatch.com/lifestyles/article.asp?aid=62710>

<http://www.cdispatch.com/news/article.asp?aid=46877>

<http://truthinjustice.org/kennedy-brewer2.htm>

## Joseph “Joe” Studdard, Place 2

Joseph “Joe” Studdard has lived in Lowndes County since he was four years old. His wife, Stephanie, teaches third grade at Columbus Christian Academy. They have 2 children: Baleigh (23) is in nursing school at Northeast Mississippi Community College, and Lawson (17) is a junior at Columbus Christian Academy.

Studdard attended East Mississippi Community College and Mississippi State University. He earned his juris doctor degree from the University of Mississippi and has been practicing law in Columbus for thirty-one years. Studdard has experience with cases involving family law, conservatorship, real estate, and business issues. He says that during his time as an attorney, he has tried all of the types of cases that are seen in Chancery Court and has had many of those cases go on to Mississippi Supreme Court.

Studdard has three main goals if elected. First, he wants to minimize the time cases spend in between the filing of any kind of document in court and the point at which it is resolved. Second, Studdard wants to provide free legal clinics to the public in a effort to assist *pro se* litigants who are representing themselves in court. This falls in line with Studdard’s belief that “we have to help those people who cannot help themselves” Lastly, Studdard wants to encourage more cases to go into mediation. Studdard believes this will relieve the caseload currently moving through the court system and therefore produce quicker and better experiences for litigants.

Studdard has been involved in several campaign gatherings and has a committee charged with raising funds for his campaign. In addition to these meetings, Studdard has attended several local festivals such as Market Street in Columbus and Prairie Arts in West Point.

Joseph Studdard. Interview by Elise Wilson. 10/05/2018.

Greco, Hannah. 29 June 2018. “Chancery judge candidates speak to Columbus Exchange Club,” *Commercial Dispatch*.

<http://ftp.cdispatch.com/news/article.asp?aid=66799>.

## Paula Drungole-Ellis, Place 3

Judge Paula Drungole-Ellis earned her B.A. from Rust College, graduating summa cum laude. She received her law degree from the University of Kansas. For the last 32 years, Judge Drungole-Ellis has handled various cases in Chancery Court. Since 2009, she has been Youth Court Referee for the Youth Court in Starkville. Youth Courts handle cases of juvenile delinquency as well as neglect and abuse of juveniles. Youth Court Referees are appointed by the local Chancery Court to act as Youth Court judges. For the past three years, she has also served as a member of the Judicial Task Force for Excellence in Education.

She is a member of the National Association of Professional Women, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Mississippi Bar Association, the Magnolia Bar Association, and the Oktibbeha County Bar Association. She has also volunteered with the National Voting Protection Project for Election, which provides legal advice and investigates voter complaints, and the Mississippi Youth Court Judges & Referees Seminar,

Judge Drungole-Ellis hopes to establish the Free Legal Clinic as a permanent program, held two to four times each year. A clinic was provided for the first time in 2018 and provided low-income people access to an attorney, free of charge, to assist with relatively simple legal procedures. Drungole-Ellis would also like to offer a yearly Court Educational Forum in each of the 14th District's six counties. These forums would teach citizens about the court system, each specific court, the types of cases handled in that particular court, and the legal process.

Judge Paula Drungole-Ellis. Interview by Daysha Humphrey.  
09/30/2018.

Paula-Drungole-Ellis. <https://www.electpde.com/>

Smith, Slim. 25 June 2018. "Chancery judges to hold free legal clinic for low-income citizens," *Commercial Dispatch*.  
<http://www.cdispatch.com/news/article.asp?aid=66717>.

## Roy A. Perkins, Place 3

Roy Perkins lives in Starkville with his wife, Shirley. They are members of MT. Peiler MB Church and have two grown children.

Perkins earned his B.A. and a master's in public policy from Mississippi State University. He earned his J.D. at Mississippi College School of Law. Licensed in Mississippi and Washington, D.C., Perkins has a law practice in Starkville and nearly 30 years of experience. Most of his cases have involved the Chancery Court, including one he argued before the Mississippi Supreme Court. Perkins served as Special Assistant Attorney General for the State of Mississippi, as a Staff Attorney for the Mississippi Legislature, and as an attorney for the Mississippi Board of Nursing.

Mr. Perkins has represented Ward 6 for seven terms on the Starkville Board of Aldermen. For three of those terms, he has been Vice Mayor. His proudest achievements in 2018 were consolidating the police department in one building and bringing Walmart to town without granting their \$1.3 million subsidy request. He faced controversy this term when he led a vote to deny a parade permit to Starkville Pride, an LGBTQ support group. This led to litigation, and the Board eventually reversed course.

If elected, Perkins has pledged to be “fair and impartial,” to “work very faithfully and diligently,” and to “make decisions based on the law.” He cites several honors for public service: receipt of the Humanitarian Service Award (2012), induction into the Mississippi Municipal League Hall of Fame (2013), recognition at the Oktibbeha County NAACP Freedom Award Banquet (2015).

Benton, Charlie. 3 January 2018. “Two qualify for chancery judge race.” *Starkville Daily*. <http://www.starkvilledailynews.com/content/two-qualify-chancery-judge-race>. Accessed 18 October 2018.

Kirkland, Logan. 12 January 2018. “New Year's Resolutions: Vice Mayor and Ward 6 Alderman Roy A'. Perkins.” *Starkville Daily*. <http://www.starkvilledailynews.com/content/new-years-resolutions-vice-mayor-and-ward-6-alderman-roy-perkins>. Accessed 18 October 2018.

Poe, Katie. 26 February 2018. “Community responds, aldermen remain quiet about Starkville's Pride parade denial.” *The Reflector*. [http://www.reflector-online.com/news/article\\_8b73e30e-1b2d-11e8-aa25-f33cd9d2495d](http://www.reflector-online.com/news/article_8b73e30e-1b2d-11e8-aa25-f33cd9d2495d).



# About the Research

The Mississippi University for Women does not endorse or otherwise support candidates or political parties competing for public office.

This guide was produced by MUW students as part of an assignment in an upper-level political science course, “Campaigns and Elections.” Together, students worked to create interview scripts for both races and to research the offices being contested. Individually, students researched candidate biographies, qualifications and issue positions. They were also responsible for contacting candidates to request interviews, and several student interviews were ultimately used to inform this guide. Students collected more information than could be printed here, so they had to decide what about the candidates would be most useful to include. After individual students submitted summaries of their research, the class collectively revised each candidate profile to ensure neutral language and balanced coverage. The students are proud to present the fruit of their labors, this guide, which we hope will help voters make an informed decision in two important local elections.

