

MEMPHIS City Council Questionnaire 2008

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ John Willingham \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please describe your background and your qualifications for this position?

Please review my compressed resume attached hereto,

What experiences caused you to run for this office?

I Love Memphis!

I have had a love affair Memphis sense my first trip here in 1950.

In 1967 I moved my family to Memphis because it was the Cleanest and Quietest City with the Best Water in the nation.

We had great Public Schools, our Police and Fire Departments were highly ranked nationally and respected locally.

Our streets were wide, clean and provided a smooth ride.

123 Major Companies and Corporations called Memphis because of these wonderful qualities, not because our politicians gave them Tax Abatements at your and my taxed expense.

Memphis has become a very corrupt City as evidenced by the fact that; Several of our politicians have been indicted, some convicted, some in jail. There are still more who deserve to be indicted for malfeasance in office.

Most of the 123 major Companies and Corporations mentioned above began leaving in the early seventies when the Quality of our public schools began to fail and the quality of our work force declined. The Citizens of Memphis began losing pride, self-respect, and sense of family values. We began to realize we had become victims of the stealthy game of Politics wherein Political Puppet Masters, control Political Puppeteers, who in turn buy and direct Political Puppets to do what is best for the Master's with little or no concern the Citizens or their pocketbook.

The people of Memphis deserve better representation!

What unique qualities would you bring to this position and what differentiates you from other candidates in your race?

I have proven under fire; Experience, Honesty, Integrity, Vision, Reliability and the Courage to be the Watch Dog for the Citizens of all Memphians.

2. What is your vision for the City? I would like to have our citizens be proud of where they live. I would like to see a migration back to Memphis by those who

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have left Memphis (3,300 last year) because of Crime, Corruption and Cronyism for the benefit of a few at the expense of many. That job has to begin with our Cities leadership and I want to be a part of that effort and success.

How would you use this office to achieve the vision? I will be available to listen to any and all Citizens Memphis. For Memphis to regain it's self respect of 30 to 50 years ago, our leaders must lead by example, so our youth can look up to them, not be ashamed of them. I intend to lead by being a good example.

3. How do you plan on insuring that there is diversity, (including race, age, gender and socio-economic) represented in the development of public policy and government?

I don't believe in trying to micro manage the insuring of Diversity (including Race, Age, Gender and Socio-Economics). Most of our problems of today are the result of politicians buying votes by trying to satisfy this group and that group and don't you know there is still another group with their hand out in exchange for votes. The best example I can give is Bussing resulting in the total Destruction of our Neighborhood Public Schools and worse still the Families and Family Values. When we look beyond that which we saw on the surface of News Papers, T-V and Heard on the Radio about Civil Rights at any cost, we see the power brokers greed for the almighty quick dollar. Our Government threw money at the problem in the belief that bussing would be the salve to satisfy the squeaking wheel needed for racial equality. It destroyed Neighborhood Schools, Families and at the same time Family Values just so the Puppet Master's could make more money on the backs of those who could least afford the exercise.

Major Companies got rich off of Bussing by Manufacturing; Tires, Seats, Batteries, Lights and Paint to mention only a few. But the day in day out incomes was even grater and where the big bucks could be harvested for many years as residual incomes from Gas, Oil, Repair Parts and Maintenance to mention a few.

Bussing was and is a Colossal Failure! Think about the Billions of Dollars each day spent on Bussing and what we could do to solve our Educational, Racial and Economic problems if we had those dollars to solve the problems of Memphis. And there would be no fuel problem! YES, we should have then and should NOW Bussing and take the money saved into new and better Public Schools in the Neighborhoods, Equal and Better Pay for Teachers, Reinstate Tech Schools for those not College Bound, along with Parent and Parent Teacher Association involvement in the neighborhoods.

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4. What are the three greatest issues facing the City of Memphis today?

Crime,  
Corruption and  
Cronyism are the three things that destroyed our school system, corrupted many of our elected Officials, made Memphis a not so safe a place to live and work, plus these things are directly responsible for increase in taxes. Over 5,000 people are incarcerated at 201 Poplar and The Correction Center at Shelby Farms. It cost Tax payers an average of \$43,000.00 per year per inmate to house criminals. By comparison we spend only \$7,000.00 per student in Public Schools.

5. What role should the City of Memphis government play in promoting the economic development for the community?

We Should spend what ever money it takes to Reduce Crime, Upgrade our Educational System. So that we produce a more employable work force pool that will attract mid-range technical businesses.  
Hopefully home grown business that will stay here

What specific initiatives or actions would you promote and/or support?  
Boot Camp program for disruptive students.

Students who want to learn deserve an atmosphere free of disruption and intimidation

6. How would you strengthen and support existing neighborhoods that are within the urban core and what barriers to community redevelopment do you see in these areas today?

Place Tech Schools in neighborhoods to insure that idle hands are busy instead of being mischievous or getting into a gang. Give them something positive to do.

How do you propose to address the current blight in many of these areas?

Work first with the Neighborhood Clergy, Schools and Area Business and together develop constructive, positive, engaging, activities that provides and interest for everyone, particularly a parent and a child type activity. Leather Carving, Lapidary, Making Baby Clothes and Cooking as examples. These ideas could be good for the young, old and every one in between. We could even develop competitions between neighborhoods. I was a craft shop teacher in my youth.

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7. What do you regard as the greatest obstacle or barrier to growth in the City today?

Our leadership continues to bring race into and make race the center piece of any election or legislation.

8. What is the role of the City Council? To Legislate

What do you think about the relationship between the Council and the City Mayor;

At best, it is strained on virtually any all subjects. This is Not likely to change. There is about as much a relationship between the council and Mayor water & oil.

as well as other legislative bodies such as, Shelby County Commissioners, MLGW, Chamber, Center City Commission, etc.

They are compatible and all seem to work work well with each other

9. With regard to the crime rate, what current strategies would you support and what changes would you propose if any?

I support and like the Blue Crush program. I would like to see more skinny policemen well actually just not so fat that some of them look frumpy. Appearance is the first chance for Police to make a good impression . Donut shops should be off limits to over weight police officers.

10. Would you be willing to submit to a background check and then allow the results to be published? YES!

11. Do you support the local ethics ordinance? YES!

What changes would you recommend? I believe they could extended to every public employee from the Mayor down and include even MLG&W

12. What are your ideas with regard to the City's responsibility for funding Memphis City Schools?

School Funding by the County is mandated by the State Legislature. I do feel that Memphis should contribute as Memphis represents is 74.3% of the County

13. What are the Council's responsibilities for making the City contract bidding process more equitable and transparent?

The Council could initiate and craft a referendum that would limit the Mayor's authority to contract or issue request for studies exceeding \$100,000.00.

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14. Should the City Council Committee and full Council meetings be video cast live?  
**YES!**