

Coalition for a Better Memphis Candidate Questionnaire Memphis Mayor

Kenneth Whalum, Jr.

- 1a. Please describe your background and your qualifications for this position. What experiences caused you to run for this office. What previous experience qualifies you more than your opponents to lead on Day 1?
- 30 years motivating men, women, boys and girls to change their lives for the better, give back to their community, and empower each other economically;
 - 10 years personally leading thousands of people to hundreds of struggling small businesses as brand new customers spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to breath life into a stagnant local economy;
 - 20 years providing FREE instruction to hundreds of Memphians in basic computer skills, entrepreneurship, public speaking, etc;
 - 15 years producing television and radio shows;
 - Bachelor's Degree in English Literature and Linguistics, Law Degree, Master of Divinity Degree;
 - Elected to school board city-wide by 83,939 votes in 2006 (more votes than ANYONE has EVER gotten since the creation of the seat)
- 1b. What previous experience do you have running a business, managing employees or controlling a budget?
- 10 years managing multi-million dollar faith-based institution budget;
 - 10 years managing 30-unit real property portfolio;
 - 15 years managing employees in Shelby County Trustee's office and Criminal Court Clerk's office (CAO);
 - 3 years managing small business (restaurant);
 - 5 years managing small business (beauty/barber shop);
 - 10 managing implementation, tracking of Bust-A-Move-Monday (details at www.bustamovemonday.com)
- 1c. Beginning with the most recent position, please list all public offices you have held. Please include positions on appointed boards or commissions.
- Memphis City Schools Board of Commissioners;

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- National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences;
- Memphis Urban League;
- 30th City of Memphis Commemorative MLK Celebration;
- 20th City of Memphis Commemorative MLK Celebration

1d. If you have previously run for elected office but were not elected, please list those races below.

- MCS 2004

2a. What is your vision for the City – how would you use this office to achieve the vision?

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- "TO CREATE WEALTH, AND TO LEAVE WEALTH TO OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN"

2b. What are the three greatest issues facing the City of Memphis today?

- Moral decay
- Lack of personal character among elected officials
- Hopelessness among our young people

2c. What issues do you believe will shape the City over the next few years?

- Moral decay
- Lack of personal character among elected officials
- Hopelessness among our young people

3. How do you plan on insuring that there is diversity represented in the development of public policy, staffing and appointments, and city contracting?

- What kind of diversity are speaking of?

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4. What role should the City of Memphis government play in promoting the economic development for the community? What specific initiatives or actions would you promote and/or support regarding both large and small businesses?

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- The city should turn its attention to strengthening indigenous small businesses by creating incentives and tax breaks that are presently being offered to out-of-state businesses as perqs for moving to Memphis.
- I would be sure the city's resources are intentionally focused on building up business districts within the city limits, specifically struggling small businesses.

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5. How would you strengthen and support existing neighborhoods that are within the City of Memphis and what barriers to community redevelopment do you see in these areas? How do you propose to address the neighborhood blight in a proactive manner?

- Decentralize city government by moving city offices into the neighborhoods, thereby making the neighborhoods the locus of government activity. The main barrier to community redevelopment is the absence of an existing thrust by the city to do so. The last part of your question is redundant.

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6. Discuss the current administrative structure and do you have a vision for altering this structure? How would you strengthen a culture of accountability and outcome based on performance standards for Divisions of City Government as well as appointed positions?

- The structure is fine, except it needs to be community-based rather than 125 North Main-based.
- There IS no culture of accountability, etc for divisions of city government or appointed positions. I would simply establish same, and set a standard of excellence through my own performance. Those who fail to meet the standard will be disciplined appropriately.

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7. Give us your thoughts on a metro form of government and/or consolidated services.

- Consolidation is a cop-out for those who have failed the test of leadership in county and city government for the last 20 years. Cost efficiency could have been achieved decades ago if the respective mayors had wanted to do so. There is no proof whatsoever that consolidation is any more effective than our present form of government, and the cities who have consolidated have also consolidated schools. Before a serious discussion on consolidation can be had, we must first improve and enhance the service delivery of the respective entities (city and county). Consolidation, again, is a smoke screen and red herring floated by incompetent administrators and fearful politicians. Finally; the confusion stems from the county's obsession with Memphis. The county charter needs to be amended to delete the title county "mayor" and replace it with county "administrator" as it is in most other counties. Then county officials need to focus on delivering services in a more effective way to Memphis and the other municipalities. Cities don't exist to serve counties; counties exist to serve cities.

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8. What is the City's responsibility to Memphis City Schools? How should the relationship between the City and Memphis City Schools be structured?
- The city's responsibility is to provide safe neighborhoods and streets, and summer employment opportunities for our children.

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9. How can the Mayor effectively contribute to the reduction of the crime rate in the City of Memphis? What current strategies would you continue to support and what changes would you propose?

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- 1. By not being a criminal; 2. By enhancing Operation Blue Crush; 3. By initiating "Operation G.E.D." sweeps of high crime areas whereby MPD, MCS, and Juvenile Court would coordinate FORCED GED completion or jail for at-risk candidates.

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10. State your position regarding residency restrictions for City workers, including police officers.

- I would enforce existing ordinances related thereto.

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11. Are you familiar with the current budget and what would be your major budget priorities?

- I would be sure current priorities are pursued, and would streamline the Mayor's budget.

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12. Would you be willing to submit to a background check and allow the results to be published?

- *Of course.*