



League of Women Voters
of Plano/Collin County
www.lwvcollin.org

Voters Guide

Mar. 2, 2010 Primary Elections Collin County Commissioners' Court

Early voting – February 16 – 26, 2010

Election day – Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

This Voters Guide is published by the League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County to help citizens prepare to cast an informed vote. The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan organization, encourages informed and active participation in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

This guide includes contested races in which two or more candidates are running regardless of party. All candidates for the respective offices were invited to participate. If a candidate did not respond by the deadline, "No response from the candidate" is printed. Responses were limited to 100 words and truncated with /// after the 100th word. Where there are multiple candidates for the same office in a party, the candidates appear in ballot order.

Candidates for Collin County Judge

4 year term. Must be 18 years or older, a U.S. citizen, a resident of Texas and a resident of the county. Responsible for presiding over the Collin County Commissioners' Court, which conducts the general business of the county and oversees financial matters.

Keith Self (Incumbent), Republican

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of Collin County Judge or Commissioner.

West Point graduate and 25-year Army officer. Experience in policy making with high levels of the US military; Joint Staff and US Embassy in Cairo to name two. I attended Deputies meetings (Deputy Secretaries, cabinet-level) in the White House Situation Room.

Experience working with large sums of taxpayer dollars; e.g. helping manage the \$2 Billion in yearly aid to Egypt.

Experience working with multiple independent authorities; directly and personally coordinating military forces from 37 nations to send to Bosnia and Kosovo.

Served as County Judge for 3+ years. I've done the job.

2. What are the biggest environmental concerns in our county and what steps would you take to solve them?

We don't have many large fixed pollution sources, so air quality will be improved as we get our traffic moving instead of sitting in congestion. The improved

transportation network funded primarily by the NTTA payment for SH121 will reduce our congestion.

Illegal dumping is being addressed with a comprehensive, cooperative effort that includes many of the departments and elected officials. Detection, enforcement, and clean-up are all part of this effort. A Public Service Announcement has been distributed and shown. Enforcement is starting to make an impact.

3. What measures would you support to improve transportation? How should they be funded?

The county has over \$1 Billion in the bank today to build our transportation infrastructure. Our priority is to protect those funds during the next legislative session, where they may be viewed as a source to close the state deficit.

The past two legislative sessions, I have recommended that the legislature increase the percentage of the state budget dedicated to transportation, currently less than 10%. I worked with our legislative delegation to protect our 121 funds and County Toll Road Authority.

Collin County citizens have stepped up to the plate on local option taxes; the tolls on Sam Rayburn.

4. Collin County is overall affluent but many of its residents live in poverty. How do you think the county should address the physical and mental health needs of these residents?

Assist our citizens when they need help getting the benefits authorized under both State and federal programs. In a recent State model, a single parent family with two children where the parent works 40 hours, gross salary is about \$15,000, but total benefits are almost \$37,000.

The county provides \$30,000 per year in medical treatment for each indigent citizen. We work with clinics so that \$30,000 stretches farther.

After an unsuccessful year trying to increase Northstar funding in the county, we funded a study to develop options to increase funding for mental health care in Collin County.

5. Collin County has strict financial guidelines for providing court-appointed attorneys. What measures do you support to ensure the right to counsel for all defendants?

Much like we do to ensure qualification for indigent medical care, verify requests for public defenders.

6. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in Collin County, and what is your position on these issues?

Water will be increasingly important. Although the county is not a member of the NTMWD, we need to cooperate with the water management system to continue to find water to supply the needs of our growing population.

John Muns, Republican

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- 1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of Collin County Judge or Commissioner.

(1) I have been a resident of Collin County for 40 years. (2) 15 years on Plano School Board. (3) Small business owner for 28 years. (4) Graduate of Abilene Christian University with a BBA in Business.

- 2. What are the biggest environmental concerns in our county and what steps would you take to solve them?

Traffic congestion – More roadways, mass transit.

- 3. What measures would you support to improve transportation? How should they be funded?

More Highways – The State is responsible for funding. They must make it a priority.

- 4. Collin County is overall affluent but many of its residents live in poverty. How do you think the county should address the physical and mental health needs of these residents?

Build a relationship with private doctors and our hospitals. Create a project access in Collin County.

- 5. Collin County has strict financial guidelines for providing court-appointed attorneys. What measures do you support to ensure the right to counsel for all defendants?

I support the recommendation of our administrative Judges. Let the expert be a part of the decision process.

- 6. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in Collin County, and what is your position on these issues?

We must have better relationships with our county employees, city leaders in the county and the legislature in Austin.

David M. Smith, Democrat

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- 1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of Collin County Judge or Commissioner.

Three terms on the Plano City Council, including three terms on the Finance Committee and as an Alternate to the Regional Transportation Committee. Related service on a variety of other local, state and national committees. Legislative Coordinator for Texas Neighborhoods Together during the last four biennial sessions. Officer of the Plano Homeowners Council and Meadows Neighborhood

Association. Past middle manager at EDS. Current environmental and political consultant. Past advisory director of the Plano Chamber of Commerce. US Air Force civil engineering experience. Engineering degree from Vanderbilt University. Former foster parent. Twenty year Collin County resident. Thirty year area resident.

2. What are the biggest environmental concerns in our county and what steps would you take to solve them?

Air pollution is the biggest concern, both for our health and for continued federal highway funding. I will join the area Clean Air Committee, reprising a role held during City Council service. I will work with area leaders in developing a plan that will include reasonable measures for coming into compliance with the new standards currently being promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency.

3. What measures would you support to improve transportation? How should they be funded?

I would first work on restoring working relationships between Collin County and others. This would include a new agreement with Denton County regarding the Dallas North Tollway extension, folding the recently created Collin County Tollway Authority into the North Texas Tollway Authority and again having Collin County representation on the Executive Committee of the North Central Texas Council of Governments. With area support, I would be an advocate for road and rail initiatives. Ideally, funding would come from or through the state. If this is inadequate, I would support the ability of the citizens to authorize local funding.

4. Collin County is overall affluent but many of its residents live in poverty. How do you think the county should address the physical and mental health needs of these residents?

A major initiative will be bringing more health service providers and facilities into Collin County to serve these residents. Many currently receive services in Dallas County. Tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars in federal, state and private money are spent on Collin County residents receiving services elsewhere. With more providers and facilities available in Collin County, we not only better serve our residents; we also realize the economic benefit resulting from more local spending.

5. Collin County has strict financial guidelines for providing court-appointed attorneys. What measures do you support to ensure the right to counsel for all defendants?

The current system is sound, because judges have the discretion to appoint attorneys for needy defendants even when they do not technically meet the guidelines. From time to time, I will consult with the judges, the district attorney and the defense bar to ensure all defendants have their basic constitutional right to counsel. I would be open to considering the establishment of a public defenders office typical of other counties our size.

6. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in Collin County, and what is your position on these issues?

Given the current economic recession and future reductions in federal grants, it is imperative that Collin County be smart in its spending and deliver services in a very

cost-effective manner. I advocate ending cronyism and nepotism that can lead to excessive spending. I will remove campaign contributions from the county contractor cost of doing business. I will support a major sustainability initiative, which will lead to lower long term energy and water costs. I will apply all of my public finance experience and expertise towards lowering our debt obligations.

Candidates for Collin County Commissioner, Precinct 2

4 year term. Must be 18 years or older, a U.S. citizen, a resident of Texas and a resident of the district represented. Responsible for representing the citizens of the district in which he/she is elected in the Collin County Commissioners' Court, which conducts the general business of the county and oversees financial matters.

Karl Voigtsberger, Republican – No response from the candidate

Cheryl Williams, Republican

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of Collin County Judge or Commissioner.

I have a strong financial background including a Finance degree from SMU and extensive experience in accounting and management consulting. More recently, I have worked in land planning. The primary functions of the Court include financial oversight and planning, making me uniquely qualified. I have a record of results as a public servant. I was elected to Plano City Council as the first representative from east Plano, an area that comprises the largest voting block in the precinct. During my tenure, we implemented a revitalization program for east Plano, lowered the tax rate, and returned a surplus to taxpayers.

2. What are the biggest environmental concerns in our county and what steps would you take to solve them?

Air quality is a primary concern. We must work to reduce traffic congestion with adequate infrastructure, encourage clean industries and technology, and discourage heavy industry with significant emissions. Water availability is also critical. The county should work with cities, towns and the Water District to do everything possible to ensure that a plentiful, good quality water supply is available to Collin County residents. Efforts should include regional co-operation, long term planning for additional reservoirs, and the potential purchase of water from other states. Planning should occur state-wide but the state should not infringe on the local control of water.

3. What measures would you support to improve transportation? How should they be funded?

We should strive to locate employment centers closer to our population centers and where we have existing infrastructure by encouraging redevelopment, not just new development. We should encourage the use of our existing rail but limit expansion until ridership increases. The use of toll roads needs reform and should be used as a last resort after exhausting federal and state sources of funds. We must expose and fight against the diversion of gasoline taxes from transportation projects and push for

Collin County's fair share of transportation dollars rather than being a donor county to the region and the state.

4. Collin County is overall affluent but many of its residents live in poverty. How do you think the county should address the physical and mental health needs of these residents?

A large number of Collin County residents who subsist below the poverty line live in Precinct 2; therefore, it deserves the attention and engagement of this Commissioner. Ignoring this issue is a disservice to the public and financially shortsighted. I will work closely with our cities, other counties, the health care industry and our non-profits to find creative and cost-effective solutions to this growing problem. Indigent Collin County citizens are our responsibility and we must address this problem head-on or risk the Texas Legislature's involvement. If you don't like Robin Hood, you won't like Austin's solution.

5. Collin County has strict financial guidelines for providing court-appointed attorneys. What measures do you support to ensure the right to counsel for all defendants?

The county must respect and uphold the constitutional rights of indigent defendants. It is appropriate to have reasonable income and asset guidelines and to verify that individuals meet those guidelines. However, in order to ensure that deserving defendants have the representation they need and avoid valid appeals, judges must continue to have the final say on appointing an attorney. It is also appropriate to regularly review the guidelines since economic conditions, availability of credit, and other financial realities can have substantial impact on an individual's ability to pay for the counsel they are entitled to by law.

6. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in Collin County, and what is your position on these issues?

I will fight against being forced into the Parkland Hospital district, which would more than double the county tax rate. If you don't like Robin Hood you will hate this proposal. I am also opposed to the creation of a massive publicly subsidized rail yard and truck distribution center in southeast Collin County. I believe it would be more prudent to focus on assisting our cities with efforts to attract businesses that will create high quality, high wage jobs to the business parks, office space and vacant land where infrastructure already exists. This will expand the tax base efficiently.

Jerry Hoagland (Incumbent), Republican

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of Collin County Judge or Commissioner.

I have BBA and MBA degrees from the University of North Texas in Denton. I have also attended many professional seminars through the years related to delivering the high quality governmental services at the least possible cost.

I was a member of the Plano City Council from 1978-80. I have been a Collin County Commissioner since November, 1980.

2. What are the biggest environmental concerns in our county and what steps would you take to solve them?

Air pollution is a problem in Collin County, but solid waste is our most costly environmental concern today. We have tried to get people in the unincorporated areas of the county to voluntarily deliver their solid waste to specified locations within the county. However, during the last three months alone an Environmental Deputy Sheriff for the county has helped clean up 12,706 pounds of illegally dumped solid waste. I believe much of this illegal dumping could be cleaned by requiring residents in the unincorporated areas of the county to have solid waste pick up at their homes.

3. What measures would you support to improve transportation? How should they be funded?

The State currently utilizes two ways to pay for road improvements: gas taxes and tolls. I don't believe the legislature is willing to increase the gas tax. I am not in favor of increased tolling. We must get the state leadership to stop the diversion of gas tax money to line items other than transportation in the state budget. Currently, only slightly more than half of the gas tax is being used to improve our transportation system. Getting the diversion stopped should go a long way in improving our transportation crisis.

4. Collin County is overall affluent but many of its residents live in poverty. How do you think the county should address the physical and mental health needs of these residents?

If anyone is at 100%, or less, of the national poverty income level, we provide healthcare services for them. I believe this is a reasonable income threshold for our citizens to meet in order to get government provided healthcare. Most mental health dollars are provided by the state and need to be equalized on a per capita basis. I believe a study by UNT that is currently underway will show a significant mental health spending disparity between Collin County and other parts of the state (with Collin County being short changed).

5. Collin County has strict financial guidelines for providing court-appointed attorneys. What measures do you support to ensure the right to counsel for all defendants?

I think the standards we have in place today are fine. Those who can pay for their own defense should do so. If anyone who is arrested is at 125%, or less, of the national poverty income level, they receive a court-appointed attorney. If there are extenuating circumstances related to the individual involved in the case, the trial judge is given the latitude to bend this general policy and provide an attorney for the defendant.

6. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in Collin County, and what is your position on these issues?

Collin County isn't doing enough long term planning. We have grown by about 300,000 people during the last decade (500K to 800K). We have another 1.2 million who will be moving to our county between now and the year 2045. Collin County will then be as large as Dallas County is today (approximately 2.0 million people). Careful thought must be given to new roads, courts, jail space, water, parks, etc. to accommodate this level of population. In a rapidly growing county such as ours we have to constantly be thinking about the implications of growth.

Rick Koster, Democrat

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of Collin County Judge or Commissioner.

Education: BSEE Yale University 1982

Experience: 25 years of engineering and sales experience in private industry; 2 years of government experience as a civilian employee of the US Southern Command; a lifetime of experience as a native speaker of both English and Spanish, and of being natively at home in both US and Latin culture.

2. What are the biggest environmental concerns in our county and what steps would you take to solve them?

My biggest environmental concerns are regional air quality, energy. Improving public transportation in the region and focusing on energy conservation will go a long way toward improving air quality. Improving capacity on our main roads will help lower emissions and save energy.

3. What measures would you support to improve transportation? How should they be funded?

I support an extension of public transit to cities and towns beyond Plano and Richardson. This should be paid with user fees and county subsidies. Road expansion should not be our only option. An example of projects I would support would be express busses that feed the DART system and link it to our courts and county facilities. I also believe that some of our roads do need expansion to meet regional traffic and housing patterns.

4. Collin County is overall affluent but many of its residents live in poverty. How do you think the county should address the physical and mental health needs of these residents?

The county must maintain an infrastructure that addresses the physical and mental health needs of less affluent citizens. Since there are no county owned facilities in Collin County, it is proper that the county contract with private and regional public facilities for these needs.

5. Collin County has strict financial guidelines for providing court-appointed attorneys. What measures do you support to ensure the right to counsel for all defendants?

I support the current Collin County rules to implement the Texas Fair Defense Act. I would support a provision that enables non-indigent defendants to access the County list of defenders and to retain lawyers at the County rate.

6. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in Collin County, and what is your position on these issues?

County government should partner with local school districts to provide a county program of vocational education. Such a program, which might be modeled on Collin College, would give our young people career options that would benefit the county and help lower the dropout rate in our schools.

County government needs to make sure that water, sewer, power and other utilities keep up with regional growth.

Candidates for Collin County Commissioner, Precinct 4

4 year term. Must be 18 years or older, a U.S. citizen, a resident of Texas and a resident of the district represented. Responsible for representing the citizens of the district in which he/she is elected in the Collin County Commissioners' Court, which conducts the general business of the county and oversees financial matters.

Kathy Ward (Incumbent), Republican

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of Collin County Judge or Commissioner.

As a teacher, businesswoman, volunteer, and now as your Precinct 4 Collin County Commissioner I am a solution-driven leader that is committed to the people I am privileged to serve. As a commissioner I have a strong fiscally responsible record. Whether it's fighting for your tax dollars in Austin or creating the Collin County Citizens Academy, I know that this is your government and I work for you.

2. What are the biggest environmental concerns in our county and what steps would you take to solve them?

Illegal dumping is one of the most pressing environmental issues that our county faces. We have found parts of a dead animal carcass, next to old couches, next to remnants of crystal meth labs in unincorporated areas of our county. If unaddressed this impacts the citizens living nearby and could eventually contaminate our water sources. This is unacceptable. As a commissioner I supported funding for a sheriff's deputy to work in conjunction with our Public Works department for offender enforcement purposes. I have also supported programs that utilize inmates and probationers for illegal dumping cleanup efforts in the county.

3. What measures would you support to improve transportation? How should they be funded?

In the 18 months I have served in this capacity I already hold a regional transportation leadership position. I am an advocate for our county's long term transportation needs that are dictated by our explosive growth. I am also working with other transportation leaders to bring trust back to the taxpayers by fixing issues such as gas tax diversions.

4. Collin County is overall affluent but many of its residents live in poverty. How do you think the county should address the physical and mental health needs of these residents?

In my short 18 months as a commissioner I have become the court's leading advocate for indigent healthcare and mental healthcare. I fought for additional mental health dollars last legislative session and continue to fight for a system that does not penalize the mentally ill in Collin County or the taxpayer. I have stood strong for healthcare initiatives that are the best return on investment for the taxpayer dollar while still taking care of our state mandated needs in the critical area of indigent healthcare.

5. Collin County has strict financial guidelines for providing court-appointed attorneys. What measures do you support to ensure the right to counsel for all defendants?

200% of the FPL is the guideline the county uses when making recommendations to judges in these specific cases. The judge makes the ultimate determination regarding legal representation. It is within the judge's complete authority to make these decisions. I support that. Our judges receive daily reports that show if someone has been in prison for 10 days or longer and without representation. There are safe guards to protect the rights of the accused that also allow our judges to be good stewards of taxpayer money.

6. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in Collin County, and what is your position on these issues?

Continuing to stand strong for low taxes will always be a pressing issue in a rapidly growing area such as Collin County. Issues such as transportation, indigent healthcare, and water, just to name a few, are dependent upon our leaders being proactive versus reactive. County leaders must be diligent in working with the cities and the citizens in addressing our changing demographics and needs.

Duncan Webb, Republican

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of Collin County Judge or Commissioner.

I am completing my 12th year as a member of the Board of Trustees of Plano ISD, including three years as Board President. I have managed annual budgets of \$500 million. PISD has continued to provide an excellent quality education to its students

despite being forced to make budget cuts, and staff reductions as a result of continuing recapture tax payments and other unfunded State mandates. My public service, combined with almost thirty years of experience as a business and real estate attorney, has produced a track record that demonstrates my unique qualifications to serve as a Commissioner.

2. What are the biggest environmental concerns in our county and what steps would you take to solve them?

Clean air and illegal dumping continue to be the biggest concern. The County will need to continue to replace the County's vehicle fleet (using TERP grants when possible) to reduce air pollution by County vehicles. The County needs more enforcement of illegal dumping laws and needs to expand its message that Collin County will prosecute persons violating the laws.

3. What measures would you support to improve transportation? How should they be funded?

I would (i) continue the paving of rural roads program started several years ago, (ii) continue planning and acquiring right of way for the outer loop, (iii) push for and facilitate quicker expenditure of RTC funds while construction costs are low. The County must also re-establish its position of leadership and influence in the State in order to create a consortium of counties pushing for elimination of the diversion of state gasoline taxes to the general fund, or determine other ways to fund transportation.

4. Collin County is overall affluent but many of its residents live in poverty. How do you think the county should address the physical and mental health needs of these residents?

The County must continue to expand and strengthen the public/private partnerships developed to meet the needs of these residents. This resident population continues to grow. The distribution of indigent health care services through private clinics seems to be a cost effective solution. However, the County must find ways to provide higher level medical care for these residents at reduced cost to its taxpayers. There are several opportunities, including developing a Project Access program modeled after one in Dallas County, which could provide additional health care resources to these residents without a material expenditure of additional County funds.

5. Collin County has strict financial guidelines for providing court-appointed attorneys. What measures do you support to ensure the right to counsel for all defendants?

I think the current system of providing court-appointed attorneys to indigents after credit checks but with judicial discretion to override the finding seems to be working well in keeping legal costs down while insuring indigents' legal rights are protected.

6. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in Collin County, and what is your position on these issues?

Fostering and facilitating economic development in our County as we come out of this financial crisis. Continued growth and expansion of the County's tax base is the key to keeping taxes low while maintaining the quality of services we expect.

Additional issues facing the County, like maintaining adequate potable water supplies, air quality, and transportation funding will require regional and state solutions which the County must take an active leadership role to facilitate. Through my dealing with the Texas Legislature on recapture, I have developed the leadership skills, and legislative relationships, to facilitate solutions to these issues.