Caddo Sheriff announces plans to retire in 2024; will not seek re-election

Friday, June 30, 2023

Caddo Parish Steve Prator announced today that he will not be seeking re-election in October and instead will retire from law enforcement next year with over 50 years of service.

Prator said the decision was made with much prayer and consideration after being diagnosed with a treatable cardiac condition this past week.

“Dr. Trey Baucum in Shreveport and the Baylor Cardiology Hospital in Dallas were able to identify and correct a problem with my heart,” he said. “Although in great health now, this medical episode has caused me to realize my mortality and so I have chosen not to seek re-election. Having raised a tremendous amount of money and been assured of widespread community support, I was very much looking forward to an exciting race and another overwhelming victory just as I have enjoyed over the last six terms.”

All donations raised for the current election will be returned, the Sheriff said. He will continue to serve until the end of his current term, which expires on June 30, 2024.

Prator is one of the longest-serving sheriffs in Caddo Parish. At the end of the current term, both he and former Sheriff Thomas R. Hughes (1916-1940) will have served 24 years. Only one sheriff served longer, J. Howell Flournoy, who served for 26 years.

Prator first took office on July 1, 2000, after receiving 80 percent of votes cast in the sheriff’s election. After serving his first term, Caddo Parish voters overwhelmingly returned him to office five more times citing his knowledge of law enforcement and leadership abilities. His approachability, outspokenness, country style, and quick wit also endeared him to voters.

Each election year, Prator campaigned on the promise, “Tough on crime; careful with your money.” In his first few months as sheriff, he trimmed the department’s budget by millions of dollars and asked voters for a tax increase only once during his 24-year administration. It was for one-tenth of a penny to fund a pay increase for deputies.

Crime in the parish outside of municipal areas with their own police departments dropped every year except one with Prator as sheriff. In the one off year, crime remained unchanged.

Since taking office, Prator always strived to improve the department providing deputies with new equipment and facilities. He established a regional training facility that serves multiple parishes, built new north and south substations, expanded the sheriff’s office fleet facilities, and opened Louisiana’s first regional re-entry facility. All of the projects were completed at no additional cost to citizens.

Prator began his career in law enforcement on January 29, 1973, when he joined the Shreveport Police Department as a patrolman. He worked a variety of assignments including homicide, robbery, sex crimes, and narcotics before being appointed as police chief while still only a sergeant. After 26 years, he retired from SPD to seek the position of sheriff.

Among his many accomplishments after election were serving a number of years as chairman of Louisiana’s Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Council, being inducted into the Louisiana Justice Hall of Fame, and building Sheriff’s Safety Town, Louisiana’s only permanent interactive safety education center for children.

He is particularly proud of his partnerships with the Boy Scouts of America Norwela Council, Caddo Council on Aging, and Robinson’s Rescue.

After closing this chapter on a life dedicated to public service, Prator said he plans to explore new avenues in

which to pursue his passion: fighting crime.

Attachments






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