

BIO FOR BRUCE HARKNESS

CANDIDATE FOR HABERSHAM COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 4

I am a Conservative Christian Republican. I am a Lifelong resident of Habersham County; My Father (Charles) worked 50 years for Ga Power and my mother (Ruby) was a nurse and a Realtor. I am married to the former Amy Reems and together we have 6 children and 2 grandchildren.

My mother's family were some of the first settlers in Habersham County 221 years ago when they settled in Tallulah Falls in 1799 where they opened a trading post at the forks of the Chatooga and Tallulah Rivers. We have been serving the people of Habersham County for generations through business and farming.

I Went from Elementary through High School here in Habersham County. I Graduated from Habersham Central High School as Salutatorian; I then went to Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland on a full academic scholarship where I received my Associate Degree and was named a Truman Scholar and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a gpa of 4.0 in Business; I then went to Piedmont College on full academic scholarship and graduated Magna Cum Laude in Education. I then went to North Georgia College in Dahlonega and received my Master's Degree in History and Psychology. Next I graduated from John Marshall Law School in Atlanta with a Doctorate of Jurisprudence where I graduated in the top 10 of my class.

My first part time job was here in Habersham County picking apples in the fall for Hoyt Adair and for Ronnie Mathis in their Hollywood orchards. Then my first real job was at Winn-Dixie in Cornelia and I worked there putting myself through high school and college and worked my way up from bag boy to Store Manager in Athens. Next I became a teacher at Habersham Central High School where I taught history for 2 years. I then became an insurance agent with the Georgia Farm Bureau while I went back to law school. Finally settling on a career, I have been an attorney since 1997. I have also been a cattle farmer in this county and in Oglethorpe County for the last 35 years.

For the last 10 years I have worked with the City of Demorest either by serving on two different City Councils or on the Downtown Development Committee where I have learned so much about water and sewer distribution to the public. I think that my knowledge with this vastly important resource will enable me to bring a lot to the table if I am elected as County commissioner. We do not have any long range plans for growth nor do we have a county wide water or sewer plan. I believe that with my knowledge and training, I can bring our county together to form and plan how we can provide water and sewer to the growth that is coming to our county. And I hope to help manage that growth through reasonable and proper growth management strategy.

Another issue that I want to tackle if elected is we need more high paying jobs for our children and our grandchildren and we need to be out there trying to bring in good jobs and industries that will keep people here so they don't have to drive far away everyday. And I want to try to help bring in some new restaurants and businesses into our area and work to get more movies made here in our beautiful county.

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Finally I think we need to “pump the brakes on the taxes.” I think our citizens are overburdened now with taxes and it is hard on the elderly and people on fixed incomes to have their property taxes increase every year. I want to talk about how to cut spending and then cut taxes.

Finally, I am like Ronald Reagan. I believe that our county is like a shining city on a hill. We are so blessed here not just because of all the natural beauty, but because we have the best people in the world living right here. This is why thousands of people have moved here and will continue to move here is because this is a great place to live, work and raise your family.

I want to bring a positive force to the commission. In this race, I will not say one negative thing about my opponent, Natalie Crawford. I applaud her for her 8 years of hard work on the county commission and I will not sling mud nor be negative in my campaign in any way. The people that know me, they know that I work hard and I get things done. I have dedicated my life to helping others and it would be an honor to be elected to serve the fine citizens of this county as their next county commissioner.