



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 1, 2011

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New officials sworn in

It was a packed house for Ellis County's swearing-in ceremony on Saturday, January 1, 2011 at 10 a.m. in the second floor courtroom of the Historic Courthouse in downtown Waxahachie. Voices fairly rang as the large crowd pledged allegiance to our flag, and many hummed along as Max Navarro, a student at Waxahachie's Finley 7th Grade Center and son of County Auditor Mike Navarro gave a flawless rendition of the National Anthem.

"I challenge each of you to join me in embracing a new goal, a goal of service, putting ego aside," said County Judge Carol Bush, noting that it is a New Year and a good time for new resolutions. "I challenge you to do the job and do it well."

Bush thanked all those in attendance for coming to the ceremony as well as for supporting the officials in their work and in their campaigns.

Senior State District Court Judge Gene Knize, departing the office after 40 years of service to Ellis County, officiated.

"She thought she would cut me off from my last chance to address a captive audience," Knize quipped after Bush introduced him. "That's the first mistake of her new administration!"

Knize also challenged those officials taking the oath, saying, "Remember that oath that you are about to take, and you'll do the right thing."

According to Knize, Ellis County began holding an official swearing-in ceremony on January 1 sometime during the 1970's, because newly elected officials "were worried their pay wouldn't start" if they didn't take the oath immediately.

"Then we had to figure out what time to hold it," he added. "People celebrate the night before, so we couldn't do it too early, and we couldn't do it too late because of the Bowl games!"

Despite the solemnity of the occasion, Knize's dry wit and long memory kept things lively and enjoyable throughout the hour-long event.

Officials taking the oath during the ceremony included both newly elected and re-elected county officials as well as appointed officials, in the following order:



Mike Navarro, County Auditor



Bill Woody, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1



Jackie Miller, Jr., Justice of the Peace, Precinct 2



Curtis Polk, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 3



Steve Egan, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 4



Cheryl Chambers, County Treasurer



Cindy Polley, County Clerk



Melanie Reed, District Clerk



Bill Dodson, County Commissioner, Precinct 2



Ron Brown, County Commissioner, Precinct 4



Carol Bush, County Judge



Jim Chapman, County Court at Law #1



Gene Calvert, County Court at Law #2



Al Scoggins, 10th Court of Appeals



Joe Grubbs, 378th District Court



Patrick Wilson, County Attorney



Bob Carroll, 40th District Court

It was a break from the traditions of the 10th Court of Appeals for newly-elected Justice Al Scoggins, currently serving as 378th District Judge, to choose Ellis County as the venue for taking the oath of his new office. He is the first elected Justice to the Court of Appeals from Ellis County, and having provided over 27 years of service to the citizens of Ellis County he felt the historic courthouse was a fitting location for the ceremony.

In explaining that Scoggins will now be addressed as “Justice” rather than “Judge,” Knize offered an easy way to remember the distinction. “Just remember there are no judges in the Court of Appeals, and there is no Justice in the District Court!”

The Commissioners’ Court convened immediately following the ceremony to accept bonds for the following officials, effective January 1, 2011:

Mike Navarro, County Auditor	\$5,000
Bill Woody, Justice of the Peace, Pct 1	\$5,000
Jackie Miller, Justice of the Peace, Pct 2	\$5,000
Curtis Polk, Justice of the Peace, Pct 3	\$5,000
Steve Egan, Justice of the Peace, Pct 4	\$5,000
Cheryl Chambers, County Treasurer	\$220,000
Cindy Polley, County Clerk	\$500,000
Melanie Reed, District Clerk	\$100,000
Bill Dodson, County Commissioner, Pct 2	\$3,000

Ron Brown, County Commissioner, Pct 4	\$3,000
Carol Bush, County Judge	\$10,000
Jim Chapman, County Court at Law	\$10,000
Gene Calvert, County Court at Law #2	\$10,000
Patrick Wilson, County Attorney	\$5,000

Light refreshments were provided by Justice Al Scoggins after the conclusion of the ceremonies.