

Few Incumbents in NE Texas

Legislature Races Left to First-Time Candidates

By DAVE McNEELY
Staff Writer of The News
HUGHES SPRINGS, Texas
—Two men who have offices next door to each other in this tiny town have become better known of late because both are running for the Texas House of Representatives.

They are running in House District 2, a sprawling district made up of Cass, Marion, Morris and Upshur County.

The seat is being vacated Counties, and part of Smith by 1-term incumbent Doyce Lee of Naples, one of five retiring incumbents in Northeast Texas.

Those retirements have spurred some heated races to choose replacements, and none of the victors appears obvious at this time.

THE TWO Hughes Springs men are Byron Terry, 48, a Wallace real estate man and Democratic party worker, and Buck Florence, 37, an attorney.

Another candidate in the Democratic primary race (there is no Republican candidate in this traditionally Democratic area) is Ronald Wade, 23, a portly tax consultant fascinated by politics.

(One district resident said Wade has been looking all his life trying to find the establishment and get in it. His wall is papered with pictures of himself with various public officials, ranging from George Bush to Ralph Yarborough.

(Wade boasts in a campaign brochure: "His abilities have been recognized by such individuals as President Richard M. Nixon, and the late President Lyndon B. Johnson, both of whom have personally commended him on his public service.")

FLORENCE IS thought to have the edge in the race, partly because of the silent support of labor. But Terry has mailed literature to every resident in the district at least twice, and Wade says he has put more than 10,000 miles on his car meeting voters in the district.

Wade also is counting on his residence in Upshur County to help him; the county has about twice as much population as each of the other counties except Cass, which has about the same.

While Florence is considered the most probable victor, one of the other candidates could force a runoff with him.

OTHER RACES for seats of retiring incumbents include:

● House District 1—Veteran conservative Democrat Ed Howard is retiring, and political observers see a tough fight between moderate-liberal lawyer and former schoolteacher Cahill Hitt, 36, of Texarkana, and conservative Exxon distributor and insurance man Hamp Atkinson, 40, of New Boston, to take over the seat.

Atkinson is painting Hitt, a former campaigner for Ralph Yarborough and John Hill, as an ultra-liberal, while Hitt is calling Atkinson the candidate of the big oil and insurance companies.

A third Democratic primary candidate is George M. Thomas Jr., 49, a retired Air Force officer. Some observers believe Thomas, also of Texarkana, may draw enough votes to force a runoff.

The victor will face Republican Mrs. Marjorie Thornton, 43, a housewife, of Wake Village in the general election.

● House District 10—Long-time moderate-conservative Rep. James D. Cole of Greenville is retiring to take a job as administrator of the Texas House of Representatives.

There is a hot 3-way race for his seat among Jay Brim, 28, a recent law school graduate and ex-legislative aide; J. L. Green Jr., 32, an insurance agent; and Smith Gilley, 34, a lawyer, all of Greenville.

A fourth candidate, who observers believe is destined to finish fourth, is Robert T. (Bob) Mansker, 33, a business and insurance teacher and doctoral education student at East Texas State University in Commerce.

The district is made up of Hopkins, Hunt and Rains Counties. Brim comes from an old family in Hopkins County, and his father is a district judge there, so he is expected to do rather well. As a result, he has moved his official residence to Greenville and is working to cut into the Hunt County vote. Green and Gilley are expected to share—which is the bulk of the district's population.

ONE THING that could interfere with Brim's Hopkins County bases is that his father earlier this year held a court of inquiry in Sulphur Springs that resulted in county commissioners ceasing their practice of doing roadwork for private individuals with county equipment. The result brought mixed reaction from the citizenry and might have hurt the younger Brim.

Gilley also claims Hopkins County origins, but is from a less-populated area than Brim.

While Mansker is expected to appeal to the liberals, Brim's progressive attitude keeps Mansker from having the liberal vote sewed up.

Green and Gilley are both considered conservatives.

Onlookers predict a runoff involving any two of the front-running tree.

● House District 12—Veteran conservative and House character Rep. Billy Williamson of Tyler is quitting to run for county judge.

The race to succeed him seems to be between Bill Clark, 28, a recent law school graduate and former aide to Williamson, and Woody Roark, 34, lawyer and former chief counsel for the Veteran's Land Board.

A third candidate is Lester Phillips Jr., 26, an employe at a local can company.

Clark has the blessing of Tyler's conservatives in the race, while Roark has a more moderate appeal. Tyler's organized labor took no position in the race; one laborite said Phillips, a union member, was told he would get labor endorsement if he mounted an active campaign. Roark, a longtime friend of House Speaker candidate Rep. Fred Head, is thought to have labor's silent blessing, though he favors re-

ention of the right-to-work law.

OBSERVERS tend to give Roark a slight edge, although Clark, son of a well-known Tyler lawyer, is expected to be strong.

Clark is playing heavily on the theme that he has long-time Tyler ties, implying that Roark does not. His ads say "Bill Clark is not an outsider . . . He's one of us!"

But some report that his stance is partly backfiring, since Roark graduated from high school and junior college in Tyler, was a local golden gloves boxing champion, and has other ties over the years with the town.

Labor believes that no matter who is elected, they will be better off than they were with Williamson.

● House District 13—Veteran conservative Democrat John Allen of Longview is quitting in the wake of a 1972 guilty plea on a nepotism charge.

Democratic candidates to replace him include the favored Jimmy Mankins, 48, a trucking company executive of Kilgore; labor-endorsed T. P. (Pat) Noon, 31, a moderate-conservative school teacher who sells real estate as well, of Longview; and Pat Smith, 49, a former lobbyist and otherwise worker for oilman Bob Cargill, also of Longview.

Noon says he was surprised at labor's endorsement; he said he was the only one of the candidates to show up for the endorsement meeting, and says the endorsement was given with the understanding that he fa-

vors retention of the right-to-work law.

Mankins' expected lead comes from the fact that he has been a 3-term city council member in Kilgore, but is also making good inroads into the Longview vote. (The district is comprised of Gregg County.)

..SMITH said he did not register as a lobbyist during the last session of the Legislature because he was covering the Legislature as a newsman for the Great Circle News, published in Longview. (That's news to me," said one longtime capitol correspondent, who said he had always known Smith as a lobbyist.)

Smith said he does not work for Cargill, who was involved in the 1962 slant-hole oil drilling scandal and who was recently appointed by Gov. Dolph Briscoe to the Interstate Oil Compact Commission. Smith said he is executive director of the Sabine River Development Association, of which Cargill is president.

The other candidates say there have been no real issues in the race. Smith says he has refused to answer questionnaires from interest groups for fear he may violate new campaign laws. "I'm not ducking any issue with this," he said.

Most observers look for a runoff between Mankins and either Smith or Noon.

The winner will face Republican Carl Anderson of Longview, 22, a businessman, in the general election.

THE ONLY Northeast Tex-

as race in which an incumbent House member has drawn opposition is House District 11. Incumbent Bill Hollowell of Grand Saline, who returned to the House this term after a 6-year absence, is opposed by Don Payne of Van.

Most observers believe that Hollowell, an attorney and college teacher who is quite popular in the district made up of Kaufman, Van Zandt and Wood Counties, will have no trouble dispatching Payne, an insurance agent.

The 42-year-old Payne recently returned to the area after several years traveling as a country and western singer and working elsewhere in the insurance business.

Payne believes that an anti-incumbent feeling, a distrust of attorneys and the fact that his wife and four children are aiding in his campaigning while bachelor Hollowell is campaigning alone, all should work to his benefit.

But most observers say Hollowell has stayed in touch with the district well despite the fact that the constitutional convention has been in progress, and say that he is much better known in the Terrell area which contains much of the district's population.

The race is largely issue-

less; Payne describes Hollowell as "a nice fellow" and is vague about any points of difference that might exist between them.