

January 30, 2009

For Immediate Release

County Commissioner Jeff Barton said today he will nominate a long-time community volunteer and 27-year veteran of the Austin Police Department, Scott Cary, to be justice of the peace for the greater Buda area.

If confirmed by the full Commissioners Court, Cary will retire from the Austin Police Department in order to assume JP duties later this month.

Barton said his decision is based on a recommendation from a blue-ribbon Citizen Selection Committee he appointed to review applicants. 21 people expressed interest in the job; 17 went through a formal application process designed by Barton.

Last week, the Selection Committee and Barton announced a short list of 10 applicants. Earlier this week, Barton made public the committee's list of four finalists, along with a set of criteria the committee developed to judge them.

"I wanted a transparent, professional, thorough process," Barton said. "We got that. I hope this can serve as a model for how the county might deal with future appointments. By opening this to the public we brought in more people, more skill sets, and more competition. The result was a terrific group of applicants, a highly talented set of finalists – and a final recommendation the public can have the utmost confidence in. Scott Cary is tested, qualified, and familiar with community. He's been checked out in public and in private. I think he will make a great justice of the peace."

Barton said he will nominate Cary for the post at the next Commissioners Court meeting on 2/3/09. It takes a majority of the five-member Court to make the appointment official. The Buda JP district is within Barton's commissioner's precinct and a majority of the Court has indicated they will look to him for a recommendation.

Cary, 55, has lived in the Buda area 23 years. He is a highly decorated veteran of the Austin Police Department and a graduate of the F.B.I. National Academy. He has studied management and criminal justice at Ranger Junior College, Texas State, the University of Texas, St. Edward's and the University of Virginia, and has completed hundreds of hours of professional training, including a United States Secret Service Protective Intelligence course.

He was the founder and race director of the Hays High School Project Graduation Run, which raised more than \$70,000 from 1999 – 2005, and is a volunteer Special Olympics certified basketball coach at Marbridge with several state Championships under his belt. Cary is also a certified USA Track and Field Official and volunteers at numerous running events and charities locally and throughout Central Texas.

In 2008, Cary was appointed to Governor Rick Perry's Advisory Council on Physical Fitness. Last year he was also awarded the 100 Club of central Texas volunteer of the year award.

Cary began his career at APD in 1982. He worked as a patrol officer in central East Austin for several years before being promoted to Detective. Cary was assigned to the robbery/homicide division for eight years where he worked on several high profile investigations, including the Yogurt Shop Murders and the abduction/murder of Colleen Reed. Cary was promoted to Sergeant in 1993. Since his promotion he has supervised the SWAT team, the Bomb Squad and patrol squads. He was later promoted to senior sergeant, and has three-times been named one of the APD employees of the year.

Last year Cary took on the challenge of forming a Peer Support program at APD. Since that time he has been building a program to assist officers with stress related issues common to the law enforcement profession.

Cary has been married for 32 years to Merry Cary, a teacher at Buda Elementary who is also a long-time community volunteer. Scott and Merry have two daughters, Megan and Faith, both graduates of Hays High and Texas A&M University.

Barton said the committee was impressed by Cary's work experience in a law-related field, by his history of accomplishment, his deep roots in the community, his public involvement, and by an interview with the committee in which he laid out a clear vision for continued public service combined with an appealing judicial temperament grounded in a life story that includes overcoming substantial hardships. Barton said both he and the committee were also impressed by outstanding references and by Cary's commitment to a long-term interest in the job.

Cary said, "I am very appreciative of this nomination and look forward to serving the citizens of Hays County. I have had a very meaningful and fulfilling 27-year career at the Austin Police Department, which I believe, has prepared me for this new challenge.

I pledge to work with the community, Commissioner's Court, local law enforcement agencies and the Hays ISD to make and keep our precinct safe."

Barton praised the committee for its diligence. "They took their mission seriously and each member really brought something to the table," he said.

"Some of the others who applied are among the best of our community," Barton said. "A few are personal friends or political allies. One or two are people I would trust with my children's lives. I can't say enough good about them. But as committee members weighed experience, temperament, and community involvement, they came to the conclusion that at this moment in time Scott Cary is a great choice, the right choice. I appointed a broad-based, knowledgeable committee. They did their job well and I trust the outcome. I am proud to sponsor Scott Cary's nomination."

The Citizen Selection Committee was composed of six local people, all with expertise relevant to the justice of the peace position, and balanced geographically across the JP precinct:

- Arthur J. Braud, Niederwald city council member, manager at Apple, Inc., former small business owner, with broad hiring experience.
- Sandra Tenorio, Buda city council member, executive director Texas Rural Communities, former Director of Border and Immigration Issues for Gov. Ann Richards and, early in her career, staff member for JP and district court judges in Travis County.
- Georgie Cunningham, who lives west of Buda and is a retired administrative law judge for the State of Texas and a local community volunteer.
- Jorge Anchondo, a former research scientist for the LBJ School of Public Affairs holds a masters degree and is now a private-sector researcher. He lives east of Buda.
- Halley Ortiz, from the Manchaca area in Chaparral Park, was a successful trial lawyer who gave up her legal practice to become an award-winning teacher, now at Wallace Middle School.
- Judy Burns from west of Buda holds a masters degree in social work and is licensed clinical social worker with Casey Family Programs. She has experience with the juvenile justice system and as a child advocate.

The Buda JP post has been vacant since Dec. 31 when long-time judge Lamont Ramage retired. Barton praised the county's other justices of the peace for their willingness to step up in the interim. The county had planned to replace Ramage with former Texas Ranger Tommy Ratliff, but Ratliff was appointed sheriff in December after the untimely death of incumbent sheriff Allen Bridges.

Barton said he also conferred with Judge Ramage about the process and the committee's final recommendation. The current term will expire in 2010. Cary has expressed an interest in running for a full four-year term at that time.

More information, including the selection criteria developed by the committee and Commissioner Barton, is available on Commissioner Barton's county website,

www.comm2.co.hays.tx.us