

# DeLoach, Hamlett voted Mr., Ms. Gibson County

## *Barry DeLoach*

When you think of someone with hometown spirit, Barry DeLoach comes to many people's minds. He has lived and worked in Humboldt his entire life.

Because he is so well known, he was chosen as Mr. Gibson County in the Humboldt Chronicle's Best of the Best contest, voted by the newspaper's readers.

"I feel honored," DeLoach said after hearing the news. "Humboldt has always been my home and always will be."

Barry and his wife, Sandy, have been married 11 years. His son, Ben, is 32 years old and married to Amanda. His daughter, Rachel, is 27 and married to Jason. They have one son, Preston, named after Barry's father. Barry has a step-son, T.J., who is also 27, and has a fiancé, Maddy.

DeLoach attended Humboldt City Schools from kindergarten through 12th grade. He attended Union University.

As a youngster, DeLoach worked in the family business, Simmons Shoe Store. He continued working there with his mother, Lucy Allison, and brothers, Bill and Bob. In his early 40s, he moved on from the shoe business to join another Humboldt family business, King Tire Company, in the Tire Distributors office that supplies tires to dozens of other tire stores in the area.

In 1997, DeLoach began working for the Humboldt Chronicle as the sports writer and photographer as a second job. Over the years, DeLoach has covered and photographed hundreds of youngsters that played sports.

"I've had three jobs in my life," DeLoach noted. "My favorite part of working for the newspaper was covering football games. You get down in the trenches with the players and coaches."

"My favorite part at Simmons was meeting the customers," he said of working in the shoe business. "I've met lots and lots of people and made many friends."

"I'm a people person," DeLoach said of his favorite part of working at Tire Distributors. "I've built relationships with my customers on the phone—people I've never met. People ask about you. I ask about them and their families. Of 100 customers, I've only seen about 10 of them."

DeLoach served on the school board in the early 1990s for almost one term. He had to leave his post when he moved out of the Ward. Education has always been part of DeLoach's life, as he covered the

## *Dr. Versie Hamlett*

Even though Dr. Versie Hamlett wasn't born and raised in Humboldt, that hasn't stopped her from being a true Humboldtian. When Dr. Hamlett accepted the position as director of Humboldt City Schools, she quickly fit right in—like a glove.

Being voted Ms. Gibson County in the Humboldt Chronicle's Best of the Best contest is a testament of just how well Dr. Hamlett has fit in and became a true Humboldtian.

"I was very surprised the community voted for me," Dr. Hamlett reacted to being selected Ms. Gibson County. "I'm so elated—very unexpected."

Dr. Hamlett came to Humboldt in May of 2014. She said it does not feel like five years but it has been a great five years. Humboldt is her first superintendent's position in her 24 years as an educator.

"I have to say, it's the best five years of my 24 years," she noted.

During these short five years, Dr. Hamlett continues to be involved in community organizations. She serves on the Gibson County United Way board, Boys & Girls Club Advisory Board and the Rotary Board. She is a firm supporter of the Stigall Museum and Friends of the Library. Dr. Hamlett regularly donates to worthy causes and organizations such as the West Tennessee Regional Art Center.

"Most days I'm here from sunup to sundown," Dr. Hamlett said of being in Humboldt. "I have an open door policy. If I'm invited to an event, I try to attend."

Dr. Hamlett was born and raised on a rural farm in Arkansas. After high school, she attended Lane College in Jackson, Tenn.

"That changed my life," she said of attending college. "I didn't want to go back to the farm."

She graduated from Lane in 1995. She then crammed two years of grad school into one year when she earned her Master's from Free-Hardeman in 1995. Hamlett continued her education at Union University to earn her Education Specialist degree in 2006 and her doctorate in Education Leadership in 2008.

"I consider myself a teacher at heart and still teach," Dr. Hamlett added. "I'm an adjunct professor at Lane and Union. This fall I'll be adjunct at UT Martin as well. Teaching is my passion."

Dr. Hamlett got her first taste of teaching at Pope Elementary School in Jackson where she taught first grade for 10 years. At the time, she thought she wanted to be a first grade teacher her entire career. Her principal asked her to move to third grade where better scores were needed. Dr. Hamlett taught third grade for a year and a half.

She then advanced from the classroom to administration as the assistant principal at Arlington Elementary School the last half of the school year, still in the Jackson-Madison County School System.

Dr. Hamlett was offered the principal's position at North Parkway Elementary School where she spent the next three years until the school closed to become a middle school.

When Andrew Jackson Elementary School first opened its doors, Dr. Hamlett was at the helm. A true testament to her leadership, 98-percent of her staff at Parkway



Mr. Gibson County  
1st - Barry DeLoach  
2nd - Tommy Goodrum  
3rd - Tom McCue

Ms. Gibson County  
1st - Versie Hamlett  
2nd - Paula Bridges McGill  
3rd - Betty Langley

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