

# Mr. Gibson County: Marvin Sikes

Few people have become as closely identified with the city of Humboldt and Gibson County as former mayor Marvin Sikes. Over decades of public service, community involvement and civic leadership, Sikes built a reputation as a man deeply invested in the people and history of the place he calls home. This year, readers of the Humboldt Chronicle honored that legacy by voting Sikes "Mr. Gibson County" in the 20th annual Best of the Best contest.

Sikes says the recognition is humbling.

"You know, I always got to give God the credit," Sikes said. "If you see a turtle on top of a fence post, he didn't get there by himself, and I didn't either."

Born and raised in Humboldt, Sikes said his early life was far from easy. He grew up in poverty alongside six siblings after his father left the family when he was young. Despite the hardships, he credits his mother's strength and determination for helping carry the family through difficult times.

"My mama, she hung with us, brother," he said. "We never went on welfare, food stamps or public assistance. We had it rough, but she stayed with us." Sikes said those experiences shaped his outlook on life and gave him an appreciation for hard work, faith and community support.

"I had so many people in my life that supported me and gave me a chance to do things," he said.

One of those chances came in 1982 when Sikes went to work for Humboldt Utilities at age 28 during a difficult economic period.

"Jobs were really hard to get back in those days," he said. "My wife and I had already been married seven years and already had a child. It was tough."

Sikes began with boots on the ground as a meter reader, walking the streets of Humboldt recording utility readings by hand.

Looking back, he said the position changed his life.

"What an opportunity it was for me to walk these streets reading meters, meeting people and getting me out of my comfort zone," he said.

Over the next three decades, Sikes worked his way through numerous departments within Humboldt Utilities,

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**Mr. Gibson County**

1st - Marvin Sikes

2nd - Joseph Blankenship

3rd - Joseph Dunn

