

## Commissioners say goodbye to 6 of own

### Members leaving by choice or ballot

By Daniel Connolly

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Hugs, gifts, proclamations, tributes and poems flew as six Shelby County commissioners said goodbye to their colleagues at the final meeting of the 2006-2010 term Monday.

Commissioner Steve Mulroy broke out his trademark limericks for each of his colleagues.

**"What to say about Deidre Malone? / Legislative star, with skills finely honed / You'll be sorely missed, Deidre / Try and come back -- we need ya! / I can't handle these jokers alone!"**

Inside jokes and personal sentiment aside, the moment signaled big changes on the 13-member commission.

Term limits and election results mean five new commissioners take office Sept. 1.

A sixth incoming commissioner, Walter Bailey, had served on the commission for 35 years until 2006, when new term-limit rules forced him to sit out for four years.

The partisan balance on the commission will remain 7-6 in favor of Democrats, but new personalities could lead to different priorities on an organization that controls more than \$1 billion in taxpayer money per year.

The six commissioners are leaving for different reasons.

Two, Edith Ann Moore and John Pellicciotti, were appointed to interim positions but lost earlier this year in elections for four-year terms.

Commissioners Joyce Avery, George Flinn and Malone face term limits.

And J.W. Gibson II chose not to seek a second term.

The formal goodbyes took more than an hour.

Each departing commissioner got a framed copy of the resolution honoring their service, which another commissioner read out loud.

They also received a signed poster with pictures of all the commissioners. Then Avery gave Sidney Chism a white cowboy hat, and Interim Mayor Joe Ford gave out his own plaques.

Mulroy's limerick described Gibson as quiet, sometimes impatient with long-winded speeches at the commission:

**"Gibson's no-nonsense style is much terser / Than us talkers who just make things worser / Though to us he's been a boon / To him, this ain't a day too soon / We'll miss him (likely more than vice versa!)"**

Commissioner Henri Brooks joked that Gibson could use the photo of fellow commissioners as a dart board.

But Gibson, a business owner, quietly thanked God and his colleagues.

"I was happy to be a part of it for the past four years," he said.

Mulroy had a special tribute for Avery, the 71-year-old commission chairwoman.

**"Chair Avery's one I'll really miss / So sweet -- unless you try her to dis / She's been one grand dame / Combining grit, grace and glam / Let me give you a goodbye kiss!"**

And he did.

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