

Q&A WITH WAYNE COUNTY CORONER CANDIDATES

Editor's note: Western Wayne News is contacting local candidates seeking election this fall in contested races to request they answer a questionnaire (all candidates for the same office receive the same questions).

Answers from Wayne County clerk and local school board candidates will appear in October issues. We encourage you to save these pages for future reference as you prepare to cast your ballot.

Robert "Brent" Meadows

• **Town of Residence:** Hagerstown, Indiana

• **Age:** 60

Education/training

• Emergency Medical Technician

• Emergency Critical Care Paramedic

• Firefighter 1 & 2

• Bio Terrorism Response

• Hazmat Specialist

• Incident Command Specialist

• BS Business Management

Work experience:

• 41 Years as an EMT

• 36 Years as a Critical Care Paramedic

• 41 Years as a Firefighter

• 6 Years as a Deputy Coroner

• Primary Instructor for the State of Indiana for 30 years

• Adjunct Faculty for the National Training Center / FEMA / National Fire Academy for 23 Years

• Subject Matter Expert/Consultant for Emergency Medical Services, Fire Services, Bio Terrorism, and Disaster Response for 23 Years.

• **Political Experience:** Current Deputy Coroner

Community Involvement:

• Cub Scouts

• Boy Scouts

• Past President of the Board of Directors for the Hagerstown Museum

• Cemetery Board

• Lodge

• Volunteer Fire Department

• Working with the Amish Community on Medical Issues, Healthcare and Emergency Situations.

Contact information:

• Cell: 765-993-7910

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• Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BrentMeadowsForCoroner>

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I am available 24/7

• **What do you see as the main responsibilities for this office?**

The responsibilities of the Coroner's Office is to determine the cause and manner of

Are you registered to vote this November?

How to find out

- Visit indianavoters.in.gov, where Hoosiers can check to make sure they are registered and update their address. Or, in Wayne County, call voter registration at (765) 973-9226 between 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. weekdays.
- The deadline to register to vote is Oct. 5 for the Nov. 3 election at indianavoters.in.gov.
- Hoosiers who have been previously incarcerated get their voting rights restored upon release from jail or prison. They are encouraged to check their registration and re-register to vote if needed

every death that occurs within the county jurisdiction. It is important that the decedent, as well as the survivors, are treated with respect and dignity at every scene, every time. Furthermore, to maintain contact with the family as they navigate through the grieving process. Lastly, in a death where someone was tragically murdered, it is important to complete a thorough and proper investigation to ensure justice is served.

• **What new challenges have been presented during the pandemic for the coroner's office?**

As a current and active Investigator with the Coroner's Office, I understand that it is still business as usual with the added complex situation that COVID-19 has involved. Extra precautions have been put in place with the securing and transporting of all patients who may or may not have had or was exposed to COVID-19. Also, extra cost for all personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, tyvek suits, and decedent bags.

This has been a challenge, however our team has been provided with all of the tools to do their job while protecting themselves and our citizens. The entire office, myself included, has made sure our patients and their families are treated with the same level of compassion and respect as we all navigate this pandemic.

• **Please explain the experience you have that made you decide to seek this office.**

I have been in public safety for over 40 years. As a critical care paramedic, firefighter,

and Investigator with the Coroner's Office, I have been taking care of patients and their families most of my adult life. At times, it has not been an easy task.

However, the compassion, respect, and dignity I have learned over the last 40 years has made me well equipped for this job. Under the direction of the current Coroner, Ron Stevens, the level of professionalism and investigative techniques have never been seen before. I want to continue this. As a citizen of Wayne County, you deserve that.

• **Are there efficiencies that can be created for this office? If so, explain your background in identifying these issues and implementing these changes.**

Working for the Office gives me a "leg up." After speaking with Coroner Ron Stevens, it was determined the next step to make our office stronger is to seek an accreditation by the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners.

This accreditation will assure you, the taxpayer, our office will be held to the highest standard and measured against other Coroner Offices across the Nation and overseas. They measure things like your standard operating procedures, ethics, transparency, and professionalism. This accreditation would also provide even more training for the deputies and hold this governmental office at a higher standard.

The Wayne County Sheriff's Office has a similar accreditation, but it is focused on law enforcement. This is important to note because we work hand and hand with the law enforcement agencies of Wayne County, especially with Wayne County Sheriff Randy Retter and his phenomenal team.



• **Why are you the best person to serve as Wayne County Coroner?**

Simply said. Over 40 years as a public safety professional. I bring compassion, integrity, transparency, and most of all honesty to the office and the residents of Wayne County.

I am endorsed by many Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians, and Independents. Most importantly, I am endorsed by members of the current office and Coroner Ron Stevens. Coroner Stevens has used his eight years in office to make it what it is today.

There is always room to make an office stronger, but there is no logical reason to deconstruct it. I plan to continue with what Coroner Stevens has brought to our beautiful community.

I want to keep the current members and make them even better. I have a service and compassion-oriented heart. I want to keep that heart with the Coroner's Office and the citizens of Wayne County. I want to work with local and state officials to provide better education for our children.

Furthermore, I want to allow families easier access to information regarding their loved one. In closing, I appreciate the time you've spent reading my responses to this questionnaire. I encourage you to vote the candidate and not the ticket, it matters NOW more than ever!

Kevin A. Fouche

I am a lifelong resident of Wayne County, graduating from Northeastern High School, attending Ball State University and Mid-America College of Mortuary Science. I am a graduate of the first class of The Indiana Medico-Legal Death Investigators Course for Indiana Coroners.

I formerly held a Indiana Funeral Director and Embalmers license for 22 years while co-owning Community Family Funeral Home for 12 years.

I served in the Wayne County Coroner's Office as a Deputy from 1997-2004 and was Wayne County Coroner from 2005-2012 after serving the two consecutive term limits.

I have served as a volunteer firefighter for 25 years, currently serving as Chief of Webster Twp. Fire Dept. I am involved

with the Wayne County 4-H Fair, volunteering on the Fair Committee and the Queen Committee.

I am an active member of Life Spring Church where I serve in the children's ministry and on a technical team. I have also been a School Bus driver for Northeastern Wayne Schools for 18 yrs.

• **What do you see as the main responsibilities for this office?**

The main responsibilities of the Coroner are to investigate deaths, find answers for survivors, protect the integrity of every case, maintain a healthy working relationship with law enforcement and other first responders and be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of Wayne County.

• **What new challenges have been presented during the pandemic for the coroner's office?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented challenges for all responders. When I previously served as Coroner it was a standard to keep enough supplies on hand in case of a mass fatality incident, however a pandemic really wasn't a thought.

Coroners and Deputies are trained to protect themselves from being contaminated on death investigations, but the unknowns of the COVID-19 virus add a new level of stress to the investigator.

• **Please explain the experience you have that made you decide to seek this office.**

I believe that my 22 years of experience as a funeral director and my 16 years of experience in the Coroner's Office has prepared me to continue to serve as the next County Coroner.

The office of the Coroner is not a job, it is more of a lifestyle, the kind of lifestyle that in one phone call can take you away from a family event and send you to someone else's nightmare, and you as the Coroner need to be able to handle the situation with dignity and professionalism no matter the time of the day.

I believe that there are jobs that we work and then there is life's calling, serving in the Coroner's Office is my calling.



Robert "Brent" Meadows



Kevin A. Fouche