

Shifting Perceptions of A Southern Sheriff: Message Making and Image Building in the Campaign of Jack Owens

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From the last week in May, 1986, to the 7th of August of the same year, the voters in Shelby County, the largest county in Tennessee, apparently changed their minds about what they valued most in a sheriff. In May they looked first for strong connections to "law enforcement" and "knowledge of the law." In August they looked first for signs of "morality," for qualities like "honesty" and "sincerity." Between May and August in Shelby County there was an election campaign for Sheriff that ended with the incumbent of ten years, a man with extensive background in law enforcement, being unseated by Jack Owens, a man with no previous education or experience in that field. On May 30th, according to his own polls, challenger Owens trailed incumbent Gene Barksdale 47% to 10% and was 9% behind another candidate, Harold "Buddy" Leatherwood.¹ In the August 7th election, Owens defeated Barksdale 38.4% to 31.9% while Leatherwood finished a distant third with 17.1%. Something had happened rhetorically. It is the purpose of this paper to account for what that "something" might have been.

By 1986 Gene Barksdale was on the verge of being a local institution. A former combat veteran, FBI agent, and policeman, Barksdale had won an upset victory in a 1976 special election after having fallen short in two previous attempts to become sheriff. Barksdale defeated political appointee Billy Ray Schilling by stressing his own law enforcement background. While in office, however, Barksdale soon convinced many of the people who had voted for him that he was not what they had been looking for. He began to look more like a maverick "western style" sheriff than a professional, as someone who took the law into his own hands while snubbing his nose at federal judges and other forms of established authority. In spite of expressed misgivings, Barksdale continued on his merry way, handing out special deputy badges and hand gun permits to friends and supporters, hiring relatives and cronies, ignoring affirmative action guidelines for promotions, laughing at contempt of court citations, and attracting national attention by chaining prisoners to fences.²

The growing sense of chagrin with the new sheriff did not surface dramatically until the 1978 election, in which he almost lost his office to colorless and underfinanced Buddy Leatherwood, an ex-police officer with little name recognition and almost no visible support. Heads were indeed turned when Leatherwood got 48% in the two-candidate race. If Barksdale had not had the support of the county's black political leaders, he would have lost by a large margin. Suddenly he appeared vulnerable; so much so that by 1982 he faced an array of opponents. But Barksdale prevailed with a 39% plurality, as his five challengers split the vote against him. Leatherwood finished second with 31%.

Between '82 and '86 Barksdale's position appeared to be deteriorating even more, but another crowded slate of opponents indicated that the '86 election would be a replay of '82. Again there were five challengers who looked like they would split the vote in a manner that would allow Barksdale's predicted 35% plurality to be enough to return him. Barksdale himself was so confident of it that he declined to hire an agency, planned no television advertising, and prepared to distribute most of the \$200,000 he reportedly had in his campaign chest to aid the efforts of the black opinion leaders whose support had kept him in office.

While Barksdale was strutting confidently, Memphis City Councilman Jack Owens felt that he could undermine Barksdale's black support to the point where it could not guarantee his reelection. Owens was promised the support of all four black members of the Memphis City Council and that of black congressman Harold Ford, whose support was worth about 15% of the total Shelby County vote. With such support Owens could win the election with a plurality of white votes. To get that plurality, Owens had to attract many of the white voters who had, on two previous occasions, voted for Buddy Leatherwood.

In 1986 Buddy Leatherwood had even less money and organization than he had in previous years, but he retained two real strengths. He was firmly connected in the public mind with law enforcement and with the office of Sheriff *and*, whatever else he was, he was perceived as something other than Gene Barksdale. He was thus the natural receptacle for the anti-Barksdale sentiment. In such a climate, Owens had to oppose Barksdale in a manner that would take votes from Leatherwood. He had to be perceived as a *positive* alternative to Barksdale. As Leatherwood had established his image as the "other guy," Owens had to appear as the "good guy."

The Owens Campaign did what it could to link the name "Owens" with the concept "good."³ The campaign message was that Jack Owens would be "good" for Shelby County and that it was time to get rid of Gene Barksdale. The message was in the theme "Jack Owens for Sheriff. Good for Shelby County" and in its variant moral imperative "For goodness sake, elect Jack Owens Sheriff." On the one hand voters were asked to believe that benefits would follow the election of Jack Owens. On the other hand they were offered a note of self-congratulations for achieving the vision of a "Barksdale-less" Shelby County.

Before the campaign rhetoric was put into practice, the Owens Campaign conducted a detailed survey to determine how the various candidates were perceived by the public. On the one hand Owens was generally perceived as a good person, thus reinforcing the decision to depict him primarily in moral terms. *Sincerity, integrity, and honesty* seemed to be his perceived strengths and Barksdale's weaknesses, but findings in the survey still gave the Owens Campaign reason to pause.⁴

While Owens appeared rated highly in such moral properties as *character, putting public interest above politics, integrity, honesty, being trustworthy, being sincere, fairness to all people, and moral principle* and Barksdale was rated low in such matters as *putting public interest before politics* and in *being trustworthy, according to the Owens survey the Shelby County electorate did not expect their sheriffs to be moral. An honest sheriff, it seemed, was almost oxymoronic.*

The top five qualities the Shelby County public expected in a sheriff were *experience as an elected official, law enforcement know-how, determination, dealing with criminals, and knowing the law*—all signs of competency in law enforcement. In contrast, *honesty* was rated 15th out of the 27 properties listed; *being trustworthy* ranked 17th; *sincerity*, 19th, and *fairness to all people* was 22nd. Barksdale's image was strong in four of the top five categories, whereas Owens was weak in all of the top five, thereby necessitating adjustments in the Owens' image positioning.⁴

To counter Owens' lack of law enforcement background in light of the public's expectation of experience in their sheriffs, an effort was made to alter the public perception of the office from an enforcer of law to an administrator of a large department. Owens talked about his interest in law enforcement and his commitment to stop crime, but he was never pictured around badges, guns, or squad cars. Consistent with his background in public administration, he was depicted as a "proven administrator." In response to queries about his lack of law enforcement experience, he always said:

The real issue is that this community has had a bad experience with Gene Barksdale. And Buddy Leatherwood has had two bad experiences trying to defeat him. I've had plenty of administrative experience. We must remember that Bill Morris, the best sheriff Shelby County ever had, went into office with no direct experience in law enforcement. I think honesty and administrative ability are the issues in this campaign, not experience in the police department.⁶

The adjustment seemed to work. In their endorsement of Owens, the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* said:

Owens has the administrative capability to keep the sheriff's office running smoothly. He has a master's degree in public administration..., extensive experience during a military career, worked in county administration, and has had an opportunity on the City Council to understand the complicated workings of modern-day metropolitan government.(7)

And what did the public think? Owens' "perceived administrative experience" showed more positive movement than did any other quality. It went from 12th to 3rd in the public's order of preferred values.⁸

A second adjustment to the research on public expectations was to present *honesty* and other moral qualities as a surprise bonus in the Owens' package. Owens' leaflet read, "Jack Owens is an experienced public administrator who knows the value of our tax dollars. He's for strict and fair law enforcement. And he's HONEST." Dialogue for a radio commercial, moreover, was written to the effect:

VOICE 1: There's a good man running for Sheriff this year.

VOICE 2: For goodness sake!

VOICE 1: His name is Jack Owens. He's a combat veteran, a proven public administrator, and he's honest.

VOICE 2: For goodness sake!

VOICE 1: For goodness sake, elect Jack Owens sheriff. Jack Owens for sheriff. Good for Shelby County.⁹

Finally, an attempt was made to connect morality and especially honesty with good law enforcement, implying that Gene Barksdale could not have been an effective sheriff because he did not have the public confidence in his integrity. Owens was presented as the answer to the lack of public confidence in the sheriff's department. His election would thus mean better law enforcement and that, of course, would be good for Shelby County. JACK OWENS FOR SHERIFF? GOOD FOR SHELBY COUNTY!

Owens started every speech with,

Call it what you will, there is a crisis in confidence regarding the Shelby County Sheriff and his department....As you know, you can't have good law enforcement without confidence in the agencies that are charged with enforcing the law.¹⁰

When asked why he was running for sheriff, Owens would reply:

There is a crisis in confidence in Shelby County in the sheriff...You can't have good law enforcement if the majority of people do not have confidence in their sheriff.¹¹

At least *The Commercial Appeal* was listening. They introduced their editorial endorsement of Owens with the line "JACK OWENS IS THE BEST CHOICE TO RESTORE CONFIDENCE." The editorial asked:

Which of the five challengers of [Barksdale] can best pull this community together, restore public confidence in the sheriff's office, and rebuild shattered employee morale? The answer: Jack Owens.¹²

The first media connection between "honesty" and "good law enforcement" was made in the first Owens' television commercial, aired in the last week of June. The commercial was intended to depict Owens as "honest," thereby giving people a reason to vote for him and making them want to vote for him so they would accept more uncritically the "good administrator commercial" which was to air in the next wave. In the commercial, people on the street talked about Owens' honesty before a stone-faced humorless Owens matter-of-factly said: "You have to be honest in order to have good law enforcement."¹³

When hearing of the commercial, Barksdale overreacted. As quoted in *The Commercial Appeal*, he said:

There's only one remark that has been made by one of the other candidates that I've resented, and that was that he [Owens] wanted to return honesty to the Sheriff's department.¹⁴

As Owens had never called Barksdale "dishonest," *The Commercial Appeal* reported that Barksdale had misunderstood the commercial, but Barksdale kept talking about the moral issues implied and thus helped Owens' shift public focus from "competency" based on experience to moral considerations.¹⁵

By mid-July the Owens campaign was on schedule. Barksdale had fallen from 47% to 38%, while Owens had moved up from 10% to 17%. Most important from the point of view of Owens' strategy, Leatherwood had fallen from 19% to 11%. The anti-Barksdale vote was going to Owens while Leatherwood's soft support was gravitating into the "undecided" column.¹⁶ Then events took over.

From the beginning, several of Barksdale's deputies had been working openly for Owens. One day Barksdale took them behind closed doors and told them if they kept doing it there would be reprisals. Seeing this threat as a violation of civil rights, the Deputy Sheriff's Association took Barksdale to a federal court. There Barksdale told Judge Robert MacRae that he had made no such threats. Association lawyer Allan Chambers then pushed a button on his tape recorder and asked Barksdale if the voice he heard on the tape was his. According to an eye-witness television reporter, the jaw of Barksdale's attorney "dropped a foot."¹⁷ Barksdale was caught lying under oath.

The Memphis media dwelt for days on the apparent Barksdale lie. Judge MacRae called the sheriff a disgrace to the integrity of his office.¹⁸ *The Commercial Appeal* ran a cartoon of Barksdale with a tree growing from his nose and printed a scathing editorial saying that, while there were grounds to impeach Barksdale, the voters would get the job done themselves by throwing him out of office on election day.¹⁹ The moral fervor of the anti-Barksdale forces had thus been activated. The question was: could it be controlled? Could it be channeled into Owens' votes?

After the almost lynch-mob furor following the "Barksdale lie," the Owens campaign made adjustments to capitalize. They abandoned any planned humor in advertising or speeches, sensing humor as an inappropriate response to either moral fervor or to anyone in real trouble. Attack plans were also laid to rest. Allowing the media to attack, the Owens campaign kept the "honesty spot" on longer than originally planned and began to make the point that Owens was the only candidate who could defeat Barksdale. Owens, for the first time, began to look viable. But Barksdale fought back.

A street black newspaper, *The Memphis Star*, using material furnished by the Barksdale campaign, revealed that Owens had been a member of the American Party, the party of George Wallace. The paper charged that the association meant that Owens was a "neo-Nazi" and Ku Klux Klan segregationist. In response, even the more reputable black weekly, *The Tri-State Defender*, ran a front page story asking if the black council members who had endorsed Owens wanted to wave the American Party flag, wear a swastika, or a KKK hat piece.²⁰ The strategy, of course, was to put pressure on the black leaders who had endorsed Owens to denounce him. If Barksdale could get back his solid black support, Owens' apparent gains as a result of his "lie" might be offset.

Owens had to respond to support the black leadership that had committed to him. Congressman Ford told him to call a press conference to clear the air and the black council members behind Owens did the same.

At his press conference, Owens admitted to being a former member of the American Party. He had been a delegate to their 1972 national convention when they had nominated William Schmitz for President. Owens explained that when he returned from Viet Nam in 1971, he wanted to get involved in politics. Neither Richard Nixon or George McGovern, he felt, had any insight into the plight of the Viet Nam combat soldier. So, he said, he gave the American Party a try, but dropped out right after their convention. He said he had made a mistake, but owed no one any apology for it.²¹

At the press conference of the black council members, Owens' supporters reaffirmed their commitment to him. One of the members, J.O. Patterson, Jr., praised Owens for his honest response to the delicate issue. He went on to say, "There was not a white person in Memphis in 1972 that did not have sympathy for George Wallace. Jack Owens is honest enough to admit it."²² The Owens campaign, in the context of the "Barksdale lie," had turned a potentially bad situation for Owens into another reinforcement of his projected image as an "honest" man.

The controversy about Owens and the American Party was dropped by *The Commercial Appeal*, but the Owens campaign felt that there had been enough confusion to prompt anti-Barksdale voters in the white Shelby community to go back to "Good Ole Buddy" Leatherwood. The "other guy" might again look attractive if the image of the "good guy" became tarnished.

A tracking poll indicated that the Owens campaign had cause for concern. Barksdale had dropped another 11.6 points to 27.4, but Owens and Leatherwood had not moved since the last poll.²³ The public was waiting for Owens or Leatherwood to show something positive. Owens responded by asserting his platform through speeches and issue-oriented radio and television commercials.

The wave of commercials seemed to work. Data gathered ten days before the election showed that Owens had moved from 17.9% to 24.5% while Barksdale had fallen to 24%, his virtual bottom. On the other hand, Leatherwood had moved from 10.9% to 16%, meaning that he could still keep Owens from a plurality even though he could not get one himself.²⁴ While the race was not over, the Owens campaign took solace in the news that the "undecideds" preferred Owens to Leatherwood by about three to two. The trends were in Owens' favor. They simply needed acceleration.

Almost immediately after the survey noted above was taken, the *Commercial Appeal* endorsed Owens. As indicated above, the editorial sounded as if it had been written by Owens himself. The campaign message was repeated as fact. After the "sins" of Barksdale were catalogued, the point was stressed that only Owens had the kind of broadly-based community support to oust the incumbent sheriff. "It takes this kind of broadbased unity to sweep aside the cronyism so long associated with Gene Barksdale's sheriff's office in favor of fair-minded and efficient administration," said the editorial.²⁵ More significant, it emphasized the fact that *The Commercial Appeal* did not think less of Leatherwood than when they had endorsed him in 1982. "Leatherwood," said the editorial, "had made two valiant but unsuccessful attempts to unseat Barksdale."²⁵ It was time now to support someone who could get the job done.

Obtaining permission from the *Commercial Appeal* to reprint the editorial, the Owens campaign dropped copies door to door in anti-Barksdale precincts that showed a large population still undecided between Leatherwood and Owens. Shortly thereafter Congressman Ford and the Memphis Police Association made public their endorsements for Owens and the community began to sense that Barksdale was ready to fall. That feeling had to be addressed.

During the last few days Owens ran a mildly negative "time for a change" spot coupled with the third encore for the "honesty spot." Three newspaper ads, however, got more progressively to the point. The first was headlined by "Jack Owens for Sheriff: A Change for the Better." The second: "Opportunity Knocks! We Can Elect a New Sheriff!" The day before the election, the Owens' ad said: "Make Your Vote Count! Elect a New (and better) Sheriff." The copy began:

Want a change in the Sheriff's Department? Elect Jack Owens! Jack Owens is the only candidate in the race who has won the community-wide support necessary to defeat the present sheriff.²⁶

The race was over!

As implied throughout, the Jack Owens for Shelby County Sheriff campaign seemed to make a difference in public perceptions and result in a significant public persuasion. During the course of the campaign there was a

clear image created for Jack Owens, an image designed into his campaign communication and verified through campaign surveys. In addition, there was also an agenda shift. Qualities like being sincere, moral principle, fairness to all people, administrative ability, ethics, integrity, and honesty gained most in priority during the campaign.²⁷ All, of course, were in line with Owens' perceived strength and Barksdale's perceived weakness. On the other hand, the qualities most in decline were those associated with Barksdale's strength and Owens' weakness. Such qualities were experience as an elected official, knowing the law, law enforcement know-how, dealing with criminals, and having a proven record. In effect, the public expectations of what a sheriff should be had apparently been virtually turned upside down. It seemed that the people of Shelby County most wanted a "good man" to be their sheriff. They wanted "good" for Shelby County.

As there was image-creation and agenda-setting in the '86 Shelby County race for Sheriff, there was also image changing and persuasion. Gone from the prevailing public perception were old ideas of a sheriff as being either corrupt or beholden (the southern sheriff) or being the person who could take the law into his own hands (the western sheriff). In their places was the image of the sheriff as professional administrator committed to good law enforcement with the community good at heart.

And persuasion? Donald C. Bryant has viewed rhetoric (the art of persuasion) as a process of adjusting people to ideas and ideas to people.²⁷ Operating in the modern age of politics where media created impressions can count for so much, the Jack Owens campaign, through careful message creation and image building, through the selection of information and the strategic timing of that information release, adjusted people to ideas and then adjusted ideas to a changing people in order to direct an enlivened feeling (anti-Barksdale sentiment) towards a deliberative resolution (the election of Jack Owens). In the final analysis, the people who made the difference in Shelby County saw more than Barksdale as the problem. They saw Owens, not as a perfect panacea, but as the best and only available solution. His campaign positioning had moved his campaign forward and made him the beneficiary of the Barksdale mistakes. The fact that Leatherwood had actually lost a few points from the start of the polling until election day and did not move the final ten days is clear testimony to the Owens' campaign's successful execution of a tightly conceived rhetorical strategy. And is that not what persuasion is all about?

In conclusion, the Owens Campaign, we feel, tends to make some important points about how we might view public persuasion in political campaigns. We have too often heard it expressed that rhetoric is no more than the process of telling people what they want to hear, of adjusting a product to a demand, of fitting an image to a public expectation. It is our opinion that in a political campaign, the image must be grounded in the reality of a candidate. The process of adjusting people to ideas is a vital part of the Bryant concept which should not be undervalued in the conception of message making for the purpose of message creation. The success of the Owens Campaign tends to support that view.

Secondly, we have also for too long heard it expressed that the public is not intelligent, that it cannot be educated in a political campaign. Based on a study of the Owens Campaign one could argue: (1) that the Shelby County public was educated to expect more from their sheriffs than experience in law enforcement, that they were educated to expect from them good character as well, or (2) that the public was educated to see how morality and good law enforcement were inseparably related. On the other hand, one could argue that the public always knew the connection between law enforcement and morality, but had given up hope of expecting their sheriffs to be moral to the extent that they no longer thought it realistic to expect it of them. It was not a question of what the public wanted, but a question of what they believed they had to settle for. When faced with the possibility of a moral sheriff, however, they not only voted for good character but suddenly gave it a pivotal place in what had come to be their new set of expectations, a set of expectations by which the Owens tenure in office will likely be evaluated.

NOTES

¹John P. Bakke, Chairman of the Department of Theatre and Communication Arts at Memphis State University, served as communications consultant for the Jack Owens Campaign and worked with Steve Ethridge on the campaign polling. Ethridge, at the time of the campaign, was Vice-President of Marketing Research for Cliff Davis and Associates of Memphis. The Owens polls were conducted through normal polling procedures with the data gathered by Pat Woods, Inc. of Memphis.

²Barksdale chained prisoners to fences as a form of protest when state authorities ordered state prisoners to be quartered in overcrowded Shelby County jails. The incident attracted national attention, and it seems that the alleged inhumanity of Barksdale, instead of the indisputably inadequate prison facilities, became the focus of the controversy.

³The Owens Campaign had to exploit what was a demonstrable wish among a significant segment of voters (about 40%) to get Barksdale out of office.

⁴For polling purposes, Ethridge adapted to politics what had been for him a successful marketing technique. He called it a "voter expectations index." He drew from a sample population a list of attributes connected with the concept "sheriff" and asked them to rank them in preferred order. Then he asked them to rate the leading candidates in light of these terms and in light of their own impressions.

⁵In the public mind, Barksdale conformed much more closely to expectations about what a sheriff should be than did Owens. Below is a comparison between late May, 1986 "Voter Expectations" compared with "Candidate Reputations." Candidate strengths are indicated when Reputation Index Number is enclosed in (), weaknesses are indicated when Number is enclosed in []

Candidate Attributes	Voter Expectations Index	Reputation Index for:	
		Gene Barksdale	Jack Owens
1. Experience as an elected official	144	(177)	[93]
2. Law Enforcement know-how	132	(152)	[75]
3. Determination	125	(140)	[93]
4. Dealing with criminals	119	128	[84]
5. Knowing the law	118	(140)	[47]
6. Being a hard worker	114	117	12
7. Strict law enforcement	114	123	[84]
8. Character	113	96	(159)
9. Having a proven record	107	118	(75)
10. Being a good communicator	103	91	(130)
11. Putting public interest before politics	100	[81]	(130)
12. Administrative ability	99	108	[75]
13. Integrity	97	90	(121)
14. Dealing with other government bodies and officials	95	83	(130)
15. Honesty	94	86	(121)
16. Maturity	94	95	93
17. Caring about people	92	83	112
18. Being trustworthy	92	[74]	(112)
19. Being sincere	88	78	(121)
20. Being courageous	88	98	[56]
21. Fairness to all people	86	74	103
22. Moral principle	86	83	(112)
23. Ethics	86	74	103
24. Being a good person	85	83	[65]
25. Imaginative ideas	82	81	(112)
26. Criminal investigation	78	90	[47]
27. Restraint	66	56	93

⁶Quotation taken from text of Owens' stock responses to stock questions. At the time of the campaign Bill Morris was the popular Mayor of Shelby County and was remembered as the best sheriff the county had ever had.

⁷Editorial: "Owens for sheriff," *The Commercial Appeal* July 30, 1986, p.A8.

⁸See Pre vs. Post Campaign Rank of Voter Expectations Chart below.

⁹Taken from copy of prepared text for radio commercial.

¹⁰Taken from text of Owens' prepared stock speech.

¹¹Taken from text of Owens' stock responses to stock questions.

¹²*The Commercial Appeal*, p.A8.

¹³The commercial was produced by the late Garry Welles of Lunar Productions of Memphis. The words and music for the jingle "Good for Us. Good for You. Good for Shelby County. Jack Owens for Goodness Sake" were written by Geordie Welles.

¹⁴"Barksdale kickoff warms to the political occasion," *The Commercial Appeal*, June 18, 1986, p.A11.

¹⁵Throughout the campaign Barksdale reacted defensively on "moral issues," thereby assisting the likelihood of an agenda shift in the public mind. He made no apparent attempt to keep the focus on his qualifications as a veteran lawman.

¹⁶Figures were taken from Owens' polls.

¹⁷Interview with Esme Murphy of WHBQ-TV, Jan. 11, 1987.

¹⁸Celeste Garrett, "Judge says sheriff lied, forbids coercion," *The Commercial Appeal*, July 19, 1986, pp.A1, A10.

¹⁹*The Commercial Appeal*, July 22, 1986, p.A6. The furor over Barksdale gave the sheriff's race center stage on the public agenda. Through an extensive yard sign, literature distribution, and radio and television effort, Owens had made his name and image readily visible for anyone who began to look seriously for a positive alternative to Barksdale.

²⁰William Larsha, "Is Election '86 a 'big mess'?", *Tri-State Defender*. August 2-6, 1986, p.1.

²¹Taken from Owens' prepared text for press conference, July 22, 1986.

²²WREG-TV Evening News, July 22, 1986. The response to the George Wallace association was in all probability "damage control." There is no way of knowing the extent to which the association stunted Owens' progress among black Shelby County voters, but it stands to reason that he was hardly helped by it.

²³Taken from Owens' polls.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Editorial "Owens for Sheriff," *The Commercial Appeal*. July 30, 1986, p.A8.

²⁶Taken from texts of Owens' newspaper ads.

²⁷The following is a comparison of the Rank of Voter Expectations Pre vs. Post Campaign as measured by Owens' polls.

Rank	Pre-Campaign Expectations	Rank	Post-Campaign Expectations
1.	Experience as an elected official	1.	Being sincere
2.	Law enforcement know-how	2.	Moral principle
3.	Determination	3.	Administrative ability
4.	Dealing with criminals	4.	Fairness to all people
5.	Knowing the law	5.5	Being a good person
6.5	Being a hard worker	5.5	Integrity
		8.5	Dealing with government officials
8.	Character	8.5	Ethics
9.	Having a proven record	8.5	Honesty
10.	Being a good communicator	8.5	Restraint
11.	Putting public interest before politics	12.5	Caring about people
12.	Administrative ability	12.5	Determination
13.	Integrity	12.5	Putting public interest before politics
14.	Dealing with other governmental officials	15.	Strict law enforcement
15.5	Honesty	16.	Being a good communicator
15.5	Maturity	17.5	Experience as elected official
17.5	Being trustworthy	17.5	Law enforcement know-how
17.5	Caring about people	20.	Being a hard worker
19.5	Being courageous	20.	Dealing with criminals
19.5	Being sincere	20.	Maturity
22.	Fairness to all people		
22.	Moral principle	23.5	Being courageous
24.	Being a good person	23.5	Having a proven record
25.	Imaginative ideas	25.	Knowing the law
26.	Criminal investigation	26.	Imaginative ideas
27.	Restraint	27.	Criminal investigation

The following is a summary of changes in Candidate Reputations as measured in the Pre and Post Election Surveys. Barksdale's improvement in some of the 'moral' categories can be attributed to the increasing significance of the issues in the public mind coupled with the minority who strongly supported him. whatever the issue might be, Barksdale's committed following was likely to see him favorably in its light.

Attributes Which Gained In Voter Expectations	Voter Candidate Reputation	
	Expectations Index	Index Change Barksdale Owens
Administrative ability	+25	+1
Fairness to all people	+34	-6 +47
Ethics	+25	-20 +38
Honesty	+17	-45 +29
Restraint	+45	+39 +23
Moral principle	+43	+39 +23
Caring about people	+15	+12 +13
Being sincere	+50	+58 +12
Integrity	+19	-1 +4
Dealing with other government officials	+16	-1 -5

²⁸Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Function and Its Scope." *Rhetoric: A Tradition in Transition*. Edited by Walter Fisher. Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, Michigan, 1974, p.211. Originally published in *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, V.39 (December 1953), pp. 401-24.

