

The passing of the torch



JEFF WILLIAMS WROTE QUITE A SUCCESS STORY

Over the past six years, at virtually every event you attended during which Arlington Mayor Jeff Williams spoke, you were assured that it was a great day in Arlington. Here are some of the highlights of “The Jeff Williams Era” that show just how accurate he was in that assessment:

- Acting on promises that were at the heart of his first mayoral campaign, he helped Arlington put in initiatives that created 6,000 new jobs in the initial year, cut the property tax rate and repaired 45,000 potholes in a single year. He also led the movement to create the city’s first economic development corporation to facilitate enhancements at existing local companies and to attract new business.
- With the introduction of the Kindness initiative, he made “being nice to one another” not just an aspiration but a way of life in Arlington.
- During his two terms in office, the city’s police and fire services were ranked among the best in Texas by several measuring agencies.
- As Mayor, Williams forged partnerships and initiatives with the Arlington Independent School District, private schools, colleges, and universities to provide students with the real-world job skills they will need to succeed as adults.
- Already the “Entertainment Capital of Texas,” Arlington enhanced that status with the additions of Texas Live!, Live! By Loews Arlington Hotel and eSports Stadium Arlington. Future development in the entertainment district, which has become “The District” under Williams, will soon render the National Medal of Honor Museum, another luxury hotel and convention center, as well as residential, retail, culinary and commercial enterprise to the neighborhood anchored by Six Flags Over Texas, Hurricane Harbor and “the stadiums.”
- Speaking of that latter reference point, one of Williams’ greater accomplishments was convincing voters to add one more stadium, Globe Life Field, which ensured the Texas Rangers would stay in Arlington – in yet another state-of-the-art, multi-use venue that will attract events and millions of visitors to Arlington. Globe Life Park was re-purposed to host other sports and eventually residential and commercial tenants. Meanwhile, Arlington became home to yet another professional franchise, the WNBA’s Dallas Wings.
- Even as “The District” was growing, downtown was evolving, via one of the more ambitious revitalization processes in city history. The Levitt Pavilion was enhanced, The George W. Hawkes Downtown Library and a new City Hall became realities, and the Abram Street project opened up unprecedented residential, retail, culinary and general commercial opportunities in the area.
- To ensure residents could get to and from all the new “heres” and “theres,” Arlington’s long-lamented public transportation system became an international model of efficiency with the addition of the VIA rideshare program.
- Under Williams’ leadership, Arlington, already the eighth-most diverse city in the country, now has a Unity Council to bring forth better practices for social justice and equity.

To see more of what Jeff Williams meant to the city, please check out The Finish Line on page 66

JIM ROSS LOOKS TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM

Last month, attorney / entrepreneur Jim Ross defeated former City Council member Michael Glaspie to earn the right to succeed popular Jeff Williams as Arlington’s newest Mayor. Ross, a former Arlington Police Officer and current owner of the “go to” Arlington eatery, Mercury Chophouse, says his admiration for what Williams accomplished helped inspire him to make a run for the city’s highest office.

“I was very concerned, given our term limits, about the direction Arlington would go without Mayor Williams at the helm,” he says, adding that now that the competitive election is over, he is “honored, excited and eager” to take on the new challenge.

Ross says he already has gained perspective about the position, just from running for it. “The campaign trail was crazy,” he says. “I learned so much about our community and met many interesting people.”

With virtually each one he met, he shared a constant refrain: “If you like the path that Arlington has been on and appreciate good, old-fashioned hard work, then, I’m your guy.”

Ross says one of his greatest resources during the campaign was the man he will succeed. He also recognizes the challenge ahead of him.

“Mayor Williams is leaving some very big shoes to fill,” Ross says. “Luckily, this city is blessed with a man who continues to give of his time and advice. He is always available for guidance and help in any issues. His best advice: ‘Stay focused on the issues and trust Arlington; our community is strong as can be.’”

When his term begins, Ross says, he already has a few goals to help build on the momentum that marked the Williams’ Era. “One of my first priorities is to help restore the relationships between the city and our first responders,” he says. “Our city is stronger when we all are working together. As far as long-term goals: jobs, jobs, jobs! Our city has to become more attractive to businesses wanting to do business with Arlington.”

To both of those ends, he notes that his experience working for the city previously and working with many city principals at his “day job” as a lawyer will help smooth the learning curve that faces many new elected officials.

“Unlike a lot of mayors, I have actually worked for this city as a police officer. I worked the streets of Arlington as a member of Arlington’s first full-time Tactical Unit and spent nearly seven years as an undercover narcotics officer,” he says. “I’m also an attorney who has owned a number of businesses and knows what it’s like to build successful companies and have to make payroll. Conversely, I’ve never run or consequently held or been elected, and this is all going to be new for me.”

One thing he believes Arlington citizens can count on during his tenure is his demeanor regarding the position, and he promises: “I’ll be a hard-working, transparent mayor who genuinely cares for every citizen, visitor and business of our great Dream City.”