

A Message From Your Political Consultant



*Jim
Spearing*

As Old Friends Prevail... Their "Adoptees" Are Thrilled

In two little noticed (among sane people) special elections held recently, former Florida House Speaker **John Thrasher** was elected to the Senate seat held for many, many years by **Jim King** who recently passed away and former State Representative **Joe Negron** was elected to the Senate seat vacated by retiring **Senator Ken Pruitt**.



John Thrasher

Both were incredible supporters of PBA (see Ken Kopczynski's article on page 5 for details) but what is equally remarkable was how unremarkably our relationships began. Take John Thrasher, for instance. As a state representative, he was clearly our friend, consistently earned our endorsement and yet his interests lay elsewhere (particularly health care). It was only when he became Speaker of the House, where he would wield enormous power, that he formally "adopted" the Florida PBA. Speaker Thrasher was particularly close to our own **David Murrell** (they speak "Jacksonvillian" fluently, having lived and served that community), and he became the most powerful and respected advocate for law enforcement in recent memory.



Joe Negron

State Representative Joe Negron is another example. Here's a guy who won our support, even in defeat, yet stayed true and loyal to our cause. Now, Senator Negron will bring his pro-PBA, tough law and order credentials to the upper chamber where we know he'll be a star.

We should take essentially three key lessons from this. First, everyone is your "friend" when running for public office. I've rarely encountered a candidate who doesn't want the support and blessing of law enforcement. But what these politicians **actually do** while in office, particularly having achieved political power, is what counts. I've seen politicians begin to back away from us during their acceptance speech! Both Speaker Thrasher and Budget Chairman Negron remembered who brought them to the dance, and they used their power

to deliver on their promise to support you and your family.

Second, loyalty matters. Many do not feel political life is an honorable profession, let alone lobbyists and, God help us, political consultants. Yet it is ironic that honesty, trust and loyalty are the hallmarks of any successful political relationship (try that in a marriage and you'll be stuck with that person for a long, long time). The Florida PBA has a well earned reputation for sticking with its proven friends, through thick and thin, sometimes to the bitter end. Many times over my political career I have been presented the choice to do the "politically expedient" thing or to stick with a friend. It is one of the easiest choices to make. Loyalty is returned by leaders such as John Thrasher and Joe Negron, and we gain greater respect from the political establishment as a result.

Finally, we have to take the long view. Forget the "ME" generation; folks today are screaming bloody murder over budget cut backs, no pay raises and the like. True, these are some tough times, but things will improve. It is important to remember that when we throw our support to some young, promising candidate, we are making an investment in the future, yours.



*Mike
Haridopolos*

Personal Note: Speaking of promising candidates, **Senator Mike Haridopolos** (slated to be the next Senate President) has likewise kept the faith with PBA. I remember interviewing him along with **Coastal Florida PBA President Vince Champion** when he ran in a crowded field for a local state House seat. This was his first election, and he will eagerly tell you that the PBA's endorsement gave his campaign much needed credibility at a time when he was struggling to break out of the pack. He did, and has never forgotten who helped him reach the first dance. As he moved up the ranks both in the House and now the Senate, Mike has used his growing political clout to fight for the men and women of law enforcement. We are looking forward to his term as Senate President and are proud of the small role we have played in his ascension. 🍀

*"I haven't taken my
Christmas lights down.
They look so nice on
the pumpkin." 🍁*

~ Winston Spear

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Seems this hillbilly came to town carrying a jug of moonshine in one hand and a shotgun in the other. He stopped a man on the street, saying to him: "Here, friend, take a drink outta my jug."

The man protested, saying he never drank. Unimpressed, the hillbilly leveled his shotgun at the stranger and commanded: "Drink!"

The stranger drank, shuddered, shook, shivered and coughed.

"Ugh! That's awful stuff!"
"Ain't it, though?" replied the hillbilly. "Now here, you hold the gun on me while I take a swig."