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BOYS STATE

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MARZELL NORRIS ELECTED GOVERNOR

Marzell Norris, a Johnsonian from Reel City, won the governor's seat in the general election held Wednesday at Boys State.

STATE ELECTION RESULTS

Supreme Court

Jayson Blackburn, Benji Headrick, A.J. McGugin, Michael Myers, Warren Sims

Court of Appeals

Jake Barnes, Nolan Bledsoe, Elijah Brock, Michael Cornett, Chapman Finn, Jaden Hicks, Tyler Hoffman, Dakota McKnight, Matthew Sanders, Joseph Sykes, Clay Williams, Mark Woody

Court of Criminal Appeals

Logan Alfano-Webb, Dalton Bennett, Grayson Blount, Joey Burd, Brandon Cooper, Lincoln Dillman, Jay Frantz, Nathan Hutchings, Will Jenkins, Cody Levi, Justin McGarrity, Colton Woodson

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR GOVERNOR

Marzell Norris says just one week in a life can make all the difference.

The Kenwood High School student from Clarksville was elected Tennessee Boys State Governor this week by more than 500 outstanding young men from around the state gathered at Tennessee Tech University.

"I wasn't going to run for any office, but I decided to run for mayor of my city and lost by two votes," Norris said. "Then I decided to go big or go home."

His fellow delegates did not want him to go home. Even when he took to walking with a crutch when an injury sustained in a spring football game flared up, they followed his lead and his message.

"I think they elected me because I was able to talk to them personally, not like what we think of as a typical politician. I let them know I see how everyone is different, and how I appreciate those differences," Norris said.

"I represent all the outcasts. The ones with an accent, a different size, a different skin color. My main goal was to leave here with friends."

Norris, the son of Kimberly McNair, Levester McNair and Marcus Norris, is active at Kenwood High School as a football player, Student Government Association officer, National Honor Society member, and track team member. He says still he found himself arriving at Boys State with a little sadness and low expectations.

"But then I saw this is a great place to be to get away and make new connections," he said.

"Everyone is so positive here. I haven't smiled this much in a year. I love everybody here!"

TBI Director Jason Locke Speaks to Delegates

Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Deputy Director Jason Locke shared information, stories and advice with Boys State delegates on Wednesday evening. After a brief introduction, he took questions from dozens of delegates who wanted to know more about the TBI.

He told delegates that good TBI agents can't make ethical or moral mistakes and must be able to put job and position first.

"We say that TBI also stands for Truth, Bravery and Integrity. We can never deviate from that. That's what we look for when we hire, someone who is not easily compromised and does not bend. That's what leaders are called to do. Anybody can make easy decisions."

Q: What path would you recommend for joining the TBI or FBI?

A: There's a demand for strong candidates. Last year, 1,500 people applied for 13 positions. Set yourself apart, and make sure you stay on a straight path. Grades are important and you must have a four-year degree. We don't demand a specific type of degree. We seek diversity, such as Spanish and accounting degrees and military backgrounds. Get some experience at a local level.

Q: What kind of quality career positions are in the TBI?

A: We have field agents, drug agents, Medicaid fraud unit personnel, forensic scientists, computer/tech services, aviation unit personnel, and computer support persons.

Q: Will we see a time where opioid and meth use decreases in Tennessee?

A: We have a Dangerous Drug Taskforce in Chattanooga. Meth labs have dropped drastically, but meth usage is at an all-time high. The TBI pushed the legislature to make it harder to get ingredients and this helped. But the Mexican drug cartel saw this and their meth production is at an all-time high, and they ship into the state.

Q: Who checks the TBI?

A: Every 6 years, the TBI director is appointed by the governor. A bipartisan panel is formed. Anyone can apply. The panel interviews and chooses the top three who are submitted to governor. The governor chooses the director for a 6-year fixed term. A director cannot be fired; only impeached by the Senate for criminal wrongdoing.

Q: What is the hardest part of your job?

A: Crimes against children are the hardest. You need to be able to recognize when it does bother you and talk to someone. It's a gift to be able to set yourself aside and not let it affect you; but it is smart to talk to someone when you recognize it's an issue.

Q: Do any TBI offices offer internships?

A: We have a huge college intern program. We just welcomed 25 interns this summer. It is highly competitive and you must come prepared.

Johnsonians won the Wednesday night All-Star Basketball game.