

County attorney juggles diverse duties

# Official enjoys round-the-clock job

By Polly Bell  
Reporter

County Attorney Jim Kuboviak started his morning with a bowl of popcorn.

"Want some?" he asks, munching on his breakfast.

This is not an unusual meal for Kuboviak because he spends much of his time working in his office.

He works with cases involving misdemeanor offenses, such as driving while intoxicated, theft by check, assault and criminal trespassing.

"It is fast and furious with no two days the same," Kuboviak says. "It never stops. Very rarely do I get out at 5 o'clock — but I love it."

Although he loves his job, Kuboviak sometimes gets irritated with the lack of privacy.

"I can't go anywhere or do anything without knowing people," Kuboviak says. "It's a pain in the butt because they always want to talk business, so I never leave it. I do it all day long."

He says he gets calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week from policemen who want advice or from defendants who've been arrested.

In addition to his duties as county attorney, Kuboviak teaches at the police training academy. He instructs on areas that will most benefit the office.

For example, he explains how to make a DWI case, how to present a case in court and how to write a report.

"I figure if I spend the time out there training them as a group when they are new, young and ready to learn, then they'll do a better job and bring me better cases," Kuboviak says. "So I have gained in the end."

Kuboviak has been involved with the criminal justice system for 16 of his 37 years.

At 19, he became a Huntsville police officer and used that job to support his criminal justice studies at Sam Houston State University.

He later earned two master's degrees — one in sociology and



Photo by Tom Ownbey

Chad Kuboviak, 3, helps his father with the family horse.

administration from SHSU, and one in criminal justice from the University of Mississippi.

While attending Mississippi, he worked as a city police officer and taught law enforcement at the police department.

Kuboviak says hands-on experience is as important, if not more important, than a diploma.

"I found out many, many years ago that when you walk out that door with a diploma — all you've got is a diploma," he says. "You need that edge over the 500 other graduates applying for that job."

The choice to live in Bryan was

a process of elimination for Kuboviak.

"I didn't want to live way out in West Texas," Kuboviak says, "I didn't want to live way out in the Panhandle and I didn't want to live way down in the valley."

"My wife was from a little town in Mississippi and she wasn't fired up about Dallas or Houston."

"So I found out the reputation of all the medium-sized towns like Bryan, Waco, Nacogdoches and Corpus Christi — places with universities so my wife could go to graduate school."

"I'm better talking than I am

writing so I went the prosecution route and started out as assistant district attorney in Brazos County."

Now, as county attorney, Kuboviak has little free time, but what he has, he usually spends with his wife, Rhonda, his 3-year-old son, Chad, and the horse he's had for 16 years.

"I told the wife when we got married, if it gets down between you and the horse — you're expendable but a good horse is hard to find," Kuboviak says with a laugh.

Kuboviak says he doesn't play politics in his job.

"People don't go to the district attorney and say, 'Can you dismiss this rapist because he's a friend of mine?'" he says. "But people come to me daily — daily — and say 'Could you dismiss this DWI?'"

"If I do it for one person, I've got to do it for everyone. All I'd be doing is wheeling and dealing and if I don't, they think I'm not their friend or their whole attitude toward me changes."

Kuboviak says personal friends, other lawyers and public officials always ask for favors.

He says he doesn't mind being put between a rock and a hard place — what he minds is the threats and lost friendships.

"I'd rather have John Citizen come in and explain his extenuating circumstances than some defense attorney come in and try to smoke me," he says.

"Just because somebody knows somebody, I don't think they ought to get a better break."

He adds that he doesn't like attorneys who try to bluff him.

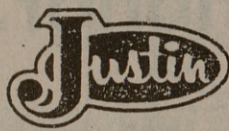
"I don't bluff because it doesn't take long to catch up with you," he says.

He says his policy is to tell the truth whether it's good or bad and he expects people to do the same.

"I'm that way with policemen, judges, victims," he says. "If I don't know the law or I'm not sure, I'm not going to 'BS' my way through it. If you don't know, you don't know."

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# Man buys largest uncut sapphire for \$10 out of rock show grab box

LONGVIEW (AP) — Roy Whetstone, who pulled what experts call the world's largest uncut sapphire out of a grab box, isn't running out to buy a Rolls-Royce with the profits of his \$10 purchase.

Whetstone is putting the 1,905-carat gem, bought from a rock dealer who thought it was one of his less attractive junk stones from Idaho, in a trust fund for his two sons.

"We're normal people and we work for a living," said Whetstone, a wholesale gem dealer.

"It's phenomenal that a dadgum little pebble in God's universe found its way to us," he said.

Since Whetstone went public with his find earlier this month, he and agent Jim Griffin, a Longview jeweler, have fielded preliminary inquiries from representatives of two Middle Easterners and an investors' group from Chicago.

Whetstone has a simple explanation for how he obtained the stone which he officially named the "The Life and Pride America's Star."

"I really, truly believe God was behind it all," he said.

"The life is the security it will represent for my boys and the fact that I don't have to worry about their lives being taken care of," said Whetstone,

who has undergone 10 heart bypasses. "Pride (as) in pride of ownership and pride that it was found in this country."

The stone, which has been appraised at \$2.28 million, is on the market for \$1.5 million.

It could bring \$10 to \$15 million after it is cut.

"That's not to say that if we get a couple of fellows trying to get it, the price couldn't go higher," Whetstone said.

"The average size of rough (stone) that is found is 12 to 15 carats and under," Whetstone said. "This stone weighs 1,905 carats."

The story began when his two sons, Johnathan, 11, and Stephen, 4, each gave him \$5 for a rock from a gem show last February in Tucson, Ariz.

Whetstone said he isn't sure exactly why he went to a hotel hosting the rock dealers instead of gem sellers, or how he wound up in the room being used by a dealer from Idaho.

The light-bluish sapphire — which was in a box marked "Your Choice \$15" — seemed to be waiting for him, he said.

"I went by the first two rooms on either side of

me and went into a third room, straight to the window and saw the stone and saw the end of the stone glowing," he said.

Whetstone asked the dealer if he really wanted \$15 for the stone.

The dealer, who suggested there were better rocks to be found, wasn't in a mood to argue and took \$10 for the stone.

Whetstone said he's since talked to the dealer, whose identity he protects at the man's request.

"He said, 'Roy, I'm tickled to death for you. I hope you get \$15 million for it,'" Whetstone said.

Whetstone kept the stone a secret for nine months until he and Griffin had the stone verified and appraised and arranged for insurance.

"If you don't get your beans in a row, the skeptics just flat won't believe it," Whetstone said.

"Another thing was to educate my boys," he added. "I told them, 'Hey, you own something valuable and there are bad people out there.'"

Pointing to the often-lurid history of other famous gems, Whetstone said he hopes his sons' stone will take a different course.

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