



Episode 973: Glenn Jacobs, WWE's Kane, Runs for Mayor

Guest: Glenn Jacobs

WOODS: It's been a long, long time since I had you on, but I'll tell you, there were an awful lot of wrestling fans who took an interest in that particular episode. It was written up in different wrestling websites. Apparently people followed your every move at that point, which was good for me, of course, a young podcast [laughing]. Anyway, what is your exact status with the WWE now? Are you permanently retired?

JACOBS: No, I'm actually on hiatus. I'm still under contract, but I'm not — everyone keeps on saying "former," and technically it's not former — you know, "former WWE wrestler" or "former WWE superstar," and it's not quite former yet. And I'm like, was it John Wayne or whoever who said, "The rumors" — I guess Mark Twain — "The rumors of my demise have been somewhat exaggerated," anyway.

WOODS: All right, but if you were to be elected, then what would happen?

JACOBS: I would become "former" [laughing].

WOODS: [laughing] Okay, all right, just wondering. Okay.

JACOBS: Yes.

WOODS: Okay, so it wouldn't be like Ron Paul, like on the weekends you deliver babies; on the weekends you're throwing people around. That wouldn't happen?

JACOBS: No, probably not.

WOODS: All right, fair enough.

JACOBS: Probably not [laughing].

WOODS: All right, so tell me about — Knox County seems kind of like a — I don't understand the political unit that that is.

JACOBS: Sure, so I guess it's somewhat unique in that, you know, some places around the country have metropolitan government where the county, basically the whole metropolitan area is under one government. Here in East Tennessee, most of the counties have their own government and the cities have a government within the

county, so the city takes care of certain services within their jurisdiction and the county takes care of the stuff out in the county. Normally – not normally, but in the past, the county mayors have been called judge executives or county executives, and they changed that to county mayor some years ago.

Knox County itself of course encompasses the city of Knoxville. The city of Knoxville is about 170,000 people. The county has about 450,000 people. The annual budget for the county is not quite \$800 million. Under that, that includes the school system, of course the county roads and that sort of thing, the infrastructure, the jails, the sheriff's department, the health department, and all that sort of stuff. So yeah, but a lot of people get confused because you have a city mayor and a county mayor, but the county actually has a lot more responsibility and authority than the city does.

WOODS: All right, give us a picture of the election, what it's going to look like, when it is, who's running, and who's the current mayor.

JACOBS: The current mayor is a man named Tim Burchett. He is term limited so he can't run again, and the election will be May of 2018. Burchett, he's been very good for the county. We haven't raised taxes here since 1999. He follows real conservative fiscal policy. I think he's done a very good job for the county, and he's actually running for Congress now that Jimmy Duncan, who was our representative who's also someone I think that all of us respect. Next to Ron Paul, one of the best of the old school in Congress. Jimmy's retiring. He won't run again, so Burchett is running for that seat. And as I said, the election is May of next year. Currently, there are two other people that are in the race that have announced. They're both county commissioners. And that's about it.

WOODS: All right, what can you tell us about those other people?

JACOBS: As I said, they're both county commissioners. One works for the police department. He's been on the county commission for I think about eight years. And the other gentleman has been on the county commission for two years. We actually – the other gentleman's name is Bob Thomas. We share some things in common. He was in radio for a long time and he did some voiceovers in movies and that sort of stuff, so he's been in the entertainment industry as well.

WOODS: All right, so what made you decide to do this all of a sudden?

JACOBS: A guy named Tom Woods.

WOODS: No, you are not pinning this on me [laughing].

JACOBS: [laughing] So the last time I was on your show, you asked me a question that really got me to thinking and basically was, What are you going to do, or, Where do you think that our movement is going to achieve success? Well, this was back I guess – what, that show was about 2013, right? And I told you I was fed up with politics, especially after what happened with Ron Paul and the RNC in 2012, I think. You know, I wasn't naive enough to think that Ron was going to win, but I felt very slighted that the RNC went to great lengths not to allow him to even speak and not to let the

viewpoint of the liberty wing of the Republican Party be represented at their national convention. So I was fed up. I really was.

And your question, though, what you said back to me when I said, "I'm fed up. I'm done," and you said back to me, "Well, it's not like you're going to have the majority of Americans suddenly withdraw their consent." And that got me to thinking. You're exactly right. I think that the political process is still something that those of us who want to see positive change – and what I mean by that is change in the direction of liberty and free markets – we have to do what we can do to cause that to happen, and that includes sometimes being in the political process. And that really has a lot to do with it.

I mean, I love America. I love the idea of a place where anyone, virtually anyone has the opportunity to take their gifts and create the life that they want to live, and that's what the American dream is. It's the ability to go out there and to pursue your dreams and to just create that life, so long of course as you're not infringing upon other people's rights really to do the same thing. That's something that's worth conserving. That's something that's worth protecting. I look at my kids and my grandkids, and you know, I'll often tell people I'm not special. I'm not someone that just was gifted in whatever. I have unique skill set, and it is rather unique because it was in professional wrestling. But I was able to parlay that because I had opportunities to do so. That's the key, is making sure that those opportunities exist for future generations, and that's what this is all about.

And I think a lot of it begins at the local level, because – I think we would agree on this – I don't think the federal government is all of a sudden just going to say, "Oh, we've way stepped over the bounds of the Constitution so we're going to start giving the states and localities their power back." That's not going to happen. I think what's going to happen is this has to be a movement from the bottom up. It's not going to come from the top down. So I think that being in positions in state and local government in many ways is just as important as being in the federal government. In some ways, I think it's actually more important.

WOODS: And you can probably get more done. There's probably less of an entrenched, impenetrable bureaucracy at that local level. All right, I'm asking the wrong person this question, but what I wanted to know about your opponents is really how an outside observer might handicap this race, in that you are extremely well known – I mean, you're known all over the country, around the world. These are a couple of local figures. But on the other hand, they have political connections, and you don't at this point, at least not what they have. So how do you balance out which of those things trumps the other?

JACOBS: Well, a lot of it is the strategies that we have to pursue in the campaign, of course, and the kind of campaign that we run and actually utilizing our strengths to the best extent possible. And the major thing for me is just getting me in front of people, because a lot of people, yeah, know me as the wrestler guy, but hopefully after they talk to me, they realize, hey, he's somewhat intelligent. He can put a sentence together. He seems to be on the ball about things. And that helps me out tremendously. See, I do face some difficulties, some challenges. There's no doubt

about that. But again, it's how competent a campaign that we run and are able to take advantage of the things that we're able to do.

And frankly, Tom, a lot of this is who wants to work the hardest, who's going to get out there and knock on the most doors, who's going to get out there and talk with people the most, who's willing to make phone calls to folks to raise money and do all that stuff. And I'm willing to do that. I think this is very important. So I'm in a good position. I really am. And you're exactly right. It's sort of strange because, in many ways, if this was a more national race or a state race, I would probably get more exposure because of who I am and because of the "celebrity status" and all that sort of stuff. You know, I'd be able to take advantage of that a little more than I'm able to with this.

But nevertheless, the great thing about Knox County is people here have — we have good sense. It's fiscal conservatives. And the message that I have resonates, because it's that message. You don't spend money you don't have, and even if you do have the money, you don't always need to spend it. We need to take care of each other. We need to stop relying on the government to take care of us, and we need to take care of each other as civil society. We all need to work together to promote our area, and we need transparency in government. If nothing else, people deserve to know what goes on in the government because they're the ones paying the bill. They're the shareholders. And to me, that's an absolute requirement. I mean, you wouldn't have another corporation where the shareholders weren't included in the decision making or at least the ability to understand why decisions are made. I think that's vitally important.

So I think that our platform has resonated with people as well, and a lot of it is my ability to articulate that and to get it across and to get people to realize that I'm — I understand that the wrestler thing doesn't have anything to do with me as a candidate. It gets sort of my foot in the door, but it's the other things. My vision for the county, which again is I want Knox County to be a place that is the most business-friendly place in the country; a place where people know that if they're an entrepreneur, they can succeed here because the government's going to stay out of the way; a place where we work together to take care of one another, and that makes a better community. It's my ability to articulate that message that's really going to make the difference.

WOODS: All right, more with Glenn Jacobs after we Tennessee thank our sponsor.

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All right, now one other thing I just want to make sure I understand. This election that's coming up in May, is this a primary and then there's a general election?

JACOBS: Yes.

WOODS: So you're running against two other Republicans.

JACOBS: Yes, sir. The primary's in May. The general election is in August. And then here in Tennessee, our early voting period is actually when most folks vote, and despite the fact that the election day is May 1st, early voting will begin – we'll have to ramp things up about six weeks before that to really hit the people for early voting.

WOODS: Okay, so how are you positioning yourself against these other Republicans? Are you positioning yourself as, Well, they also want to hold the line on taxes and spending, but I'm going to do a 15% better job than they are? Or are you positioning yourself as a different kind of candidate altogether?

JACOBS: A different kind of candidate altogether. First everyone's going to talk about they're not going to raise taxes until, all of a sudden, Oh gosh, we need to raise taxes. Well, I'm not going to raise taxes. I mean, there's inefficiencies in government. Like I said, we have an \$800 million budget, so there are inefficiencies and waste that, no matter how lean the government runs – and again, the current mayor has done a very good job – there's things that you can look at and take care of, as well as working with the private sector to help offset some of the costs. You know, whether it's naming rights on buildings or contracting and those sorts of things, there are ways to save money, again, no matter how big the government's budget is.

As well as people are just tired of politicians. It's funny because I'll talk with folks and they'll ask me if I have any experience in politics, and I always sort of cringe because, you know, I'm applying for a job and when you're applying for a job, you want to say, "Yeah, I've got all this great experience." And I say no, and it's amazing people say, "Good, because we're tired of politicians."

And again, I think that's actually for me an asset that I have. I've been out in the real world. I've traveled all over the world. I've seen what's out there. I'm a small businessperson myself. I understand the challenges the small businesspeople face. When you look at the global economy, the economy has never been this competitive before. Here in Knox County, we're not just competing against the other cities in Tennessee; we're competing against Shanghai and Hong Kong and a hundred cities in China that have over a million people in each city and just everything around the world. To me, the way you compete with that is you unleash the free market and you attract people here and you make sure that our economy is working as best as it possibly can, and that can only happen when the free market is allowed to work. Those are the things that I talk about.

And the issues that – Knox County is a great place, and the issues that we face are issues that we're going to have to deal with together, and I think the people here too realize that we ask government to solve a problem, and generally what happens is the problem becomes worse as opposed to better, and that's something else that I'm very much into, is all of us – government, civil society, our great institutions in the private sector – working together to deal with the problems that we do have.

WOODS: How has the local GOP reacted to Glenn Jacobs running for office?

JACOBS: [laughing] You know, political parties are not monolithic and the reaction has been split. There are some really good conservative people who like me and support me, and there are just some other folks – I'm a newcomer, and for that reason, I think

they're somewhat just suspicious of me, which is fine. So it's been split, but again, I think the more that I'm able to get in front of people and talk with them and they see the real me, they understand I'm just a guy that wants to serve my community. That really is what I am. And I think that resonates.

WOODS: When you have events, are people coming out because they want to see Kane, or are they coming out because they want to hear what you have to say? Like in other words, are there young people showing up because they're awestruck and star struck?

JACOBS: A little bit of both, actually. And there are a lot of people who are wrestling fans – I mean, there's a stereotype about wrestling fans that really bothers me because for a lot of the media that has this elite view of the world, wrestling fans are just toothless, inbred people, and that is absolutely not true. We cut across all demographics, young and old. I've talked with people who are eight years old that are fans; I've talked to people that are 80 years old that are fans. We just cut across everything at this point.

So what I find a lot of is that there are people who know me from wrestling maybe, but they also know about me from the work that I do in the community, from shows like this, being on shows like this. I mean, I've had people come up and talk with me about Austrian economics and how some of my stuff that's out there on YouTube and the Internet, they've really appreciated my insights. I mean, that blows me away. So it's really a cross-section.

And I think what's happened is the wrestling deal has become a bonus. I don't think that people come out just because of the wrestling deal. I think they come out because yeah, they do want to meet the candidate who happens to be maybe someone that they watched growing up on TV, but it's not like I sit there the whole time and we'll talk about just what's happening in the wrestling world. We'll talk about substantive issues, and I think that's great. And again, it just goes back to this stereotype that has unfortunately been perpetuated that, again – you know, wrestling fans are everywhere.

And that's another thing, too. A lot people don't like to campaign and you'll hear horror stories and it's hard work and all that. I love it. I get to go out there and meet my neighbors. I get to go out and knock on doors and talk to people and find out what the issues really are and things that concern them. I just love it. I think it's awesome. And it is really – I feel so much more connected to my community than I did before. So it's great, and whether people want to come meet me because I'm Kane the wrestler or they want to come meet me because I'm Glenn Jacobs running for Knox County mayor, to me, I just like meeting people and hearing what's on their mind.

WOODS: Yeah, that's nice. Now, my experience with listening to you and reading things that you write is you have a very good way of explaining things to ordinary people, which I think a lot of our people are good at; we have some scholarly types who, even when they dumb it down three levels, you still can't understand a word they're saying. But you have that gift, which is very important. But all the same, even when you have that gift, you're going to have a few positions that are just a tough sell

no matter how you slice it. Do you feel like there's anything in your platform that's a tougher sell than the rest?

JACOBS: You know, people — like last night, I had a guy asked me about, say, with the environment and conservationism, and to me again it's private property. And I tried to explain when, say you're looking at an endangered species — wasn't necessarily what he was talking about — how when people can actually own them or when people can own natural resources — if you look at parks and that sort of thing — they take a lot better care of them than the government's going to because there's a profit incentive, and it eliminates the problem of the tragedy of the commons, of course, which means that everybody's trying to exploit a resource as much as possible and there's no effort to conserve it because no one owns it and no one has a long-term vested interest in making sure the resource continues to produce.

So sometimes it's not necessarily that the positions are hard to sell; it's the fact that we're in such a soundbite society that in order to do the groundwork to get — for lack of a better term, it's like you're telling a joke and you can't get to the punchline because you have to go through the groundwork first, and by the time you get to the punchline, no one's paying attention anymore. That's what I find difficult, is how do you put things in a way that's concise that people understand and can relate to. And I probably with my answer did not do a very good job of doing that, actually [laughing]. That's something I struggle with.

WOODS: Well, that is a hard issue, and there are some issues that we believe in where one side of the debate has a quick bumper sticker and we, who really want to give a thorough answer, we have to give two or three paragraphs. But that's the way it goes. It's an opportunity for education.

Now, given that the election is a ways off, what's your typical day like and what's it going to be like in those six weeks that you were mentioning?

JACOBS: So we announced back in April, and since then, we've basically just been trying to get out there. We go out on weekends and knock on doors, and then on Saturdays and, say, a couple of days through the week we'll probably knock on doors as well. We have events, fundraising events, meet-and-greets and that sort of thing, so it really varies by day to day, of course. I have my business, as well. We own an insurance agency that I have to run, and thank goodness I have a great staff that helps me because I haven't been able to devote as much time to that as I have in the past. And it's also going out and meeting folks that I need to meet, so mostly I've been making an effort to meet with people in the county, department heads and the folks that actually are doing the heavy lifting in the county to see what their issues are and what really goes on. So the average day would be: get up; work at the insurance agency for a little while; maybe run off to lunch and have lunch with someone that I need to have a meeting with; then either come back or from there have another meeting; then in the afternoon, go out and knock on doors or go to a fundraiser.

Tomorrow is going to be — it's a Saturday and it's going to be a significant day, because we have two big events here in Knox County. I have to be at both of them. And you know, I'm a pretty energetic guy, but you have to find a way to replicate myself [laughing]. One in the morning, then another one in the afternoon. And I spent

this morning talking with folks and volunteers to make sure that we have staffing at both places and make sure that we have everything we need, which of course at some point, we'll realize that we've forgotten something because that's always what happens no matter how well organized you think you are.

But I think as we go into the fall, once we get into November and December, things are actually going to slow down because people will be concentrating on the holidays and that sort of thing. Probably about the middle of January, things are going to really ramp up, and then they're really going to ramp up going into the campaign, at which point we will be knocking on doors every evening, doing as many events as we can, and just all that stuff. So yeah, the last few weeks before the campaign, things will really ramp up and it will become a full-time job at that point.

WOODS: All right, before I ask for your website, one last thing: what's been the reaction in the wrestling world to your decision?

JACOBS: Oh, it's been overwhelmingly supportive. I worked with a great bunch of guys and girls throughout the years. And the thing about WWE is they want you to succeed outside of the wrestling business as well, because not only is it good for you as a person, but it's also a good reflection on our company. I mean, if you think about it, we have got Dwayne "the Rock" Johnson, who's the number one movie star in the world. We've got John Cena, who's one of our huge stars and he's on *The Today Show* all the time. And they want you to succeed, so it's been very successful both from the support that I received from people within WWE, as well as my coworkers, and I'm very thankful for that.

WOODS: Well, tell us how people can help you out.

JACOBS: You can go to JacobsForMayor.com, and there is a "Donate" button there, and I will appreciate donations. And also, there's a store where you can get T-shirts and bumper stickers and that sort of thing, and I think those are actually really cool. I'm probably one of the few local candidates in the country who has the ability for people to think his T-shirts are cool, you know? So pick a T-shirt up and make a donation. That would be awesome. If you're in the Knox County area, in the Tennessee area, or Kentucky, if you want to come down and knock on doors with us one day or volunteer, that'd be awesome as well.

WOODS: I'm checking them out right now. I'm looking at the shirts. Yeah, good for you. Okay. I'm over there right now. So JacobsForMayor.com is where to go. We'll link to that at TomWoods.com/973. Well, best of luck, Glenn. No matter what happens, I hope you don't blame me for the outcome if you win or you lose [laughing]. But I'm glad you're out there because you are a great spokesman for us.

JACOBS: Thanks, Tom. I appreciate it. And like I said, this is – for me, this has been a phenomenal experience so far. I've had a lot of fun, and so far, it's been a decision that I'm glad that I made.

WOODS: Great, thanks so much for your time again today.

JACOBS: Thank you.