

# Jim Strickland

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**2024**

**Dean and Professor of Practice, University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law**

**2016-2023**

**Mayor of Memphis, Tennessee**

Elected in 2015 and 2019 to serve as the City's chief executive officer. Responsible for the general welfare of the City as a policy maker and as the senior executive of an entity with over 8,000 employees. Responsible to ensure the City provides core services across Memphis and Shelby County, all united behind one common purpose: to improve the quality of life for Memphians, every day.

### **Key Accomplishments:**

- Restructured city government leadership into a C-Suite, improving communication, strategy, and operations. Expanded the traditional direct report structure where only the Chief Administrative Officer reported to the Mayor to include the police, fire, operations, communications, human resources, legal and finance chiefs. Weekly strategy meetings were held with the Mayor and all chiefs to review operations and determine policy.
- Transformed City government's communications internally and externally to better and more often share information with employees and citizens.
- Led the planning and execution of the City's operating budget, which was \$800 million in 2023. With little growth in tax revenue the first 6 years in office, strenuous budget decisions governed by priorities and cooperation with city council members were key to maintaining the balance between revenues and expenditures without a tax increase.
- Fully funded the city's pension plan for the first time since 2005 through difficult decision making, resulting in improvements in the City's credit ratings with bond rating agencies.
- Implemented the use of data to measure performance and outcomes of City services to help guide improvements and to improve internal and external communications on both current and future planned improvements. Recognized and received two gold medals by "What Works in Cities" (a division of Bloomberg Philanthropies), for "exceptional use of data to inform policy decisions, allocate funding, improve services, evaluate program effectiveness, and engage residents."
- Developed a policy where department leaders meet with the Mayor monthly as a group to review performance and share ideas for improvement.
- Led City through the COVID pandemic:
  - Issued initial executive orders governing public gatherings in the City in Spring 2020.
  - Co-chaired task force for region,
  - Led creation of a mass testing program for schools to return to in-person classes.
  - Charter schools utilizing the program did not sustain any learning loss after returning to in-class instruction for the 2020-2021 school year.
  - Responded to an emergency request from Tennessee state government to develop and lead a team to assume responsibility for an inefficient mass vaccination program. Within the first 48 hours, implementation of immediate changes greatly improved processes, wait times, and citizen satisfaction. Over 350,000 vaccines were administered over 11 months.
  - Oversaw a team that became proficient in contact tracing and provided the bulk of that service for Memphis and Shelby County.
  - Oversaw a team that assumed responsibility for food distribution for students during

- virtual school year after the school system suspended its program.
  - Oversaw a communications system focused on reaching citizens with regular updates.
- Directed the team effort in legally removing Confederate statues when faced with a state law prohibiting cities from removing such monuments. These monuments to Jim Crow and segregation were not representative of modern-day Memphis. We rectified some of the underrepresentation of the diversity of historical monuments by installing the Suffrage Monument, the Ida B. Wells Plaza and statue, the MLK Reflection Park, and the I Am a Man Plaza (which may be the only monument in the world honoring sanitation workers.)
- Led the implementation of projects designed to improve and transform the future of Memphis, such as free universal needs-based pre-kindergarten; fiber broadband to 85% of homes and businesses in Memphis; Memphis 3.0, the first comprehensive plan for the city in 40 years; and Transit Vision, the first ever dedicated funding source for Memphis Area Transit Association, to greatly improve public transportation by 2030.
- Prioritized the recruitment and retention of police officers and firefighters and marshalled the team and resources to increase hiring of over 1,100 police officers and 1,200 firefighters.
- Transformed the 911 emergency communications bureau, which handles 1 million calls per year, by reducing the average wait time to answer from around one minute to below eight seconds.
- Improved the City's fire department and achieved the highest national rating for the first time since the 1960s, putting Memphis in the top 1% of the country's fire departments.
- Oversaw the creation of the Healthcare Navigator program that diverts those with mental health challenges away from jail and those without urgent health care needs away from emergency rooms to appropriate care providers.
- Improved the City's library system, which was recognized in 2021 with the nation's highest honor, the National Medal for Museum and Library System.
- Dramatically improved the City's contracting with Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) from 12% to over 27% by leading the effort to be more equitable in the city's purchasing process.
- Led the formation and execution of a reimagining of the Memphis-built environment, including Accelerate Memphis, a \$200 million investment in parks and neighborhoods particularly in underserved areas; \$200 million of investments in parks and community centers, building new ones and improving others; a \$245 million modernization of the airport concourse and a \$200 million overhaul of the Renasant Convention Center; construction of a \$65 million youth sports complex; and a \$60 million award-winning redesign of Tom Lee Park.
- Transformed Memphis Animal Services and improved the save rate from around 50% to 85-90%, which led to being one of five organizations in the country recognized for its lifesaving work by Best Friends Animal Society.
- Planned and executed the lobbying effort to obtain one of the largest cash grants in history from Tennessee state government to the City (\$350 million to renovate Fed Ex Forum and Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium).
- Led the partnership which developed the \$30 million Leftwich Tennis Center and coordinated the private fundraising responsible for paying over one-half the total cost.

## **1998- 2015**

### **Kustoff & Strickland PLLC**

Full partner of a law office located in Memphis, Tennessee with areas of practice in general practice, commercial litigation, collections, family law, guardianship for veterans, breach of contract, personal injury, and civil matters.

**1990-1998**

**Glankler Brown, PLLC**

Associate attorney. Based in Memphis, Tennessee, Glankler Brown represents clients across a wide spectrum of business and personal issues. Represented individuals and businesses in general civil litigation practice and occasional criminal defense litigation in state and federal court.

**1989-1990**

**Tennessee Supreme Court**

Clerk for Justice William H.D. Fones

**1989-1996**

**University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law**

Adjunct Instructor, Legal Methods

**EDUCATION**

**1986-1989**

**University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law**

Juris Doctor (with honors)  
Moot Court Board, Chief Justice  
Herbert Herff Law Scholarship  
American Jurisprudence Award - Evidence

**1982-1986**

**University of Memphis**

Bachelor of Business Administration (magna cum laude)  
Student Body President

**COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPERIENCE**

Alpha Omega Veterans Services, Inc.  
Habitat for Humanity  
Kiwanis Club of Memphis  
Leadership Memphis  
Leadership Tennessee  
Memphis Botanic Gardens  
Memphis City Council, Chairman  
Memphis/Shelby County Board of Adjustment  
Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative Executive Committee  
St. Vincent de Paul Society  
Tennessee Municipal League Board of Directors  
University of Memphis Alumni Association National Board of Directors  
University of Memphis Tiger Scholarship Fund Board of Directors

## **HONORS**

Christian Brothers High School - Hall of Fame  
Christian Brothers University - Honorary Doctor of Public Service  
Christian Brothers University - Commencement Speaker  
Commercial Appeal- Best Local Politician  
Hyde Park Matters Neighborhood Association - Boots on the Ground Award  
Ida B. Wells Memphis Memorial Committee - Impact Award  
Impact Baptist Church - Civic Hero  
Leadership Memphis - Community Champion of the year to City Government  
Memphis Bar Association – Judge Jerome Turner Lawyer's Lawyer Award  
Memphis Bar Association - Sam A. Myar, Jr. Memorial Award  
Memphis Business Journal, Top 40 under 40  
Memphis Flyer, Top 40 under 40  
Memphis Urban League - Diamond Award  
NAACP Memphis Branch-Presidential Award  
National Association of Women Business Owners - Star Award and MWBE Champion  
Rotary Club of Memphis East Bobby Dunavant Public Servant Award  
Rep. Barbara Cooper - Harriet Tubman Living Legend Award  
Sierra Club - We're Glad We Elected You Award  
Southern College of Optometry - Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters  
Southern College of Optometry - Commencement Speaker  
Tennessee Municipal League - Municipal Champion Award  
University of Memphis Commencement Speaker  
University of Memphis Alumni Association - Scheidt Community Impact Award  
WLOK Radio - Courage in Politics Award