

Stealth Demo trial lawyers hurl money at GOPer Strayhorn

This item from last week's Austin Chronicle should warm the cockles of Texas Democrats' hearts:

"... in June... trial lawyers... put their money on. Comptroller Carolé Keeton Strayhorn in the governor's race."

That's a sure sign that the state's "progressives" will have a serious contender in next year's gubernatorial race — running in the Republican primary.

Strayhorn, a longtime Texas Democrat in GOP clothing, has inspired her co-Demos to flood her campaign with cash.

The most recent "Friends of Carole Keeton Strayhorn" finance report, filed this month with the Texas Ethics Commission, featured contributions from:

■ **Houston trial lawyer John Eddie Williams Jr. — \$100,000**

"John Eddie has specialized in representing plaintiffs in mass tort cases involving asbestos, silicosis, benzene, welding rod fumes and toxic waste exposure," the attorney's Web site



**RODDY
STINSON**

profile on motherjones.com.

"The fees he has won give Williams the kind of money and connections that provide high-level access. During his second term, President Clinton invited Williams to the White House for a state dinner with Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi. Williams returned the favor, inviting Hillary Clinton and 50 generous donors to his home for a meal, raising \$150,000 for her

notes with pride before citing honors that include: "Past president of the Texas Trial Lawyers Association (and) the Houston Trial Lawyers Foundation."

Williams' personal-injury law practice has been very lucrative.

From a 2001

Senate campaign."

So why is the Democratic attorney backing Strayhorn to the tune of \$100,000?

"This is a Republican state," Williams said matter-of-factly when an Austin American-Statesman reporter asked him that question. "We're going to have a Republican governor."

Unless his candidate wins. ■ **Beaumont trial lawyer Walter Umphrey — \$100,000**

From his firm's (Provost/Umphrey) Web site:

"Major Areas of Practice:

"Catastrophic Accidents, Automobile Accidents, Industrial Accidents, Premises Accidents, Construction Accidents, Wrongful Death Claims... Toxic Torts — Asbestos, Lead, Benzene, Silica, Paint, Beryllium, Butadiene..."

If you have ever bumped your knee in a fender-bender, mashed your pinkie with a hammer or slipped on a banana peel in your neighbor's driveway, odds

See STINSON/4A

WORLD

SUNDAY, JULY 24, 2005

Stinson: Trial lawyers backing Strayhorn

CONTINUED FROM 3A

are, Walter can get you a buck or two — and maybe a whole lot more.

To wit:

"On behalf of its clients, Provost/Umphrey regularly records settlements and/or verdicts in the multi-million dollar range."

■ **Houston trial lawyer Lance Lubel — \$25,000**

From Lubel's Web site:

"... represents victims of personal injuries, including toxic torts, products liability, automobile accidents, industrial site ac-

cidents and insurance bad faith. Among his many legal accomplishments, Lance served as Lead Counsel in the largest reported jury award in Texas for a silicosis case.

"He also serves as General Counsel to the Pipefitters Local 211 Union."

You can hardly get more Republican than that.

■ **Santa Fe (N.M.) trial lawyer Bill Robins — \$10,000**

His firm, Heard, Robins, Cloud & Lubel, "represents victims of major personal injury, wrongful death, work site acci-

dents, medical malpractice, automobile accidents and class-action cases throughout New Mexico and West Texas," according to Web-site info.

Also, Robins has been a major contributor to New Mexico Democratic Gov Bill Richardson, former secretary of energy in the Clinton administration.

According to a May 9 Associated Press report of campaign gifts to Richardson, "Bill Robins, a lawyer in Texas and Santa Fe, gave \$31,000."

Space limitation forces me to stop the contributor profiles

there.

But keep reading this space between now and the March Republican primary for more eye-opening uncoverings of the significant and implicative connections between Carolé Keeton Strayhorn's campaign to take over the governor's mansion and the Stealth Democrats who are capitalizing it.

To contact Roddy Stinson, call (210) 250-3155 or e-mail rstinson@express-news.net. His column appears on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.