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Mathis New County Coroner

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*By Annabeth Miller,
ShowMe Times Editors*

BLOOMFIELD, MO. – March 15, 2011 – When Aaron Mathis was just a young man in the Dexter schools, his father began working with the county coroner’s office. So the young Dexter man watched and learned about the job of coroner first-hand from his father.

Now, Aaron Mathis is following his father’s footsteps and is beginning his tour of duty as the Stoddard County Coroner. Mathis was appointed by Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon to the post this week and took the oath of office in a ceremony in the Stoddard County Justice Center on Tuesday.

Mathis was appointed by the governor to fill the unexpired term of Morgan Sifford, who resigned from the post in January. Administering the oath of office was Judge Joe Satterfield, friend and high school classmate of Mathis’ parents, Greg and Lisa.

“I’ve watched Aaron group up into a intelligent, confident, hard-working --- well, he’s just a well-rounded individual. I am very proud of him. It’s been a pleasure watching you grow up,” Satterfield said in remarks prior to Mathis taking the oath of office. “There’s absolutely no doubt in my mind that you have earned the right to be coroner and you absolutely deserve the appointment the governor has bestowed on you.”

Standing beside Mathis as he took the oath of office was his wife, Brittany.

Following the oath, Mathis commented that he remembered his mother taking him to Bloomfield in 2006 when his father was sworn into office as coroner following the death of Ray Rainey.

“I was looking through some clippings and found that my father had a lot more hair and Joe’s (Satterfield) was a lot darker back then,” Mathis said with a grin.

Mathis explained he would be meeting with local officials – Hank Trout of the Stoddard County Major Case Squad as well as county law enforcement and emergency officials to learn of their expectations of the Coroner’s Office.

“Stoddard County law enforcement is going to be your best friend,” Mathis said in an interview. “I’ve developed a good relationship with Hank Trout – seeing he and his son Nick down at Little League baseball when I was coaching. I have a lot of respect for Hank and Tommy Horton (of the Sheriff’s Department) and the guys with the Highway Patrol. We will all work good together.”

Mathis is a 2004 graduate of Dexter High School and attended St. Louis Community College at Forest Park and received a degree in mortuary science.

“When I was in middle school if you had asked me what I wanted to do I probably would have said sports broadcasting,” Mathis said. “But when I got into high school, I realized that this (funeral service) was what I wanted to go into. “

The young Mathis has high praise for his hometown and county.

“Stoddard County has been very good to our family. I enjoy being able to be in contact with people, knowing that you’re able to make a difference. So Dexter and Stoddard County was always the place I knew I wanted to come back to,” he said.

The new coroner explained that his office investigates deaths – whether unexplained, accidental, and unattended. He said when such a situation occurs he will be called to the scene.

“We’ll be in touch with the chief law enforcement person on the scene, which most times will be Hank Trout or somebody from the Highway Patrol that’s investigating it,” he said. “We’ll work with their investigators to see if there needs to be an autopsy performed and

what circumstances led to that person passing away.”

He explained the coroner is also notified when a person passes away at a house> In addition, state law requires that anyone under the age of 18 who dies must also have an autopsy performed.

“I’m excited to be here in the county and working with people,” he said. He commented that he enjoyed serving the Health Care Foundation board of directors. “I enjoy working with people and working with law enforcement. I look forward to do that in the next two years.”

Mathis will serve the remainder of Sifford’s term, which ends in 2012. He will then be able to seek the office in the November 2012 election.

Joining Mathis and his wife and parents at the swearing in ceremony were his grandparents, Vernon and June Mathis and Bob Coffey, all of Dexter, Brittany’s parents, Tim and Kendra Ward, and a number of family and friends.

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