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Graham running for Minn. attorney general

By [MIKE O'ROURKE](#)
Associate Editor

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Brainerd native John Remington "Jack" Graham is running for Minnesota attorney general.

The former Crow Wing County attorney and longtime foe of fluoridation said there are morale problems in Attorney General Lori Swanson's office that he has learned about through media reports and his own independent knowledge.



John Remington Graham

He said the attorney general's office has become the political property of one party. DFL candidates have successfully won election to the post for decades.

Graham, 69, said the office is being used unethically, citing a 2006 legal settlement involving Capital One Bank in which the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now or ACORN received money from a legal judgment. ACORN's political action committee subsequently endorsed then-Attorney General Mike Hatch for governor. Swanson, then a top attorney in Hatch's office, was also endorsed by the group for attorney general.

Swanson could not be reached for comment Monday night.

"I would certainly change the direction of the attorney general's office," Graham said in a phone interview from his home in St. Agapit, Quebec, Canada. "I want to clean up the ethics of the attorney general's office and then work on cleaning up the ethics of state government ... We will not use that office to promote selfish political ambitions."

Graham was elected county attorney in 1990 in what most observers saw as a huge political upset. He had been living in Quebec at the time but established a legal residency in Brainerd before the election. Graham served one term as county attorney and did not seek re-election. He was a special counsel to the city of Brainerd from 1974 to 1980 and led the unsuccessful fight against mandatory fluoridation of the city's water.

The attorney, who will seek the Republican Party's endorsement, said he practices law in Minnesota periodically and estimated he travels back to his home state about six to eight times a year. He unsuccessfully sought the Republican endorsement for the attorney general post in 1998.

Graham said he will establish residency by staying with a friend in St. Paul and begin campaigning in earnest by early next year. He registered a political committee with the Minnesota Campaign Finance Board on Wednesday.

Graham has unsuccessfully sought judgeships on at least two occasions.

In addition to his law practice, Graham said he recently completed his literary work, which he described as a major treatise on the intended meaning of the U.S. Constitution, which involved 40 years of scholarship.

He declined to speculate on his chances to win the state office.

"Every time I thought I was going to win I lost and every time I thought I was going to lose I won," he said. "I've stopped making predictions. One thing I do feel pretty sure about. You have to win the state (party) endorsement. I certainly would have to have the state endorsement."

He said that if someone else won the Republican endorsement he was almost 100 percent sure he would back that person. "Maybe if I put my hat in the ring I might encourage others to do likewise," he said.

Asked if he would end his race if a suitable candidate surfaced, Graham was noncommittal.

"Well, that's speculating, but anything might happen," he said.

The former Brainerd attorney said he switched from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party because of the former's stance on social issues.

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"I think what happened is that the Democratic Party became the party of abortion on demand, gay marriage and global warming," he said. "I found I was much more comfortable being a Republican than a Democrat."

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He and his wife, Sylvie, who he said was the maiesse or female mayor of St. Agapit, have five children. If he were elected, Graham said they would be visiting each other quite a bit.

MIKE O'ROURKE may be reached at mike.orourke@brainerddispatch.com or 855-5860.

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Reader Comments

+ 2 Rating

Posted by: [golfnut2](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 8:06:06 am

This guy is like a bad penney!

Posted by: [tork747](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 8:42:20 am

He gets things riled up for sure

Posted by: [Cheyenne43](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 9:15:27 am

Graham might provide some comic relief. Wouldn't mind perusing his 'literary' work.

Posted by: [leftover](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 9:48:31 am

Wasn't this the guy that saw ghosts in the courthouse men's room?

+ 1 Rating

Posted by: [unoochouno](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 10:07:09 am

Welcome to the Republican party.

Posted by: [Cheyenne43](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 10:47:57 am

LOL

+ 1 Rating

Posted by: [loann](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 10:49:55 am

He seems like a winner to me. Anyone who wants to clean up the present AG office is okay.

Posted by: [loann](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 10:50:34 am

He seems like a winner to me. Anyone who wants to clean up the present AG office is okay.

+ 1 Rating

Posted by: [rob2000](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 11:33:04 am

You may want to go back to the early nineties and check out some of the things this guy has said and done. He was an embarrassment to Crow Wing County and would no doubt be an embarrassment to the State of Minnesota.

-1 Rating

Posted by: [kylebush](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 11:46:26 am

Yes it was the guy who claims to have seen ghosts, he's a nutjob for sure!!

Posted by: [dgamradt](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 12:00:08 pm

Jack and I have been very close friends since the 8th grade and his sense of moral/ intellect is beyond reproach. I have read his treatise on "the intended meaning of the constitution" "Principles of the Confederacy" - all 800 pages, and it is brilliant - perhaps THE MOST SCHOLARLY literary contribution ever made by a citizen of the great city of Brainerd (and maybe the entire state?)He should never, ever be dismissed as a "nutcase" simply because he is a very, very serious man - even though he and I cannot always agree. I wish him well and good luck.

-1 Rating

Posted by: [tork747](#) at Dec. 1, 2009 at 12:37:37 pm

I cant argue with him calling todays Democrats "the party of abortion on demand, gay

marriage and global warming," Thats pretty much it.

-1 Rating

Posted by: lifelongresident at Dec. 1, 2009 at 12:57:05 pm

Chey,

Today's to do list: Check off any possible support from me for Jack Graham.

Posted by: alexb757 at Dec. 1, 2009 at 1:06:10 pm

Please see today's "This was Brainerd" section...

-1 Rating

Posted by: lifelongresident at Dec. 1, 2009 at 1:38:11 pm

Exactly Alex

Posted by: Krankster at Dec. 1, 2009 at 3:13:32 pm

I'd bet Michelle Bachman would back him...something along the lines of "Birds of a Feather".

Posted by: earthylady at Dec. 1, 2009 at 3:41:55 pm

20 years ago (1989)

John Remington Graham, former Brainerd attorney, is to have his day in court when the Minnesota Supreme Court will hear arguments that Graham be suspended for 60 days and fined \$1,000 in costs for unprofessional conduct.

I think the ghosts were in the old Paramount Theatre. He obsessed about that topic in the Dispatch. I think the above charge is when he went into the ladies bathroom at the courthouse. He had a history of walking around with his zipper down. He was elected county attorney because people wanted Rathke out. Graham believed that whatever happened at home (child or spousal abuse) was a private matter. Those are memories of his time in Brainerd.

There's a fine line between being brilliant, and being unstable.

-1 Rating

Posted by: powderfull at Dec. 1, 2009 at 3:45:17 pm

i about fell out of my bar stool...ah...i mean, i about choked to death on my coffee when i red about john REMINGTON graham slipping south from canada again. the dispatch must have a ton of files on this boy! golfnut...(this is a first)...i agree with your bad penny statement. this guy has issues galore. if the republicans put this guy under their wing, then why bother to put male or female names on the bathroom doors?

Posted by: lifelongresident at Dec. 1, 2009 at 5:15:51 pm

Posted by: earthylady at Dec. 1, 2009 at 3:41:55 pm
There's a fine line between being brilliant, and being unstable.

Nope, in this case Graham is just plain unstable. Makes me think he will probably win!!

Posted by: leftover at Dec. 1, 2009 at 6:04:41 pm

"Graham believed that whatever happened at home (child or spousal abuse) was a private matter."

Wow, that was a long time ago, but I do remember that.. There was a little girl who had bruises all over her swimsuit area, and he dismissed it and refused to investigate as she was horseback riding the previous week.

Posted by: marjorie at Dec. 1, 2009 at 6:21:21 pm

I don't think we have anything to worry about. he doesn't have much of a chance with his record around here. I would hope the Republican Party wouldn't want to claim this guy! WOW!

+ 1 Rating

Posted by: Myeye08 at Dec. 1, 2009 at 6:22:36 pm

Nice fit for either party! But a better fit for the party of the "Educated."

+ 1 Rating

Posted by: poissant at Dec. 1, 2009 at 7:01:40 pm

Palins running mate in 2012

-1 Rating

Posted by: 91cheve at Dec. 1, 2009 at 7:53:56 pm

Crow Wing County residents wouldn't "dismiss" Graham on his being a very serious guy, rather on his outrageous behavior in the ladies room in the courthouse. Not stable, not good for our state.

Posted by: vikingsfan123 at Dec. 1, 2009 at 8:10:42 pm

Please remember that he was trying to overturn a very crooked county government and was caught in the middle of a corrupt police department and an even more corrupt city council pushing and pulling him in all directions. He is exactly what we need to fix this state. Maybe you all should do a little more research on what was going on, and is still going on, behind closed doors. You'd be very very surprised to find all the dirty work they've swept under the rug. I recently left Brainerd because it had become unbearable. You try to get help, but around there, one hand washes the other... There is nowhere to go for help when they decide you are their target... Call me crazy, but I have all the proof i need for myself to believe. A little research and you will see too.

Posted by: callmecoach at Dec. 1, 2009 at 8:54:28 pm

Great comedy by the candidate and the observers...if it weren't so serious. Thanks to the Brainerd Daily Disgrace for bringing it all to our attention.

Posted by: callmecoach at Dec. 1, 2009 at 8:54:30 pm

Great comedy by the candidate and the observers...if it weren't so serious. Thanks to the Brainerd Daily Disgrace for bringing it all to our attention.

Posted by: readermn at Dec. 2, 2009 at 5:33:44 am

so to clarify this guy primarily lives in Canada, and wants to be an attorney general for MN??? Maybe thats what we need to fix OUR corrupt state government (AKA: the "good ol' boy society")!!! Maybe he can expose some of the corrupt things that go on in Brainerd's hidden government!

+ 1 Rating

Posted by: windycountry at Dec. 2, 2009 at 7:15:19 am

well I guess if we can have a president of the United States that is reputed to not even be an American citizen, I guess MN can have a Canadian citizen for Attorney General.... What is happening to the citizens of this country? Is someone pouring "Stupid" pills into the drinking water now?? Citizen's we are electing these "people" into office. Know who you are voting for!!

Posted by: Myeye08 at Dec. 2, 2009 at 8:25:51 am

Vikings- He did fight the fight but yet was run out by the inner circle after all. I do admit he should have looked at the sign on the door before entering and not let so many cows out of the barn.

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