



## **Dr. Brian Babin – Family Man, Dentist, U.S. Representative**

[Tyler County Booster](#), 06-19-14, 5B.

Dr. Brian Babin won! The Republican nominee for U.S. Congressional Dist. 36 celebrated with his wife, Roxanne, family and over 300 friends and supporters at a victory celebration in Woodville, Tuesday night, May 27. Poised to win in November, Babin will be the first Congressional representative from Tyler County since Bronson Cooper in 1892.

On the campaign trail, Babin often repeated, “I’m a dentist, not a politician. I’m not looking for a second career.” Good move, as most are weary of professional politicians. Though politick he must, most of his best friends will not be D.C. denizens.

Dentists deal in reality: a patient in pain needs relief now! There’s a need for

a reality check and some root canals in D.C. “This country is simply going in the absolutely wrong direction under weak, misguided ... leadership ... in both parties,” said Babin.

Kicked off overnight when our current congressman withdrew his name from the ballot at the last minute, Babin’s campaign focused mostly upon his own roots in East Texas and his record of public service as well as a push for limited government, lower taxes, a strong military, his rock-solid support for religious freedom and gun rights, and their correctives in repealing Obamacare, reducing spending, and cleaning bureaucratic waste ([www.BabinForCongress.com](http://www.BabinForCongress.com)).

Babin won the primary in March by a large margin carrying eight of nine counties in a field of 12, forcing a run-off. His opponent in the runoff spent three times the money and often used negative tactics lacking truth, forcing Babin to correct some distractions. Babin won the runoff by a large margin, 58% to 42%, and most political pundits see Brian winning handsomely in November.

Babin’s credibility and good name won out. Having lived in the district most of his life, he has defended the district and conservative values on professional and civic boards at the city, county, district, and state levels for 35 years.

Born in Port Arthur, Texas, Babin graduated from Forest Park HS, Beaumont, in 1966. After six years in the Texas Army National Guard as an airborne artillery man, he attended UT in Austin and graduated from Lamar University and then UT Dental School in Houston. He received one of the 15 Air Force Senior Dental Scholarships offered in the nation at the time.



Babin reconnected with Roxanne, whom he first met in HS, while at UT and they married in 1972. When he proposed, he said, “I do not have money but I can show you a great adventure.” So instead of an engagement ring, for their honeymoon, they bought two Eurail passes and travelled all over Western Europe, including France, Germany, Italy, Denmark and Sweden.

“We ate a lot of cheese and crackers,” chuckled Roxanne, “but a great adventure it has been.”

Back in the states, they sang popular songs by John Denver, Glen Campbell and others in clubs and hotels to help make ends meet until he graduated from dental school. Upon graduation, the USAF commissioned Babin a captain and offered him a choice of assignments.

Roxanne said, “We filled out our dream sheet and got our wish assignment for Germany.” They packed up their two babies, daughter Marit and son Leif, and were off to Ramstein Air Base to serve his three obligated years, including two months in Hellinikon, Greece, and two months in Upper Heyford, England.

An orange VW bus hosted some of their best times camping around Europe, spending many nights in a big Coleman tent. One night in a sheep meadow in Ireland, the tent filled with rain. In Belgium, they were awakened by something scratching on the tent. No worries, just a hedgehog, but a very special one, “Mrs. Tiggy-winkle,” they told the children, from the classic tale from Beatrix Potter (1905) the children knew well. During a spectacular camping trip at the Oracle of Delphi on the slopes of Mount Parnassus in Greece, their camp overlooked the entire complex of ruins with a view of the Gulf of Corinth. But during the night, a wind storm dislodged the stakes from the rocky ground and they escaped in the nick of time as the tent blew down the mountainside.

Leaving the AF in 1979, they came back home to Southeast Texas and chose Woodville because of “the wonderful people, local control, small-town community and Christian values,” said Brian. They bought a home in Woodville’s Timberland addition, better known at the time as “Kiddie Wonderland” amidst families with similarly aged children. Brian reflected on that tight-knit neighborhood, “Every child had one of those plastic Big Wheels. There were at least 50 kids on our street.”

Within a week, their twins Kirsten and Lucas were born. Some of the first neighbors to welcome them were the Charles Spurlock family along with their one-year old son, Caleb. Twenty one years later both families rejoiced as Kirsten and Caleb married. Caleb went on to attend dental school where he graduated first in his class and the couple returned home to Woodville where Dr. Spurlock bought the practice his father-in-law had started. Now, Kirsten, Caleb and their four children live just a few hundred yards from where they grew up in Timberland – a storybook love affair.

The Babin’s youngest daughter, LaLa, also married her childhood sweetheart, Brad Elrod, son of her first dancing teacher, Linda Pate. Elrod earned a law degree and recently joined the Whisenant Law Office in Woodville, much to Brian and Roxanne’s delight.

Oldest daughter Marit is now an attorney heading the governmental affairs department of KBR in Houston; she and husband Hank have one son Henry. Marit’s political background provided invaluable counsel for the campaign.

Oldest son Leif, a graduate of the Naval Academy in Annapolis, fought brutal battles in Iraq and became a decorated Navy SEAL before leaving the military to start his own leadership company. Leif came in frequently from his home in New York to help on the campaign trail. He is married to Fox News anchor Jenna Lee, and they are expecting their first child in the fall.



Leif Babin, oldest son

Lucas traveled the world as a top model, had a Hollywood career of several movies including “School of Rock,” and starred in a TV show in Brazil. He recently graduated from the University of Houston Law School and lives in The Woodlands with his wife, Luciana, and their twin sons.

When the five Babin children were young, their parents bought them musical instruments instead of video games. Soon they were referred to as the von Babin Family Singers after the von Trapp family singers that escaped Nazi occupied Austria a generation earlier and made famous in “The Sound of Music” (1969) as they performed all over Tyler County at church and civic gatherings.

“I don’t know how good we were but we were free,” said Brian with a smile.

Three times Brian was designated a Super Dentist by Texas Monthly with a long resume including the past presidency of the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners.

Active in Woodville’s First Baptist, he enjoys being a deacon, singing in the choir and in The Generations men’s singing group. He was on the Woodville City Council, then Mayor, on the school board, in the Woodville Lions, Tyler County Chamber of Commerce, and Tyler County Heritage Society. Governor Bush appointed him to the Lower Neches Valley Authority that defended our water rights where he served for 15 years. Long interested in history and archeology, Babin also served on the Texas Historical Commission where he and his family participated in several archaeological digs at sites in Texas.

In 1989, they cleared land and built a home near Woodville. Their living room is part archeological museum, hunter’s trophy room, and laid back family retreat. A huge elk looks down from above the mantel over the stone fire place. Several deer, turkey, a pheasant, a bobcat, a crocodile skull, bear rug and many more look down from their posts all around. Large windows on three sides give ample views of the pasture with cows and horses and the dense forest beyond. The house is filled with many books, and some of Babin’s own original artwork hangs on the walls.

Yet, from January to May, the Babin’s living room did double duty as campaign headquarters. There was an organized tornado of campaign documents, strategy papers, boxes of flyers and stickers and letterhead on every surface, including the pool table. It was here that the Babins and staffers lived and strategized into the wee hours of the night after a hard day of traveling the nine county districts.

During our interview, two big Dobermans roused themselves from napping on the porch to greet grandkids arriving to visit BeePop and Grandy. Roxanne made lunch, lifted a grandchild, answered the phone, doing double duty herself as campaign manager as well as beating the trail in the opposite direction of Brian as an equal strategist and surrogate speaker in her own right, accomplished, articulate and passionate.

“Not long after meeting us, our campaign aide, Steve Janushkowsky, commented about how Brian and I made a good team,” said Roxanne. “I told him it was called marriage.”

When Janushkowsky applied for the job in early January, he asked, “What will be required of me?”

Roxanne popped, “Total, intense commitment!” No doubts here.

Along with their family, Janushkowsky proved to be an integral part of the campaign team that included Cody Jarrott as finance consultant, Taylor Cooper as scheduler and Emily Waldrep as aide and photographer.

Babin became involved politically in 1980, when he helped with the Reagan campaign. “I had served four years under Jimmy Carter. I knew America and the world needed a stronger

leader. Yet, I was told, ‘If I was smart, I would not get involved with a Republican, because it might hurt my business.’ Zero Republicans had ever been elected in Tyler County.” But his country took precedent over his business. Babin became Reagan’s county chairman and then his regional chairman. “I got Mike Reagan, Ronald Reagan’s son, to come to Tyler County,” said Brian. “We filled up the ballroom at the Woodville Inn with hundreds of conservative Tyler County Democrats. Ronald Reagan carried Tyler County by a landslide.”

That was the real beginning of the Republican Party in Tyler County.

“If it ever hurt my business,” Brian said, “I never knew it.”

When Congressman Steve Stockman removed his name in the last hour in December 2013, triggering a statute allowing for a filing extension, numerous friends and supporters called urging Brian to run because none of the other candidates were from East Texas. As usual, Brian and Roxanne talked and prayed.

Babin said, “Without her 100% support, I’d never do it.” In the middle of the night, they knew. “It was like the good Lord was just opening door after door,” he said. “It has always been our deeply held belief that small towns are the true heart of America, communities like ours here in East Texas are full of good, decent, hard-working God-fearing people. That influence is fading fast in Washington. We just could not sit by and let it happen. We saw it as a duty more than anything.”

As grandchildren scampered about, and plans for the day unfolded, there was a hint of rain in the air. The busy campaign tension had subsided, and the Babins were looking ahead.

“I am proud to be from Tyler County,” said Babin. “I understand that the challenges in Washington are only part of the job of a Congressman. I will never forget where I come from and that I work for the people back home. This campaign is not about Brian Babin. This is about us and the kind of country we want for our children and grandchildren.”



Brian and Roxanne posing with several of their children and grandchildren