After leaving the bench and she took the position of Chief Deputy for Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli.

She is currently a law professor at Regent University School of Law where she has been a member of the Board of Visitors since 2003. Her ethics are impeccable, sources say.

She is recognized by her colleagues as a prominent, brilliant, distinguished jurist. She is a graduate of the Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William and Mary.

West has also served as a district court judge; VA Secretary of Public Safety under Gov. George Allen; Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice; Norfolk Deputy Commonwealth’s Atty; Virginia Beach Assistant Commonwealth’s Atty.; Assistant Beach City Atty.; and clerked for U.S. Judge Sam Coleman III on the Circuit Court of Appeals in Bristol, VA.

After his last election Sessoms had a positive approval rating of 92%, but recent polling has dropped that to 50%. He has always been an establishment-owned politician, whereas West’s support is from a ground swell of the public support.

Sessoms was an officer in Wachovia Bank prior to 2011 when he was forced out because the bank adopted a new ethics policy whereby he couldn’t maintain his position with the bank and be involved in city politics. He subsequently joined Towne Bank, which had no ethics policy, as CEO of the bank’s Financial Services Group where he became a political darling mixing political power with his and his bank's political interests.

An investigation by reporter John Holland of the Virginian-Pilot revealed Sessoms voted dozens of times directly benefiting developers who’d borrowed at least $140 MILLION from his bank.

The ‘powers that be’ at the Pilot shut Holland’s work down and did not allow further investigation or stories.
One of Sessoms’ best friends is Willcox & Savage lawyer Billy Harrison who is a close friend with Rusty Fridell, former Willcox & Savage lawyer, who is now the Pilot’s corporate lawyer.

The Virginia Beach city attorney had originally given Sessoms a clean bill of legal to mix bank business with council votes ruling that his activity was not in conflict of interest, but a special prosecutor disagreed and filed 5 conflict of interest charges against Sessoms.

At trial, 4 of the charges were dropped in a plea agreement, and Sessoms agreed to conviction on an Alford plea to one count - - giving him a misdemeanor conviction on conflict of interest. Making him is a convicted criminal.

Sessoms actions have prompted many questions. In September 2012, he failed to get a circuit court judge to aid and abet him in ‘hiding’ or sealing all records in a lawsuit against a former customer of his Towne Bank, but by that time Virginia News Source had already obtained and published several of the documents. (Click here for the full convoluted story see:

Sessoms has operated as though he is above the law with a council cadre that votes anyway he wants them to, regardless of their public responsibilities.

Sessoms has been noted for raising large amounts of campaign funds to promote other council candidates who’d be his loyal minions and support his agenda. Some succeeded, some failed, but all were questionable as to whether they would represent the people or Sessoms and his special interest business friends.

In fact there is speculation that some of the campaign funding activity may be under investigation by the FBI over money laundering. Again not denied by the feds.

Before the conflict of interest criminal conviction there was widespread ‘establishment’ support among his ‘society friends' to return Sessoms to office again this year.
Now sources inside the Sessoms’s camp say the mayor is worried, but doesn’t believe West will challenge him.

West has statewide political and financial support for what promises to be a very expensive campaign unless Sessoms drops out of the race.

It’s a question of whether his ego will out rank his better judgement and reality of almost certain defeat if West jumps in the race.