

David Baria celebrates victory after grueling campaign season

I am happy to be a resident of one of the best communities in the entire world,” a jubilant David Baria said last night at his victory party at Bay St. Louis’ 100 Men Hall after his successful bid to succeed long-time state legislator J.P. Compretta as the representative for Mississippi House District 122.

Baria, a Democrat, defeated Republican challenger Dorothy Wilcox in Hancock County’s general election last night, winning 3,010-2,126 with all but 103 provisional ballots outstanding.

It was a hard-fought race that had become the talk of the town in recent weeks after a series of negative campaign mailers paid for by Advance MS PAC and “Friends of Dorothy Wilcox” attacked Baria both personally and professionally in his role as state District 46 senator.

“I think my victory sends a clear message,” Baria said. “It says two things: Number one, you can leave this dirty campaigning back where it came from because it doesn’t work in Hancock County; and next, it says the people of Hancock County vote for the most qualified person, no matter their political affiliation. “That makes me very proud, both as a resident of this county, and as an American, frankly. It restores my faith.”

Baria, still boyish at 48, has been an attorney for the past 21 years. He became Mississippi District 46 senator in 2007 after winning a contentious race against then-incumbent Sen. Scottie Cuevas.

Baria raised eyebrows earlier this year when he announced he would be leaving his state senate seat – for which he had already qualified to seek re-election – to throw his hat into the ring for Compretta’s vacated position.

Compretta, 66, announced this past May that he would not seek re-election, citing his desire to spend more time with his family. Compretta, a Democrat, served as the District 122 representative from 1976-1984, and again from 1988 to the present.

“I’m ready to go to work right away,” he said. “I’ve already been in contact with all the candidates for speaker of the house. I feel I can be a better representative for the people of Hancock County in the House of Representatives. I’m ready to go.”