

# TARY

## BR man enjoying role as EPA aide

Louisiana and Baton Rouge now have a man at the top of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Brian McNabb, 26, was recently appointed to serve as the personal assistant to EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson.

McNabb is the former political director for the Republican Party of Louisiana. When asked to list his choices for which federal department he would like to work in, McNabb chose the EPA with hopes of helping his state, he said.

"I thought I'd be able to get in the mix of issues important to Louisiana, for example coastal erosion," McNabb said. "I know it's a cliché, but it really is an important issue."

McNabb and his sister were born in south Baton Rouge, off Jefferson Highway, to an accountant father and homemaking mom. He attended Christian Life Academy for 12 years before heading off to LSU, where he graduated with a degree in general studies.

Despite his youth, McNabb is a veteran of Louisiana politics. He got interested in politics after watching the 2000 presidential race, complete with its recount. McNabb



**GERARD SHIELDS**  
Washington Correspondent

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**PAUL SAWYER**, chief of staff for U.S. Rep. Richard Baker

dived into local politics in 2001 when he volunteered on the unsuccessful city council campaign of Malcolm Richard.

"I enjoyed the local campaign, the face-to-face, hands-on, door-to-door people interaction," McNabb said. "That got me hooked."

McNabb then served an internship in 2002 in the office of U.S. Rep. Richard Baker, R-Baton Rouge. McNabb answered the phone, responded to constituent letters and conducted Capitol tours. It was where he fell in love with Washington, which fueled his hope of returning someday, he said.

"That was kind of when I got the bug to get back up here," McNabb said.

Of the dozens of interns who have worked in the office, McNabb was a standout, said Paul Sawyer, Baker's chief of staff.

"He has a natural curiosity about everything and is the kind of guy who's never met a stranger," Sawyer said. "All of our interns are memorable, but Brian is among the most because he constantly stayed in touch with our office over the years and maintained relationships with our staff."

Back at LSU, McNabb had his own weekly column in The Daily Reveille. In it, he projected his pro-GOP, conservative views. McNabb was attracted to the Republican party because of its positions such as smaller government and lower taxes, he said.

In 2002, McNabb volunteered for the Senate campaign of Republican Suzanne Terrell, who lost a close runoff race to U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La. McNabb handled activities on the LSU campus.

A year later in 2003, he joined Terrell in her bid for state attorney general, which she again lost in a close race. McNabb had served as her personal assistant throughout the campaign. Terrell remembers McNabb as personable.

"He'll do well in a position where he has to

interface with a lot of people and a lot of different kinds of people," she said.

After the campaign, McNabb became political director for the state party in 2004, which he said was very gratifying. After years of races with close losses for Republicans, President Bush won Louisiana with 58 percent of the vote, the state elected the first Republican senator in over a century in U.S. Sen. David Vitter, R-La., the federal congressional delegation grew to six Republicans, and a Republican was elected to the state Supreme Court.

"It was a dream year," McNabb said. Jon Bargas, former state party executive director, credited McNabb with performing well under pressure.

"He was there when I got there in the morning and there when I left," Bargas said.

Now McNabb is putting in 12-hour days at the EPA that typically begin at 6 a.m. He wouldn't have it any other way, he said. "He's keeping me busy," said Johnson, the first EPA administrator to rise through department ranks.

One of McNabb's proudest accomplishments is that he has introduced Community Coffee into the office. He brought a suitcase full of the java back from a recent trip home.

"I've got the administrator drinking Community Coffee," McNabb said. "What better way to get the morning started."



McNabb