

GUEST COLUMN to the MONROE DISPATCH

For the Thursday, July 28, 2016 Edition

From: Mayor James E. "Jamie" Mayo

## **We have a Shared Responsibility to Face the Ugly Elephants in the Room Part 1**

For the past several weeks it has felt like we were watching a very bad movie. Almost every day we pick up our phone, watch or read the news and learn about another senseless killing. We no longer live in a time where we can simply shake our head in disgust of the violence seen in the Middle East, Europe or a third world country. That bad movie or reality series we have been watching is taking place in our very own back yard. In addition to deadly acts of violence seen here in Monroe, West Monroe and other parts of northeast Louisiana, it includes mass shootings (Orlando, San Bernardino, etc.), police shooting civilians (Baton Rouge, Minnesota, etc.), mothers killing their own children (Houston and Memphis), and deadly attacks on law enforcement (Dallas, Baton Rouge, etc.).

If we are going to collectively slow down and stop this violent trend, we must face reality and address some big ugly elephants in the room. America has some problems that we must admit to and address. This country has a problem with racism, mental health awareness, respect for law enforcement, and overall community involvement. We will always have issues as a city, parish, state and country if we continue to ignore these issues. I don't know it all and I don't have all of the answers. But, I know there are several things we need to do as government leaders, law enforcement, faith-based leaders, educators, mental health facilitators and citizens. Please read this column next week as I share just share 10 thoughts about things we can do to help make things better.

By working together, we can make a difference. Monroe is one city, with one future!