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THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

STATE OF TEXAS

1983-1985

FINAL REPORT

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TEXAS GOVERNORS
COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
FINAL REPORT OF THE
GOVERNORS COMMISSION

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FINAL REPORT
of
THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
STATE OF TEXAS
1983 - 1985

PREPARED BY:

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May 20, 1985

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INTRODUCTION

This report covers the two-year period of June 1983 through May 1985, and provides a brief overview of the activities and accomplishments of the Governor's Commission for Women, the fourth commission in Texas' history. Governor Mark White established the Commission by issuing Executive Order MW-4 on April 13, 1983. Twenty-nine members were appointed and a set of objectives were provided in the Executive Order. The Commission met for the first time in June 1983 and met quarterly for the next two years. The last meeting of this commission was in May 1985. The report includes a brief history of commissions for women, the organizational structure of Texas' fourth commission, a listing of the key accomplishments of the Commission and recommendations. More detailed materials covering all of the aspects of the activities of the Commission are available in the Commission office.

BRIEF HISTORY*

On April 13, 1983, Governor Mark White issued the Executive Order (MW-4) creating and establishing the fourth Governor's Commission for Women in Texas' history. Emphasizing that the goals of equal legal, social, political, economic, and educational opportunity and advancement of all women and men is critical to the future of Texas, the order stated the purpose to be the promotion of state policies which would provide equal opportunities for and aid in the advancement of women. Governor White called on the Commission to "help him open the doors of opportunity even wider for women in Texas." The philosophy of the fourth commission was to set a course for success not only for itself but also for those commissions to follow.

COMMISSIONS ON WOMEN; THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Influenced by the civil rights and women's movements in the 60's, the United Nations Committee on the Status of Women began an international effort to promote commissions at the national level in many countries.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy created the first U.S. National Commission on the Status of Women, marking "the beginning of government recognition that women's status was a legitimate matter for policy consideration." The Kennedy Commission noted the disadvantaged conditions of women but there was, at that time, little translation of this into federal programs or regulations. The National Commission did fuel the establishment of women's commissions in the various states.

By 1967 there was a commission in some form in every state. During the LBJ years that followed, a series of legislative successes - Title VII, Title IX, State ERA's - were accomplished.

A National Association of Commissions was also formed which is still active today. For the first time the changing roles and needs of women in society were viewed as important enough to warrant politically appointed commissions to advise governors, mayors and legislators.

* This section is adapted from Wean, Deborah Ann, "A History of Women's Commissions: Strategies for Change and Survival." Masters Thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, May 1984.

Despite the proliferation of commissions, they found it difficult to accomplish their tasks:

Asked for advice, their advice was often ignored or actively resisted.

Mandated to research and assess the status of women, they were provided no money to carry out the necessary research.

Since most were established by the executive order of a governor, the next governor dissolved them and started with new members. The former members seldom advised the next group or left a record; thus there was no continuity in philosophy, programs, or staff from commission to commission.

In addition, women's groups of all political persuasions arose in the 70's representing the total spectrum of life styles, political philosophies and problems. As women became more active, their diversity pressed upon the politicians who immediately perceived the difficulty of pleasing all. So the politicians either tried to ignore the "women's thing" altogether or tried to form commissions with members representing the diversity. Diverse membership caused conflicts on the commissions which led to stalemates, infighting and a disintegration of the commissions. Some were abolished, some allowed to wither and die, some floundered along.

In Texas, the history of the prior commissions reflects the particular times and the ambivalence of our society regarding women and their roles.

THE CONNALLY COMMISSION

On January 13, 1967 Governor John Connally created the first Commission. He asked his Commission to make "recommendations for overcoming any unequal policies and practices in employment, political or civil rights." In February 1968 the Commission presented the Governor with a 67-page report. Included were recommendations regarding:

daycare facilities,
improved counseling for women, and
liberalized abortion laws and family planning.

The Commission was disbanded when Connally left office in 1969.

THE SMITH COMMISSION

In 1970, Governor Preston Smith appointed his Commission. Smith defined their role as "advisor and messenger between female citizens and their government." They were to serve in an advisory capacity to the Governor and the Legislature and to assess, counsel, advise, and provide ideas.

Smith also charged the Commission to advocate for the needs and rights of women and to take up society's problems.

This Commission agreed to request that the legislature establish a permanent agency and allocate money to it. At some point the Commission disbanded. Yet Smith did request a permanent commission. A bill proposing a permanent commission passed in the Senate but got bogged down in the State Affairs Committee and did not survive.

THE BRISCOE COMMISSION

Governor Dolph Briscoe was elected in 1972 and in 1975 he supported a legislative bill to establish a Commission on the Status of Women in the Texas House. A similar bill went to the Senate and passed. This bill then was substituted for the House bill, but it made no headway. Hearings were held on the creation of a permanent commission (January 1976). Eighty-two (82) witnesses testified, with a two-to-one majority in favor of creating a permanent commission.

The Subcommittee voted 3-2 against the recommendations "because - a centralized commission at the State Capitol would be too remote and thus unresponsive." Also the subcommittee opposed the creation of another bureaucracy. Again in 1977 Briscoe recommended a legislative commission, but this recommendation also floundered and died. Then, Briscoe issued an Executive Order (August 17, 1977) to establish a commission, and a budget of \$50,000 was allocated. His commission was diverse geographically, culturally, and politically. The commission agreed to issue a report entitled "Family Violence: Child within the Cycle." They planned a statewide conference on family violence, but the conference did not materialize when Briscoe was not re-elected.

THE CLEMENTS PERIOD

Governor Bill Clements did not support a commission. He asked for the resignation of the paid executive director and secretary. While he never officially abolished it, he failed to appoint staff or provide funds. Instead he appointed the Governor's Task Force on Equal Opportunity for Women and Minorities in February of 1982. The Task Force was not provided ample funding, and a report was never presented during the Clements administration.

THE WHITE COMMISSION

Discussions regarding a new commission began during the 1982 election campaign. An ad hoc group representing women's organizations in Texas met with State Representative Mary Polk of El Paso to discuss a commission after the election. A proposal was pulled together by Mary Hardesty, special assistant to Governor Mark White, and this formed the basis of EO MW-4. The EO gave a clear mandate. The requested \$500,000 budget was reduced to \$150,000 by the Legislature for the biennium (as of 1980 only twelve state commissions had budgets of over \$150,000).

Governor White appointed 29 persons to his Commission. The remainder of this report describes the major accomplishments of this Commission for the period from June 1983 through May 1985.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Executive Order MW-4 provided the broad framework for Commission activities. Members of the Commission were appointed for two-year terms and a majority vote was the mandate for action. The positions of chair and vice-chair were gubernatorial appointments as was the staff position of executive director. Fifteen objectives were identified for Commission attention.

The Commission was provided a budget of \$150,000 for the biennium and Governor White appointed the executive director in April 1983. Subsequently the executive director hired an administrative assistant. Additional staff were added to manage a Crime Victim Assistance grant which was placed in the Commission in August of 1983.

The first meeting in June, 1983, was mainly an informational session designed to orient the membership and to provide the group with the opportunity to get to know one another and the staff of the Commission. The chair also appointed all members to committees for the purpose of accomplishing the objectives of the Commission, and a chair and vice-chair of each committee were appointed. An Executive Committee composed of the chair, vice-chair, committee chairs and executive director was also formed and this group met between Commission meetings to help plan the agendas of meetings and to provide some of the follow-up planning necessary to implement the decisions made at Commission meetings.

After the initial Commission meeting in June, a second meeting was set for October. This meeting was crucial in that key committee activities were selected at that meeting. The general format for meetings always included time for committees to meet and to report the results of their deliberations to the entire group. It also proved to be helpful that a set of *Guidelines* spelling out responsibilities and procedures was developed early on.

In addition to the Commission members and office staff, citizen volunteers and interns served as excellent resources for carrying out the activities of the Commission.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following sections summarize the major accomplishments of the 1983-1985 Commission.

TEXAS CRIME VICTIM CLEARINGHOUSE

The Governor's Commission for Women received a Criminal Justice grant which financed the new Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse served to identify and coordinate crime victim assistance programs, particularly for crimes against women.

The Clearinghouse published a directory of services, training manuals and materials, held regional workshops, maintained a toll-free telephone line for crime victims and service providers, and co-sponsored a number of conferences and events.

In summary, during the first grant year - the Clearinghouse

- held 16 regional workshops and a state forum for Victim Rights Week
- received approximately 1,265 requests and referrals
- had 589 in-depth victim assistance calls and contacts
- distributed 17,000 newsletters, 7,750 service brochures and 900 assistance manuals
- received a national program recognition nomination from the National Organization for Victim Assistance
- conducted 60 agency consultations and 78 evaluations

STATE-WIDE MAILING LIST

One of the first steps taken by the Commission was to begin the process for acquiring mailing lists. The Commission office eventually acquired a word-processor and developed a mailing list of approximately 7,000 persons. These listings were entered on data files. Most of the persons on the list were women who attended one or more activities sponsored by the Commission or were members of Texas women's organizations (state or local branches).

NEWSLETTERS

During the two-year period five newsletters were issued to all persons on the mailing list. The newsletters generally contained information on all of the activities of the Commission, activities sponsored by other women's groups in Texas or by state government, statistical or other information on women in Texas, and other items of interest. The dates of release of the five newsletters were: September, 1983; January, 1984; May, 1984; December, 1984; and April, 1985.

MEDIA RELEASES, NEWS STORIES AND PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

The executive director, along with the Public Relations Committee, released a number of stories on the Commission during the two-year period.

STATE AGENCY LIAISONS

The Commission requested that the Governor invite the commissioners or directors of all state agencies to name liaisons to the Women's Commission. In all, 39 state agency liaisons were named by the summer of 1983. By May of 1985 there were 68 agency liaisons. The liaisons met monthly to receive reports on Commission activities, to hear reports from ad hoc study groups on current women's issues and to learn about the services and programs of two state agencies each month. Special emphasis was given in the reports to methods used by state agencies to prepare women for administrative and executive positions. The liaisons selected Carol Whitcraft as chair the first year and Fran Herrington as chair the second year. The liaisons actively supported all the work of the Commission and proved to be a very valuable resource.

STATE AGENCY QUESTIONNAIRE

In June 1984 Governor Mark White wrote letters to state agency heads asking them to identify policies or programs that their agencies used to advance women in the agencies. The letters were accompanied by questionnaires to be completed and returned to the Commission for evaluation. The questionnaire asked for identification of women at executive and management positions and their salary levels within the agency. It also asked for identification of methods that could be used to increase the number of women at executive and management levels. The results were subsequently used for program planning.

APPOINTMENTS

Governor Mark White directed the Commission to aid him in finding and recommending qualified women for appointive office. The Commission developed and distributed a resume form throughout the state in order to begin a Talent File Bank to be used as a resource for gubernatorial appointments. As of April 1985 Governor White had appointed 315 women to state boards and commissions.

CARAVANS

The Governor's Commission for Women utilized "caravans" to reach out to women across the state. Caravans were public meetings to acquaint communities with the purposes and activities of the Commission and to provide a forum for local women to share their concerns and needs with Commission members. Topics discussed included education, health, domestic violence, sexual assault and harrassment, legal rights, and child care, etc.

Commission members worked with local coordinators from the areas where the caravans were held to aid in the organization of the meetings. Approximately 30 communities in all regions of the state were sites of caravans with a total attendance of more than 2,200 people.

CONFERENCES

In 1984 and 1985, the Commission sponsored or co-sponsored nine regional and statewide conferences. Over 5,600 persons attended these events.

One conference, "A Celebration of Leadership: Women in the Public Sector" was held to honor state agencies with exemplary records in developing women in executive positions. During that conference, Governor White made special awards to the following agencies:

State Treasury
Industrial Accident Board
Commission on Alcoholism
Health Facilities Commission

SPEAKER'S BUREAU

A Speaker's Bureau was developed by the Commission to address issues of concern to women. The bureau was composed of Commission members who made speeches on topics such as the Texas constitutional amendment to allow involuntary assignment of income for child support payments, non-traditional career roles, violence against women and children, women and the law, the Texas ERA, etc.

The bureau also served to communicate information regarding the activities and objectives of the Commission and to encourage women to participate in government. Speeches were given in more than 50 communities in all areas of the state for a wide variety of groups and occasions. The total attendance at the speeches was estimated to be approximately 9,000.

WOMEN IN TEXAS TODAY WEEK

Throughout the week of September 9-15, 1984, the Governor's Commission for Women sponsored "Women in Texas Today Week." The purpose of the week was to increase public awareness of Texas women's achievements and to highlight positive female role models for young people in Texas.

WOMEN AROUND TEXAS LOCAL CELEBRATIONS

To kick off Women in Texas Today Week and highlight the talents and leadership of women across the state, local celebrations were held in 19 Texas communities. Members of local commissions, Governor's Commission members in each city, representatives from statewide women's groups participating in the State Women's Coalition, and other volunteers were among those coordinating area events.

Colorful posters designed for Women in Texas Today Week were available for promoting local celebrations.

Because of the efforts and talents of local celebration committees, over 5,200 persons across Texas were able to participate in the recognition of achievements of Texas women. Most celebrations honored those women nominated for the Texas Women's Hall of Fame from their area of the state, as well as outstanding women community leaders.

TEXAS WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

The induction of twelve women into the Hall of Fame highlighted the Women in Texas Today Week celebration at an awards ceremony in Austin at the LBJ Library on September 13, 1985:

ARTS AND HUMANITIES: Dr. Amy Freeman Lee, San Antonio, author and lecturer.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE: Oveta Culp Hobby, Houston, former Secretary of U.S. Department of Health and Welfare, and former publisher of the *Houston Post*.

CIVIC AND VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT: Christi Daniels Adair, Houston, former teacher and civil rights activist.

COMMUNICATIONS: Vivian L. Anderson Castleberry, Dallas, former Women's Editor of the *Dallas Times Herald*.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP: Lila Banks Cockrell, San Antonio, Former Mayor of San Antonio.

EDUCATION: Dr. Mary Evelyn B. Huey, Denton, higher education, President, Texas Women's University. Dr. Kate A. Bell, Houston, primary and secondary education, former teacher, principal, and school administrator.

HEALTH PROFESSIONS: Dr. Clotilde P. Garcia, Corpus Christi, physician and author.

LEGAL: Judge Sarah T. Hughes, Dallas, former federal and state district court judge.

PUBLIC SERVICE: Lady Bird Johnson, Austin, former First Lady of U.S. and presently head of the National Wildflower Institute. Barbara Jordan, Austin, former member of Congress and now professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, UT-Austin.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Dr. Jeanne Porter Hester, Houston, Internist and Associate Professor of Medicine, M.D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute.

THE TEXAS WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME PERMANENT EXHIBIT

Texas Woman's University in Denton has offered to permanently house the Hall of Fame exhibit. The exhibit was developed by the State Agency Liaison Group.

ESSAY CONTEST

In September at the Hall of Fame, Governor White recognized statewide essay winners of the contest, "A Living Texas Woman I Admire." The winners were honored by Governor White, and Chairman Joe Kelly Butler and the State Board of Education.

Winners

Lee Ann Loafman
12th Grade
Plainview High School
Plainview, TX

Madeleine Haddox
11th Grade
Burgess High School
El Paso, TX

Briar McNutt
10th Grade
Pecos High School
Pecos, TX

Michael Bragg
9th Grade
Smylie Wilson
Junior High School
Lubbock, TX

Subjects of Essays

Kathy Whitmire
Mayor, City of Houston

Rosa Guerrero
Former teacher El Paso,
TX, public schools.
Now operates dance
studio specializing in
cultural arts and
folklorico dance.

Betty Howell
Ft. Stockton, TX
Owner of catering
business, emergency
medical service
technician, teacher,
and community
volunteer.

Barbara K. Walker
Lubbock, TX
Author, educator, lec-
turer, curator of the
Archive of Turkish Oral
Narrative at Texas Tech
University.

Teachers

Ellen Sims

Elizabeth Lashus

Kathy Favor

Earlene Guess

SURVEYS

As a part of the Commission's effort to solicit input, individuals were asked to complete an 80-item issues questionnaire regarding how they perceived the relative severity of many social problems of special concern to women. This questionnaire, titled "Women's Issues," was circulated over the period of one year (1984).

"Most critical issues" were identified to be:

Pay Inequities for Work of Comparable Value (Worth)

Rape

Child Abuse and Neglect

Inadequate Income or Support

Adolescent Pregnancy

Non-Payment of Child Support

LOCAL WOMEN'S COMMISSIONS

As of the date of this report there were local women's commissions in Austin, San Antonio, Wichita Falls, Ft. Worth, San Angelo, San Marcos, Southeast Texas (Jefferson, Orange, and Hardin Counties), Corpus Christi, Longview and Lubbock. State Commission members worked with city and county officials to establish new local commissions during the 1983-1985 period. Governor White was active in support of the effort to establish more local commissions. He corresponded with the mayors and/or county judges urging them to create local commissions in Houston, Dallas, El Paso, Galveston, Brenham, San Marcos and Longview. In the planning stages are commissions in:

Amarillo
Brenham
Bryan-College Station
Temple
Tyler
El Paso

RESOLUTIONS ON CHILD SUPPORT AND TEXANS FOR CHILD SUPPORT

Proposition 6 on the 1983 ballot provided for the assignment of income for the enforcement of court-ordered child support. A Texans for Child Support Committee was formed. The honorary chair was Linda Gale White. Co-chairs were Senator Ray Farabee of Wichita Falls and Representative Rene Oliveira of Brownsville. Both Governor White and Mrs. White taped public service announcements encouraging the passage of this amendment. The Women's Commission unanimously passed a resolution in support of the amendment and made speeches on behalf of its support.

MONITORING COMMITTEE: JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT

Lt. Governor Bill Hobby named five appointments to the Joint Training Monitoring Committee. Aurora Sanchez, chair of the Commission's Program Development Committee, and Gay Erwin, executive director of the Women's Commission, were among those appointed.

The Program Development Committee also was active in monitoring the numbers of women appointed to local Private Industry Councils (PIC's). The Governor wrote letters to appropriate officials to encourage female appointments.

RESOLUTION ON AFDC PAYMENTS

Members voted to endorse the Texas Department of Human Resources (TDHR) initiative on AFDC which was approved by the TDHR Board and recommended to the Governor for inclusion in the special session of the Legislature. The recommendation was that AFDC payments be raised to \$60 per month and Medicaid coverage for certain groups be expanded.

RESOLUTION ON INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

The Commission also passed a resolution regarding University Interscholastic League (UIL) rules. The Legislative Council of the UIL appointed a committee to study and hold public hearings on UIL gender-based rules. A Commission ad hoc committee, chaired by Hermine Tobolowsky, with Helen Farabee, Lorraine Bonner, Carol Nasworthy, and Martha Williams as members, monitored actions affecting this subject.

VOTER REGISTRATION: TEXAS WOMEN FOR THE EIGHTIES

Texas Women for the 80's was a nonpartisan program to increase electoral participation among women in Texas. More than 800 women and men participated in this project throughout the state. Over the course of eight months, the project registered 28,000 women and approximately 14,000 men. The Commission was generally supportive of this independent effort. Several members of the Commission were involved as individuals and the Commission also urged the Secretary of State's Office to collect statistics on the voter registration pattern according to sex of voter which had not been done before.

MONITORING THE TEXAS ERA

Hermine Tobolowsky, a member of the Commission, was involved in establishing Texas' ERA. As a member of the fourth commission, she took major responsibility for monitoring present Texas laws for compliance with the ERA. She made several presentations on this subject at various conferences and in speeches around the state. She also drafted legislation for the 1985 Texas Legislative session that would bring remaining statutes into compliance with the Texas ERA.

FORMATION OF THE TEXAS WOMEN'S COMMISSION FOUNDATION

The Commission members, as individuals, requested that by-laws be drawn up to establish the Texas Women's Commission Foundation. The Foundation is a non-profit organization which will assist the Commission by raising funds for research and educational programs. The Foundation was incorporated on April 16, 1985.

PUBLICATIONS*

Publications of the Commission are listed as follows:

- Governor's Commission for Women 1983-1985: Membership Profiles
- Women in Texas Week Posters
- Hot Line Card
- How the Legislature Works - A Legislative Handbook
- Texas Women in the Skilled Trades
- Women and JTPA in Texas
- Conference Proceedings: Women in the Public Sector
- Living Texas Woman I Most Admire: Winning Essays
- Informational Packet: Forming a Local Commission
- Non-Traditional Careers in the Skilled Trades
- Commission Newsletters (Quarterly)
- Crime Victim Clearinghouse Newsletters
- Crime Victim's Resource Manual for Prosecutors including Family Violence Section
- Crime Victim Clearinghouse Brochure
- Anti-Victimization Handbook for School Children
- Resource Dictionary for Crime Survivors Resources in Texas
- Report to 69th Legislature on Family Violence in Texas
- Final Report of the Fourth Commission for Women, 1983-1985

***FOR COPIES PLEASE WRITE:**

The Governor's Commission for Women
Publications Division
P.O. Box 12428
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RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NEXT COMMISSION

The 1983-1985 Commission is now history. We believe that the next commission can build on our efforts. The following recommendations are based on our experiences during the two years we were privileged to serve our state. The following are some of our suggestions. We wish you well and we are confident that you will find your tenure on the Commission as rewarding as we did.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A high priority should be placed on developing local commissions in Texas.
2. A high priority should be placed on actions to alleviate the most critical problems identified in the Issues Survey.
3. Publications of the Commission should be widely disseminated. Additional publications should be developed.
4. The mailing list should be updated and expanded.
5. The Newsletter should be continued and published at least quarterly.
6. The Women in Texas Week and Hall of Fame events should be continued and highlighted in the media.
7. Conferences and caravans should be continued.
8. The Speaker's Bureau should be better organized and should be expanded.
9. Statistics on Texas women should be continually collected and disseminated.
10. Student interns and volunteers can greatly extend the work of the Commission. A coordinator should be utilized to coordinate intern and volunteer activities.
11. The State Agency Liaison Group is a most important arm of the Commission. The activities of this group should be wholeheartedly supported.
12. The fifth and subsequent commissions should carefully document their efforts.

**VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENT INTERNS WHO SUPPORTED THE WORK
OF THE COMMISSION**

VOLUNTEERS

Kathy Ayala
Sunne Barker
Kay Berry
Lael Byers
Laura Copeland
Julie Cunniff
Dana Darnell
Alice Davies
Mollie Doyal
Kathleen Gray
Jan Green
Martha Harris
Aggie Kranz
Dimetry Loren
Kay Magee
Billie Roberts
Jackie Seiders
Debbie Silagi
Susan Trammell

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Anna Carroll
Michele Chandler
Carol Fant
Ginny Findeisen
Miriam Freeman
Jackie Geir
Catherine Hawkins
Amy Kaplan
Rebecca Redwood
Susan Sieuk
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