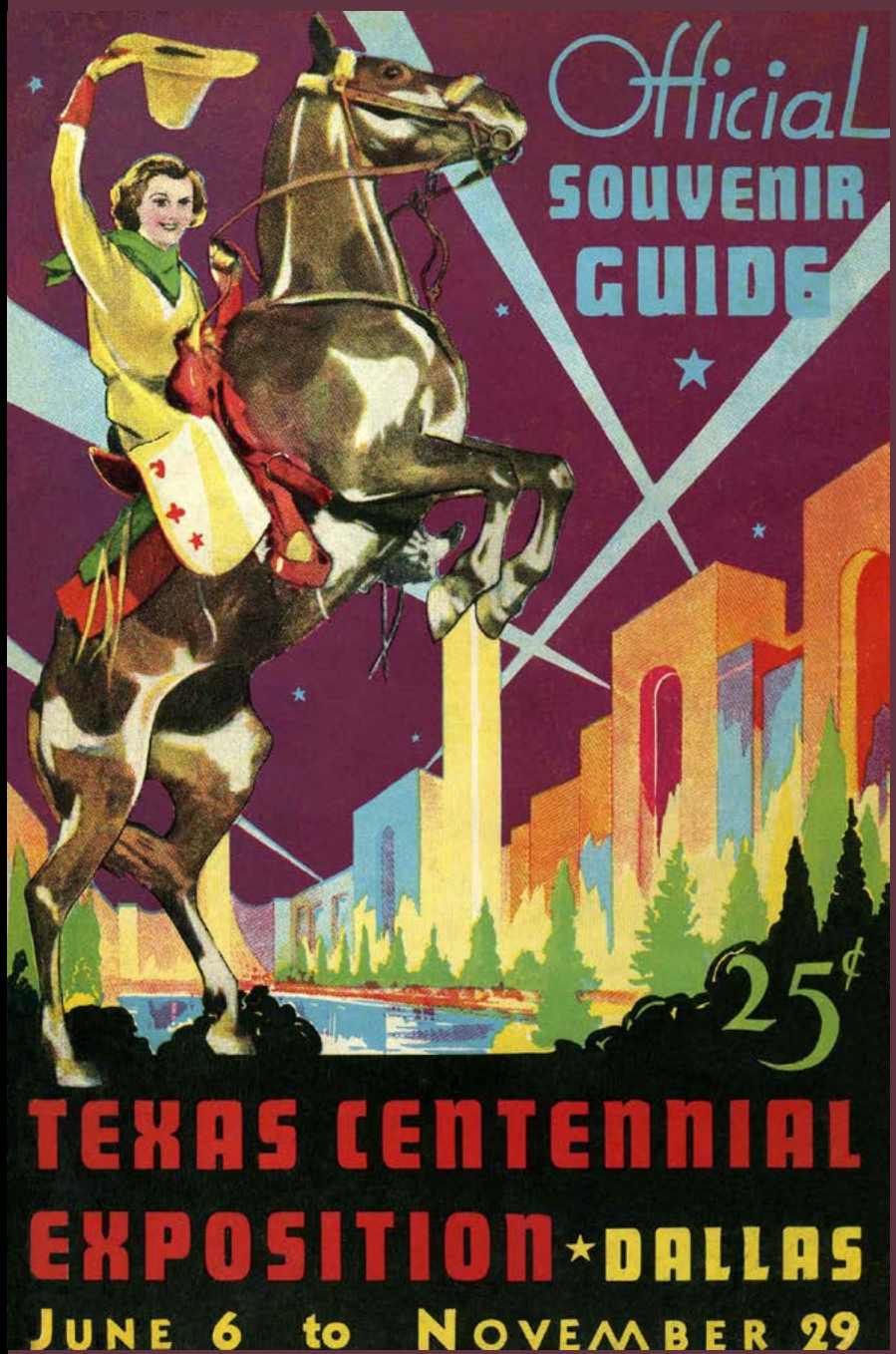
Spring
2023

LEGACIES

A History Journal for Dallas & North Central Texas

Dallas Legends

A Lady of All Trades: Hazel Mae "Bobby" Peck McGough
Tex Avery: Cartoonist, Animator, Director
The Lakewood Rats: Deconstructing the Myth
Legendary Lady of the Law: Louise Ballerstedt Raggio



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Front and back covers: Because of the Texas Centennial celebration, 1936 has been called "the year that America discovered Texas." It was also the year that Dallas, which hosted the Central Exposition at Fair Park, achieved a reputation as a center for culture, entertainment, and sophisticated businesses like Neiman-Marcus. The legend of Dallas as "Big D" was born.

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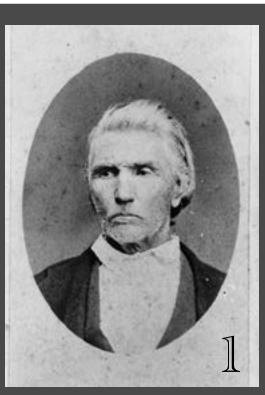
Dallas Legends

DEPARTMENTS

All previous issues of *Legacies* from 1989 through 2022 are online at the University of North Texas Portal to Texas History. The address is: http://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/collections/LHJNT.

DALLAS LEGENDS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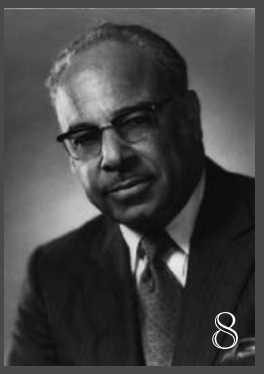
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All the individuals pictured above qualify as Dallas legends. How many do you recognize? (Answers are on page 17.)

The word "legend" has various meanings. It can describe a story coming down from the past, especially one popularly regarded as historical but maybe not verifiable. We also refer to some outstanding individuals as legends, persons whose achievements in a certain field inspire others. The term "urban legend" has come into use in the more recent past, describing an event that may not have actually occurred but accounts of which continue to flourish, becoming embellished over time.

This issue of *Legacies* deals with legends—in this case individuals or a group of people—associated with Dallas. Brandon Murray opens the issue with the story of Hazel Mae "Bobby" Peck. She is largely forgotten today, but in the late 1920s and '30s, she gained publicity in a surprising variety of fields—beauty queen, circus performer, nightclub performer and manager—only to end up running the Dallas Symphony Orchestra box office and then offering a temporary home to circus animals on her farm outside Dallas. Bobby Peck seems to have enjoyed posing for the camera and talking to the press. But, sadly, whatever legendary status she may have enjoyed is now largely confined to old photos and faded newspaper clippings.

Fred "Tex" Avery was a classmate of Bobby Peck's at North Dallas High School. But as Frank Jackson recounts, he had to leave Dallas for Hollywood to find success. He became a legend in the field of animation by creating (or at least refining) cartoon characters such as Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, and Screwy Squirrel. And late in his career, he created memorable ads for companies such as Frito-Lay, Raid, and Kool-Aid. His legendary status is indicated by a historical marker in Taylor, Texas, where he was born; a mural at North Dallas High School; and membership in the Animation Hall of Fame. And whenever someone says, "What's up, doc?" or "That's all, folks," the credit should go to Tex Avery, who heard at least the first of those lines in the halls of North Dallas High School and gave them to Bugs Bunny.

The Lakewood Rats are one of Dallas's most popular urban legends. In the last 75 years, stories have circulated about their identities and exploits. Some have even questioned whether or not they really existed. With meticulous research, Teresa Musgrove Judd has identified the seven original Lakewood Rats and traced their subsequent lives. She also explains the persistence of the nickname through later copycats, who ventured beyond the playful pranks of the original Rats to more serious crimes, including vandalism and street fighting.

Louise Ballerstedt Raggio is a legend in the field of law. As Samantha Dodd explains, as one of the first women attorneys in Texas, she encountered not only prejudice but also the challenges of forty-four laws that discriminated against married women. Through careful planning and negotiations, she shepherded the Marital Property Act into law in 1967, finally enabling women to control their personal earnings, sign contracts, and much more. After another ten years of work, she saw passage of a revised Texas Family Code in 1979, earning her the title "mother of family law" in Texas. Mrs. Raggio is a legend whose work has affected every Texan for more than forty years, and whose example has influenced legislation in other states.

Whether or not the words "legends" and "legacies" share a common root, it's appropriate that we examine and even salute a few legends that originated in Dallas. Legends help define a community's unique identity, allowing its residents to share stories that make for a more richly textured past.

—*Michael V. Hazel*

A Lady of All Trades: The High-Flying Life of Hazel Mae "Bobby" Peck McGough

By Brandon Murray, MLS, CA

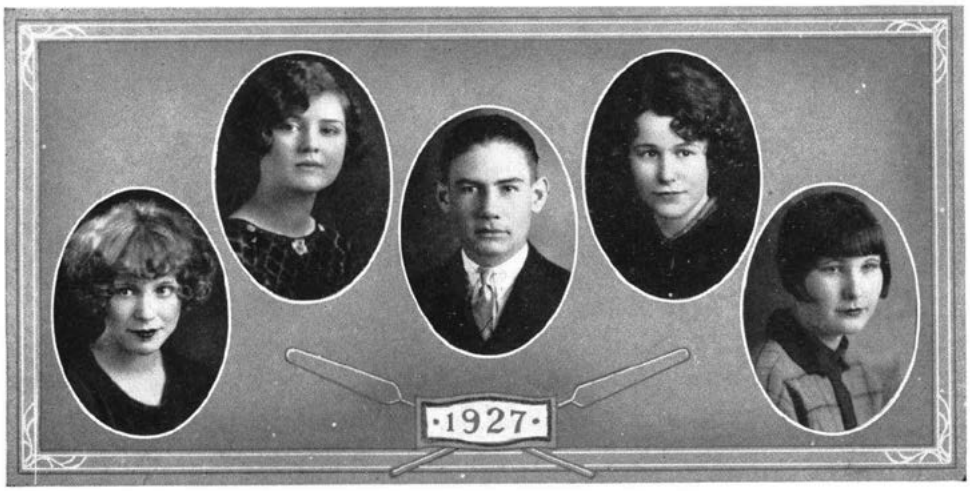
What makes someone a legend in Dallas history? Is it being crowned Miss Dallas and then working in the circus? Perhaps being a woman in 1930s Dallas who runs night clubs is unusual enough to be considered legendary. Hazel Mae "Bobby" Peck McGough fits the bill. Bobby Peck was a beauty queen, trapeze artist, Dallas night club owner, wife, mother, and later a pillar of the community in the Dallas-Fort Worth town of Sachse, Texas. She led a singular life, one that made its mark on the places and people with whom she came into contact.

Queen of Beauty

Bobby Peck was born on December 18, 1908, in Galveston, Texas.[1] According to the 1910 United States Census, one-year-old Bobby (listed as "Hazel M.") was the first-born daughter of Ernest and Lillian Peck. The couple were both 29 years old and had been married for two years. The family lived in Galveston, Texas' Ward 9.[2] Her parents were originally from Michigan.[3]

By 1920, the Peck family was living on Maple Avenue in Dallas, and Bobby had younger brothers George, age 4, and one-year-old Frank.[4] The 1926 North Dallas High School yearbook lists "Hazel Peck" of the 1927 graduating class as having "Entered from Houston School. Girl Scouts '24, '25; Radio Club '26. Peppy, clever, and good looking."[5] In the summers when she was off from school, Peck would go north to a small town in New Jersey that employed her as a vaudeville dancer.[6] Bobby officially graduated from North Dallas High School on January 28, 1927.[7]

In May 1928, Bobby Peck, "a bobbed-haired blonde," was chosen by the judges presiding at a bathing beauty contest in the Majestic Theater to receive the title, "Miss Dallas of 1928." She



Hazel ("Bobby") Peck, far left, graduated from North Dallas High School in January 1927.

was first selected by the audience as one of five contestants to compete out of eleven elimination winners. Miss Dallas of 1928 was then expected to compete in the International Pageant of Pulchritude at Galveston in June 1928 for the title of "Miss United States."[8]

According to the 1930 U. S. Census, Bobby Peck (still listed as "Hazel") is recorded as twenty-one years old, working at a "cashier" in a "railroad office," and she was living at her parents' home at 4321 Hartford Street. Her father, Ernest, is listed as the head of household. Also living there were her mother Lillian and three younger brothers, George, Frank, and Fred, ages 14, 11, and 8 respectively.[9]

Queen of the Air

In 1933, Peck "used her skills as an acrobat and a dancer" to get a job performing for Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus. Bobby Peck would spend over twenty-seven years of her life as a circus performer, having "trooped as a trapeze artist, performed aerobatics from a single rope."[10] Leaving, then returning to the industry and joining many different circuses over that nearly 30-year span, Peck joined the Hagenbeck-Wallace Show in 1934-35 and 1937-38, which shuttered for good in 1938.[11]

Peck was dubbed "The Daring Young Lady on The Flying Trapeze."[12] Testifying in court in 1936, Peck said that her time in the circus was as "an aerialist . . . and left it after she had fallen from a trapeze twice and was injured both times."[13] Peck also "worked with animal acts and did tricks atop elephants."[14] A "Bobby Peck" was touring Texas with Hamiter Bros. Circus by August 1935, in an equestrian act that was expected to "thrill all spectators" in Shiner, Texas, on Saturday August 35, which appears to be the same person as the aerialist.[15]

Promotions for the Labor Day 1935 performance of the Hamiter Bros. Circus in La Grange, Texas, highlighted Bobby Peck's equestrian feats. "Some of the features that will be shown at this circus . . . are Miss Bobby Peck and her educated horse, Major; young James Hamiter with his dogs, ponies and monkeys, and Herberta Beeson, marvel of the air."[16] Bobby Peck, who "disdained the use of a net," was performing circa November

Bobby Peck enjoyed swimming and sunbathing at Kidd Springs Park. This photo was taken July 10, 1927.

1935 at Madison Square Garden in New York, presumably for Ringling Brothers, when she was overcome by heat, falling 37 feet and breaking both ankles. As a result of those injuries, she left the circus to return to Dallas and pursue a career on the ground.[17]

Bobby Peck, third from left, posed with lifeguards at Kidd Springs Park on July 10, 1927.

Queen of the Nightlife

In December 1935, Bobby Peck began a new career as nightclub hostess at a new Dallas nightclub called Club Midnight, and within "less than a week that it has been open, [it has] become the rendezvous for show people and ex-show people." This included set designer Harry Little, vaudeville dancer Chuck Wingo, acrobat Jack McCoy, and singers Val Davis and Alta Piedmont.[18]

Club Midnight, located at 3513 Oak Lawn, threw a big grand opening celebration on New Year's Eve 1935 featuring Bobby Peck's "Bad Girl," "The Gloom Chaser" Val Davis, "Kate Smith of the East" Alta Piedmont, as well as "The Fast Stepper" Jack & Jill.[19] Alta Piedmont sang in clubs and on stage in Chicago and the Midwest before coming to Dallas and signing with Bobby Peck as her manager.[20]

The *Dallas Dispatch* newspaper made the observation, ". . . who wouldn't want to be met at the door by the charming Bobby Peck?"[21] In mid-January 1936, Harry Sandman, the financial backer and owner of Club Midnight, at which Bobby Peck was hostess, was interviewed about the new club and its hostess. Sandman observed that, "he has no plans for Bobby to do shawl dance act in Dallas but that if we will guarantee the proper box-office he has a swell Lady Godiva act in mind if he could only find a horse."[22] A "Phil" Sandman worked as a Club Midnight bartender, a possible relative of owner Harry Sandman; a possibility bolstered by the fact that Phil was known to periodically quit his job and frequent other clubs as a customer.[23]

On Saturday night January 25, 1936, liquor board inspector S. F. Phelps visited Club Midnight

Hazel Mae "Bobby" Peck was crowned Miss Dallas, 1928, during a contest at the Majestic Theater.

Representing Dallas, Bobby Peck competed in the International Pageant of Pulchritude at Galveston in June 1928. Here she poses on the beach with an unidentified man, possibly a judge.

and cited Bobby Peck, who was charged in Judge Henry King's County Criminal Court with "operating an open saloon" along with bartender Phil Sanderson and waiter Billy Cox. Peck was also charged with "possession of liquor." [24] She was ultimately not prosecuted.[25] The crux of the violation, according to the liquor board, was establishments that had a permit to sell beer and wine but were in possession of "distilled spirits" to sell to customers.[26] Even when her liquor

Bobby Peck took this photo of a lion taming act when the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus performed at the State Fair of Texas in October 1929. She herself performed with the Circus in 1934-35 and again in 1937-38.

violation case was set in early February, prosecutors expressed doubt at being able to successfully prosecute a woman for such a violation.[27] Advertising for Club Midnight maintained a position of legal compliance with the liquor law by including wording such as, "'taint legal—but we are: legal cocktails served day and night."[28]

Peck's status as a local celebrity was on the rise at the time, as evident by a mention in *The Dallas Morning News* when she attended a local wrestling match: "Others alongside the ring were Ben Rosenthal, Bob Thornton, Ben Critz, Bill Parker, Jimmy Lovell, Fern Green, Bobby Peck and Doc Rubenstein."[29]

A February 1936 sports column by Bill Singleton in the *The Dallas Morning News* mentioned Peck's club in a somewhat cryptic manner, simply interjecting, "Speaking of white hopes, at least one pops up every night at Bobby Peck's Place; so far none have shown a real knockout punch."[30] This may perhaps indicate that Club Midnight developed a reputation for rowdiness, as the statement seems to be a reference to pugilistic behavior. It's also possible the statement may be connected to a mention a few weeks earlier by Singleton, "While he is waiting for his reinstatement in the A.A.U., Billy Cox, popular D.A.C. boxer, is working as a waiter at

Club Midnight." During that month, the *Dallas Times Herald* reported that Bobby Peck was negotiating for the closed Club Samovar.[32]

March 6, 1936, was a busy Friday in the nightlife of Dallas. Pianist and composer Seymour Simons began a performance engagement at the Baker Hotel, and Bobby Peck opened a second club called Midnight Frolics at 2007 Elm Street, the site of the former Club Samovar. Her opening night show included "Alta Piedmont, titanic singer of the Club Midnight, as featured vocalist along with Maxine Richards who does a bit of torching."[33]The master of ceremonies for the show was Jan Castle, with Daphne Campbell providing "a line of girls" according to *The Dallas Morning News*, which also speculated that while Lou Mack and his "swing" band would provide the night's "music for the entertainment and dancing," he was expected to be replaced by a "bigger name" the following week.[34]

Aside from anticipating the "many aching heads" from a night of drinking and revelry, "300-pound" Piedmont's opening performance was highlighted, as she was considered "at present Dallas' favorite individual personality."[35] Piedmont was described as a singer "who has a face like Helen Morgan and a chassis like Kate Smith." She was also called, "that happy-go-lucky ton and a half of melody and madness."[37]

The Dallas Morning News also described Peck's intended approach to contending with an additional club as follows: "With the opening of the Midnight Frolics, Hostess Peck will desert the Club Midnight, where she has been extending the welcome smile for the last month or so. Despite her desertion the club will continue to operate and a new hostess will be installed as soon as the field is cleared."[38]

The "bigger name" turned out to be Benny Meroff and his band along with vocalist Florence Gast, Meroff's wife, booked by Peck for a "one-night stand" at Midnight Frolics on Friday night March 13. The intention of the booking was to "determine just what direction the club will take in the future" in getting bigger acts.[39] Another big name that Peck booked for a week-long engagement in April 1936 was band leader Husk O'Hare.[40] O'Hare was once engaged to actress Jean Harlow.[41]

Bobby Peck was once again charged with possessing liquor, this time at the Midnight Frolics, based on a March 17 visit by liquor inspectors, who seized one bottle of whiskey.[42] Peck was released on a $500 bond to await trial.[43] The trial of "night club operator" Bobby Peck for "the illegal possession of liquor at the Midnight Frolics," was delayed until over the weekend from its original date until Monday April 6, due to a different liquor possession trial.[44] Peck's case was one of twelve liquor law violation cases at the time in Judge Henry King's County Criminal

Court.[45] Peck was quite upset at the delay, stating, "'I am getting sick and tired of coming down to court at 9 o'clock every morning,'" to which she added, "'One can't keep her youth and good physical condition that way.'"[46]

On the first day of her trial, Bobby Peck arrived in court "smartly-attired with her mother Miss Lillian Peck."[47] Peck was described by the *Dallas Dispatch* as being, "athletically inclined," and it was noted that "the inspectors seemed more incensed at Miss Peck's athletic prowess than her alleged sale of hard liquor at a beer tavern."[48] Peck was working in clubs in part to put two of her younger brothers through school, according to her lawyer Maury Hughes, who argued that the state had a grudge against Peck because Inspector Strong "lost a front tooth in a scuffle with Bobby."[49] One of the trial days saw a packed courtroom due to an "erroneous report that an aerial trapeze apparatus" had been assembled at court.[50]

During her trial, Peck was accused of pulling the leg of Inspector Roscoe Wylie, although Peck claimed that, in fact, she was kicked by Wylie. She was also accused of assaulting Inspector J. E. Young. Peck took the stand. She told the jury that she was 26 years old and unmarried, stating, "I'm an old maid."[51] Peck denied that she had intended to interfere with a liquor inspection and stated the bottle in question belonged to a customer. Peck testified, "'I never took a drink in my life, I don't smoke, and I don't know anything about whiskey or mixed drinks."

Peck had previously clarified her role in the altercation in a statement to the *Dallas Times Herald,* "I was sitting with a party of guests at a table on the dance floor. I saw that guy [Inspector Roscoe Wylie] crawling over the bar and thought he was trying to pick a fight with the bartender. So I tackled him."[52] On April 7, Peck was acquitted by the jury.[53]

By early May 1936, Peck's stint as a night club luminary was at an end. Harry Sandman, who was the financial backer of Club Midnight Club and Midnight Frolics, shuttered both clubs without explanation.[54] However, in December 1936, Phil Weinbeck, alias Phil Sandman, forged Peck's name on a $32 check and was in court for that offense.[55] Peck's response to the closing of her club hostess gigs was to return to the Hagenbeck-Wallace Show for what turned out to be its final circus season in 1937-38.[56] She kept in training even when she was working as hostess at Club Midnight. Peck had already rigged equipment in her backyard to practice the aerial stunts from her circus act.[57] Among her acts in that circus was working with elephants, along with two other "elephant girls," Marion Knowlton and Bobbie Warriner.[58]

Queen of the Dallas Symphony's Box Office

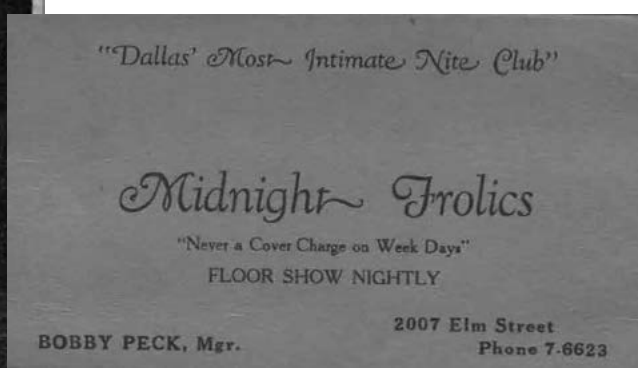
On June 19, 1937, Bobby Peck was an old maid no longer, when she married William Paul McGough.[59] When McGough was still single, he worked as an automobile salesman and lived in his father Thomas's home in Swissvale, Allegheny, Pennsylvania, along with his mother, Delia, and two brothers and three sisters.[60]In the spring 1937, Bill McGough was working as "boss ticket seller on Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus," but by October 1937, the newlyweds were living in New York, where he managed the Carlton Theater.[61]

By June 1940, Bobby and Bill McGough (also known as "Mack") had moved to Pittsburgh, which was closer to his family. He was working in automobile sales, although she was "training horses and teaching riding at Fox Chapel" and with the sponsorship of an unnamed wealthy Pittsburgh man, organized a group of children to train them for a light horse brigade.[62] On his World War II military draft card, then 39-year-old William Paul McGough listed "Mrs. Hazel McGough" as the person who would always know his address. He wrote a Pennsylvania address on the form for himself and his spouse, but on the top edge of the form, in different handwriting, is the address "4321 Hartford St., Dallas, Texas," followed by the date October 14, 1943.[63]

This photo of Hostess Bobby Peck was published in the *Dallas Dispatch* in January 1936.

Before ultimately retuning to Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus from 1948 to 1950 to end her circus career, Peck performed in the 1945 Russell Brothers Show and for the Clyde Beatty Show from 1946 to 1947.[64] She came to Dallas in August 1947 with the Clyde Beatty Circus as a "star performer," doing an equestrienne performance in a group that square danced on "horseback, with elephants and in the aerial ballet."[65] Clyde Beatty was a well-known animal trainer who headlined the circus with a "cageful of lions and tigers," and his wife, Harriett, worked with Royal Bengal tigers. The Clyde Beatty Circus itself was described as not being "the biggest of its kind, but it serves nicely with plenty of spangles-and-sawdust entertainment for circus fans, old and young."[66]

Box office employment ran in Peck's family. According to the 1950 United States Census, Lillian Peck, Bobby's mother, was the widowed head of her Dallas residence at 4321 Hartford Street. At the age of 69, Lillian Peck earned $12,403 a year as a "ticket seller" for an "ice arena."[67] Lillian Peck was in fact a "long-time box office worker" at the Dallas Symphony Orchestra.[68] Bobby Peck worked in the State Fair and Operetta box offices and followed in her mother's footsteps by



Bobby Peck managed the Midnight Frolics, a nightclub on Elm Street, for a few months in 1936. She also served as manager for some of the performers.

working for the Dallas Symphony Orchestra in its first postwar season, 1945-46, although she quit for three years to return to the circus.[69] By the time Walter Hendl took over as the conductor at the Dallas Symphony Orchestra (DSO) in 1949, Bobby was in charge of the DSO box office. Hendl first met Bobby years earlier when she worked in New Jersey and they both worked at the same establishment at which Hendl played piano. Also in 1949, Bill McGough was circus treasurer in charge of United States ticket sales for Ringling Brothers in 1949.[70]

Apparently having lived at his mother-in-law's address since at least late 1943, Bill McGough was still listed there when the 1950 U. S. Census was taken, working as a circus "ticket auditor." Bobby lived there with him and her mother. Bobby's occupation is listed as "ticket seller" at the Dallas Symphony Orchestra.[71]

Due to poor box office revenues in the early part of 1950, a letter was drafted on March 20, 1950, to Bobby that informed her of the layoff of Dallas Symphony Orchestra box office personnel effective April 2. The letter also stated that the organization was "eagerly looking forward to" her rejoining the organization the following year "under better conditions."[72] Despite being retired from performing, in the early 1950s Bobby would accompany her husband, who would tour with Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus as the circus treasurer.[73]

The couple spent the circus off-seasons living on their farm near Cedar Hill, and in 1952, they added to their farm's collection of circus souvenirs by having the 250-pound "varicolored circus wheel, which is seen at the opening and the close of the DeMille circus film, 'The Greatest Show on Earth,'" shipped to them from Sarasota, Florida. Unable to have children, it was on one of these circus tours with her husband that Peck decided to adopt a child. While the circus was in Cuba, she visited a Cuban orphanage that was a square city block in size. It was there that she chose five-year-old Michele.[75]


Bobby, an Old Maid.

The *Dallas Dispatch* quoted Bobby Peck's description of herself in this photo caption, "Bobby an Old Maid," April 6, 1936.

Peck and Bill McGough raised their adopted daughter on their farm. Although Bobby Peck no longer performed in circuses, she maintained social connections with those from the circus

industry and their fans. Circus performers and their animals such as bears, lions, and elephants would visit the farm and sometimes remain there for weeks, attracting curious looks from people passing the farm. "'When they went through Dallas, they would stop there,'" according to Peck's daughter, who added, "We almost had another circus."[76]

As late as 1976, Bobby attended the 50th Circus Fans Association of America (CFA) Convention in Dallas. Her attendance was noted by the publication *Circus Report*, as follows: "Mrs. Fritz Huber, of Houston, was one of the several guests at the recent CFA's 50 Anniversary Convention in Dallas. She visited with Anne Thomas (Flying Melzaros), Bobby Peck, Smokey Jones and his daughter, and reports that Tommy Randolph was busy taking pictures at all hours of the day and night."[77]

Bobby's husband, William Paul McGough, died on May 5, 1981, at the age of 73 from "terminal cardiorespiratory arrest" due to "widespread metastatic cancer of the prostate." His death certificate listed his occupation as treasurer of a circus.[78] McGough was buried at Grove Hill Memorial Cemetery in Dallas.[79] Bobby Peck McGough was remarried on October 6, 1984, to Verd A. McElfresh. [80]Peck's second husband died in 1987, but was buried at Restland Memorial Park alongside his previous wife, Bessie, who died in 1979.[81]

Hazel Mae "Bobby" Peck McGough died on April 27, 1997, of a heart attack at age 88 in a Garland hospital, although she lived the last 25 years of her life in Sachse, Texas. She was a well-known member of that community and belonged to the Sachse Go-Getters.[82] Peck was buried with her first husband, William Paul McGough, at Grove Hill Memorial Cemetery.[83] She was survived by her daughter, Michele Peterson of California, three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren, as well as her three younger brothers, George Peck of Dallas, Frank Peck of Abilene, and Fred Peck of Houston.[84]

The Dallas Morning News described Bobby as someone who "lived her life without a net," but it is her daughter who perhaps described Bobby Peck McGough best: "She was a lady of all trades."[85]

NOTES

[1]"Bobby Peck McGough," *Wylie News*, May 14, 1997.

[2]Year: 1910; Census Place: *Galveston Ward 9, Galveston, Texas*; Roll: T624_1554; Page: 10A; Enumeration District: 0047; FHL microfilm: 1375567 from Ancestry.com.

[3]Year: 1930; Census Place: *Dallas, Dallas, Texas*; Page: 49B; Enumeration District: 0067; FHL microfilm: 2342052 from Ancestry.com.

[4]Year: 1920; Census Place: *Justice Precinct 1, Dallas, Texas*; Roll: T625_1791; Page: 21A; Enumeration District: 3 from Ancestry.com.

[5]*The Viking*, North Dallas High School Yearbook, 1926, p.45.

[6]"When Old Troupers Get Together," *The Dallas Morning News* (hereafter cited as *DMN*), October 3, 1949.

[7]MA07.13 Bobby Peck Scrapbook, p. 38, Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library.

[8]"Bobbed Blonde Named as 1928 'Miss Dallas,'" *DMN*, May 29, 1928.

[9]Year: 1930; Census Place: *Dallas, Dallas, Texas;* Page: 49B; Enumeration District: 0067; FHL microfilm: 2342052 from Ancestry.com.

[10]"Rites Today for Ex-Circus Performer Bobby Peck," [electronic] *DMN*, May 1, 1997.

[11]"Bobby Peck McGough," *Wylie News,* May 14, 1997.

[12]Edmond R. Barr, "Rialto Ramblings," *Dallas Dispatch*, January 3, 1936.

[13]"Blonde Hostess Cleared by Jury in Liquor Trial," *DMN*, April 8, 1936.

[14]"Rites Today for Ex-Circus Performer Bobby Peck," [electronic] *DMN*, May 1, 1997.

[15]"Big Show Coming to Shiner," *Shiner Gazette*, August 29, 1935.

[16]"Hamiter Bros. Circus Coming to La Grange," *La Grange Journal*, August 29, 1935.

[17]"Report Bobby Will Perform On Trapeze Packs Courtroom: Defense Labels Ankles Exhibit A," *Dallas Dispatch*, April 7, 1936.

[18]Edmond R. Barr, "Rialto Ramblings," *Dallas Dispatch*, December 30, 1935.

[19]MA07.13 Bobby Peck Scrapbook, p. 5, Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library.

[20]"Sings Low at Midnight," *Dallas Dispatch*, January 8, 1936.

[21]Edmond R. Barr, "Rialto Ramblings," *Dallas Dispatch,* January 3, 1936.

[22]"Odd Thoughts," *This Week in Dallas*, January 18, 1936.

[23]*This Week in Dallas*, January February 8, 1936.

[24]"Sunday Selling Charge Results in Big Seizure," *DMN*, January 28, 1936.

[25]"Juries Evidently Believe Sale by Drink No Breach," *DMN*, October 31, 1937.

[26]"Possessing Liquor Illegally Charged in 2 Complaints," *DMN*, April 4, 1936.

[27]MA07.13 Bobby Peck Scrapbook, p. 38, Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library.

[28]"Advertisement," *This Week in Dallas*, February 1, 1936.

[29]Bill Singleton, "Sports Ramblings," *DMN*, February 5, 1936.

[30]Bill Singleton, "Sports Ramblings," *DMN*, February 10, 1936.

[31]Bill Singleton, "Sports Ramblings," *DMN*, January 20, 1936.

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DALLAS LEGENDS

1) John Neely Bryan, the founder of Dallas

2) Dr. Samuel Pryor, the first Mayor of Dallas

3) Sarah Cockrell, the first businesswoman in Dallas

4) Henry "Dad" Garrett, Dallas inventor who designed the first traffic light and launched what became WRR-Radio

5) George Bannerman Dealey, founder of *The Dallas Morning News* and the "father of city planning" in Dallas

6) Margo Jones, created theater history with her theater-in-the-round at Fair Park

7) R. L. Thornton, bank president who led efforts to secure the Texas Centennial Exposition for Dallas and later served as the city's mayor

8) George Allen, first African American elected to the Dallas City Council and later a Justice of the Peace

9) Anita Martinez, first Hispanic to serve on the Dallas City Council and founder of the Anita Martinez Ballet Folklorico

10) Juanita Craft, pioneering civil right leaders, later a member of the Dallas City Council

Tex Avery
Cartoonist, Animator, Director

By Frank Jackson

In the summer of 1980 I was in Los Angeles and I found out that an old movie theater in Pasadena was screening some classic Warner Brothers cartoons and three of the directors would be present. I had spent a good many years of my childhood and more than a little of my adulthood watching Warner Brothers cartoons on television, so of course I made plans to attend. At the beginning of the show, however, the audience was informed that just two directors, Bob Clampett and Friz Freleng, were able to attend. The third, Tex Avery, was ill. Just how ill would soon be obvious as he passed away from lung cancer at age 72 later that summer.

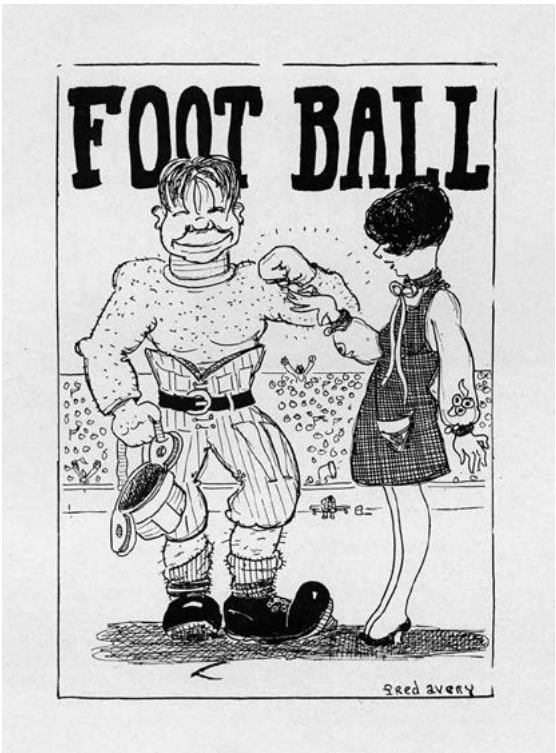
At the time I was disappointed he wasn't there on stage, but in the ensuing years I've learned more about him and his work, and now I am even more disappointed that I didn't get a chance to see him in person. Tex Avery might not have been a household word in his day, but he was a legend in the world of animation not just for his own work but for his influence on the work of animators who came after him.

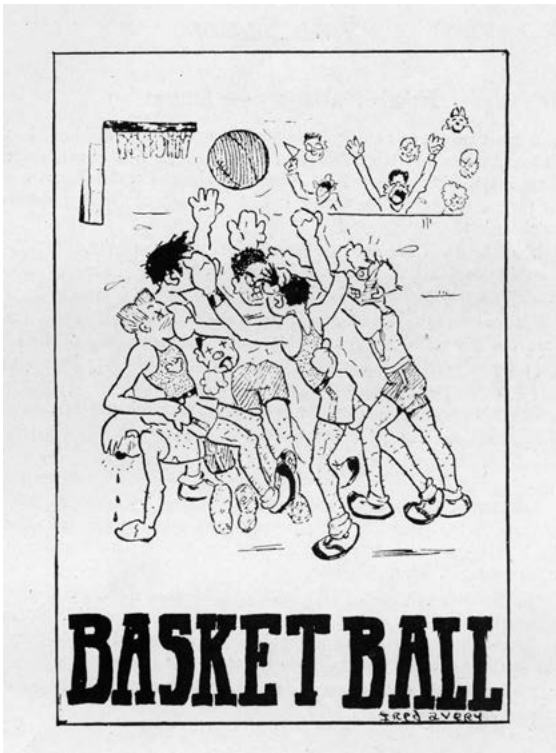
This publicity photo of Tex Avery was taken while he worked at MGM Studio in the 1940s.

North Dallas High School had been open only a few years when Avery transferred there in 1924, after his family moved to Dallas from El Paso.

Fred Avery, who didn't gain the nickname "Tex" until after he moved to Hollywood, graduated from North Dallas High School in 1926.

Frederick Bean Avery, supposedly a descendant of the notorious Judge Roy Bean, was born in 1908 in the Williamson County town of Taylor, but he grew up in Dallas and attended North Dallas High School. His cartoons appeared in the school's yearbook, newspaper, and magazine. After graduating from North Dallas High in





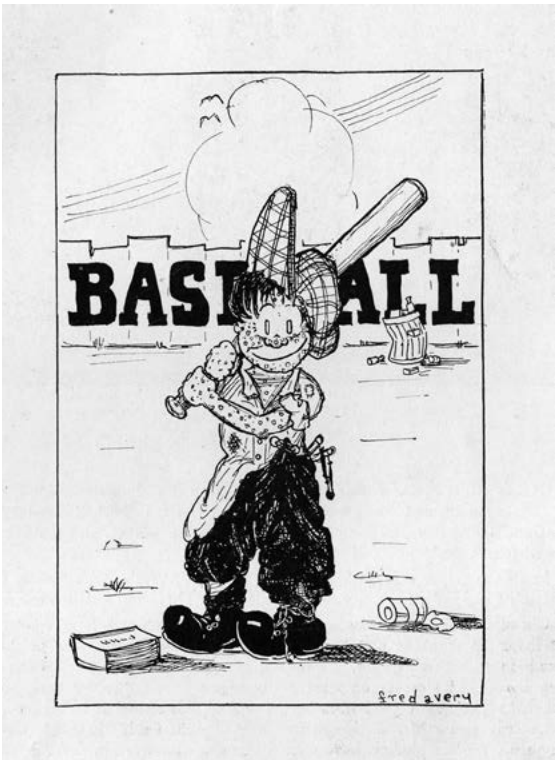
Avery served as an art editor for *The Norther*, a North Dallas High School student magazine, where his cartoons preceded sections on various sports.

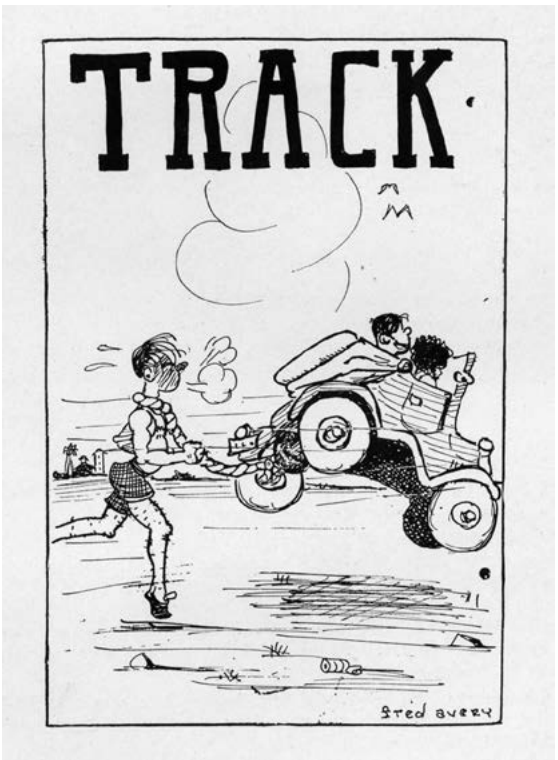
1926, he studied at the Chicago Art Institute. His ambition was to become a newspaper cartoonist, but he felt he couldn't realize that ambition in Dallas. Dallas was a growing city, but in the 1920 census it had just 158,976 people.

Los Angeles, however, started the decade with 576,673 people and finished it with more than 1.2 million people. Almost 40 percent of Californians lived in the City of Los Angeles. More people meant more newspapers, but unfortunately, the 1920s were bad years for newspapers as radio stations—and radio news—were easily accessible. A number of daily newspapers went out of business in the 1920s. Nevertheless, Tex was in the right place at the right time.

Moving to Los Angeles and trying to break into the movies has long been a common migratory pattern for young people. Breaking into the movies was not why Tex Avery moved to Los Angeles, but that was why he stayed. When Tex arrived in 1929 sound movies were in their infancy. Much the same was true of animated cartoons. Famously, Walt Disney introduced Mickey Mouse in *Steamboat Willie* in 1928. It was the first animated cartoon with a synchronized soundtrack. More cartoons followed, and Mickey Mouse became as famous as any flesh and blood movie star.

The other studios in Hollywood couldn't help but notice the popularity of animated cartoons, and Disney was the primary supplier. The major studios were producing features and short subjects, and they wanted to be players in animated films. Disney had a huge advantage, because in those days all he did was animation. Whatever money his cartoons earned could be plowed back into other animated films. Consequently, the top talent gravitated towards Disney. The other studios, however, hired promising young cartoonists and gag writers even if





they had no animation experience.

One of those studios was Universal, where Walter Lantz, before he created Woody Woodpecker, was a director. Lantz hired Avery, who learned the ropes of animation while working on the Oswald the Rabbit series of cartoons. Though initially just interested in earning a living at Universal while he was looking for work as a newspaper cartoonist, Avery eventually was convinced that animation, not newspaper cartoons, was where his future lay.

But that future wasn't at Universal. As is often the case when raises are not forthcoming—and this was, after all, the Depression—an employee goes in search of greener pastures. That was how Avery got to Warner Brothers in 1934 and that is where he hit his stride.

Warner Brothers had been churning out cartoons since 1930 and had lucked out when it came to hiring young talent. In fact, they were on the brink of a golden age. When Avery arrived at Warners, they already had director Friz Freleng. Also working there was an animator, later a director, named Chuck Jones, who would also become a legend in the industry. Mel Blanc, who voiced most of the characters, and musical director Carl Stalling also came on board in the mid-30s. The whole operation was overseen by producer Leon Schlesinger. Today all are in the Animation Hall of Fame.

When he arrived at Warners, Avery was given a Porky Pig cartoon, *Gold-Diggers of '49,* to direct. Bob Clampett and Chuck Jones served as his animators and proved to be kindred spirits. The results were good, so just like that Avery became a full-time supervisor, which animation directors were called in those days.

Now Avery did not invent Porky Pig. Porky was a character in Warner Brothers cartoons before Avery got there. But Avery cer-

Avery didn't invent Porky Pig, but after he went to work at Warner Brothers in 1934, he refined the character.

tainly refined the character. It could be said he "invented" Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, and Bugs Bunny—or he at least took characters in their early stages and developed them in terms of appearance and personality into the characters we still recognize today.

Bugs Bunny, for example appeared in rudimentary form in 1938 in *Porky's Hare Hunt*. The marching orders for this cartoon were "Dress the duck in a rabbit suit," in other words, swap out Daffy Duck for an unnamed rabbit with a similar personality. The director of the cartoon was Bugs Hardaway. The rabbit with no name was referred to as Bugs Hardaway's bunny, hence Bugs' Bunny. Over time Bugs' morphed from a possessive into a proper name.

The rudimentary rabbit character appeared in three more cartoons in 1939 and 1940 but he still bore little resemblance to the Bugs Bunny we know today. Then, later in 1940, came *A Wild Hare*, directed by Avery. This was the first cartoon in which Bugs spoke with a Brooklyn accent and includes the first utterance of "What's up, doc?" on screen. A star was born, and in subsequent cartoons, he was officially billed as Bugs Bunny.

So Avery is generally considered to be the creator of Bugs Bunny despite the fact that he did just five cartoons with the character. He surely would have done more had he not got crosswise with Leon Schlesinger, who rarely intruded into the creative content of the cartoons he produced. Usually, when cartoon characters walk off a cliff or fall out of an airplane, it takes them a long time to hit the ground. In a 1941cartoon, *The Heckling Hare*, Avery feuded with Schlesinger, who insisted that a scene with Bugs and his antagonist, a dog named Willoughby, falling off a cliff took way too long. Avery, who was something of a perfectionist and was always reworking and tweaking his gags to get maximum laughs, disagreed. So he walked away from Warner Brothers rather than change the scene.

By then, however, Avery had gained a reputation in the industry, so he had no trouble finding a new job with MGM. Tom and Jerry, who first hit the screen in 1940, were the big stars of MGM cartoons. They were all produced under the supervision of William Hanna and Joseph Barbera. But MGM did more than Tom and Jerry cartoons, and that was what Tex was hired for.

So in 1943 he introduced a deadpan dog named Droopy in *Dumb-Hounded*. Droopy was distinctive because he didn't say much and didn't move much. He was arguably the least animated of all animated cartoon characters, so he provided a sort of counterpoint to Avery's other characters. He proved to be a popular character, however, perhaps proving the adage that "less is more," at least sometimes.

In 1944 Avery brought out Screwy Squirrel, who bore some similarities to Bugs Bunny but not enough to motivate a lawsuit from Warner Brothers. Perhaps his best known character during his MGM tenure, however, was a wolf. He

Avery won an Oscar nomination in animation for "Blitz Wolf" in 1942. The wolf, which had no official name, was probably his best known character while he worked at MGM.

was a wolf in two senses of the word. First of all, he was in the longstanding tradition of cartoon wolves who were predatory villains, best exemplified in Disney's *Three Little Pigs*. But he was also a wolf in the sense of the Hollywood wolf, a masher, a skirt-chaser, a lounge lizard. He was sometimes informally referred to as Wolfie and at MGM he was called Tex Avery's Wolf. But he never had an official name.

It's worth pausing to note that in his MGM cartoons, Avery was greatly assisted by animator Preston Blair, a former Disney animator and also a member of the Animation Hall of Fame, who specialized in animating human female characters. Also worth a shout-out is music director Scott Bradley, yet another member of the Hall of Fame. Obviously, Tex Avery's cartoons benefited greatly from his association with top-tier talent at MGM as well as at Warner Brothers.

Whether Avery did his best work at Warner Brothers or MGM is debatable, but the work was starting to take a toll. Avery took a year off in 1950 to recover from overwork. He returned in 1951 and did a couple more cartoons, but MGM dismissed Avery and his entire animation unit in 1953. He returned to Universal, where Walter Lantz was again his boss, and did several more cartoons—notably he created Chilly Willy.

Avery was nominated for six Academy Awards but never took home the prize. At Warner Brothers he was nominated for *Detouring America* (1939) and *A Wild Hare* (1940); at MGM for *The Blitz Wolf* (1942) and *Little Johnny Jet* (1953), and at Universal for *Crazy Mixed Up Pup* (1954) and *The Legend of Rockabye Point* (1955).

Tex Avery had a 20-year run from the mid-1930s to the mid-1950s while working for three major studios. Television reduced the demand for theatrical cartoons but it created a demand for animated commercials. Tex created the famous series of Raid commercials featuring animated bugs hollering "Raid!" and biting the dust after they get spritzed with Raid insecticide. He also created the infamous Frito Bandido commercials for Frito-Lay. Even Bugs Bunny got facetime in a series of popular ads for Kool-Aid. These commercials are long gone from TV, but they survive on YouTube.

TV commercials may have been a step down for Avery, but those commercials were at least memorable. A good ad campaign or slogan was catchy. And working as a director of commercials helped him pay the bills. Sadly, divorce and the suicide of a drug-addicted son had probably dampened his zany sense of humor.

Finally, Avery had a gig as a gag-writer for William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, the Tom and Jerry duo at MGM, who had established a made-for-TV cartoon factory, notable for Huckleberry Hound, Yogi Bear, the Flintstones, and many others. Avery's experience with his old colleagues was disappointing. Though Hanna and Barbera won plaudits from animation buffs for their Tom and Jerry cartoons, their reputation went south

While he was with Warner Brothers, Avery developed Bugs Bunny into the character familiar today, complete with Brooklyn accent and his famous line, "What's up, doc?"

because the limited, low-budget animation of their TV work was clearly inferior. When the new TV cartoons were aired alongside the old movie cartoons on TV, the differences were obvious, even to a small fry. TV viewers came to appreciate the old cartoons more than ever, and they couldn't help but notice that a number of those cartoons were directed by a fellow called Avery, who was billed as "Fred" in his Warner Brothers days and as "Tex" thereafter.

Now it would be romantic to say that Tex Avery was forgotten and died unremembered and unlamented but that would not be true. While his glory years were long past, animation buffs were well aware of his contribution to the art. Though TV killed off the theatrical cartoon industry, it kept those old cartoons alive indefinitely, mostly on kiddie shows. One author, Joe Adamson, was so taken with Avery's work that he turned out *Tex Avery: King of Cartoons*, which appeared a few years before Avery died. This remains the definitive work on Avery. But in subsequent books on animation, Avery's work and his influence on the art of animation have been duly noted.

In 1997 the U.S. Postal Service issued a Bugs Bunny first class stamp. Not to be outdone, in 2008, France issued a stamp honoring Tex on the centennial of his birth, with stamps of Droopy, Wolfie, and Red Hot Riding Hood. In 2020, the 80th anniversary of Bugs Bunny's official 1940 debut, the U. S. Postal Service brought out a set of ten stamps depicting Bugs as he appeared in some of his best-known cartoons.

Today a historical plaque honors Avery on the town square of Taylor, Texas, his birthplace. The plaque was dedicated on February 22, 2014, as part of a citywide celebration that included screenings of cartoons, the unveiling of a mural-sized portrait of Tex, a cake decorated with pictures of Avery and his characters, cartoon characters cosplay, and even a Tex Avery look-alike.

As for Dallas, today a hallway in North Dallas High features a tribute to Tex: a mural with Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, and Elmer Fudd, along with other Warner Brothers characters. Also, North Dallas High was the venue for

the first annual Tex Avery Animation Award, presented as part of the 2005 Deep Ellum Film Festival. In subsequent years, the award migrated to the Dallas International Film Festival.

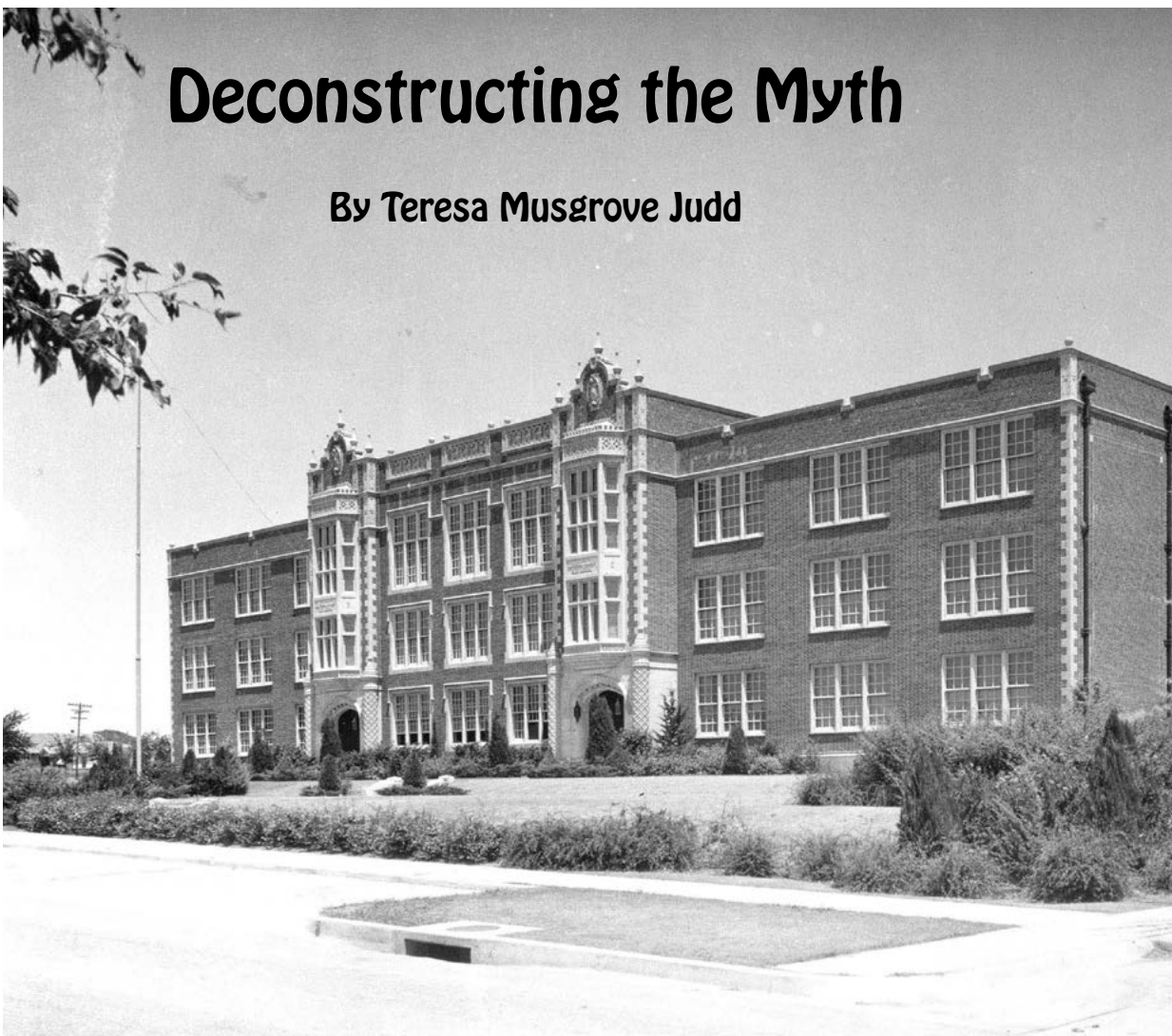
But the Tex Avery–North Dallas High connection extends far beyond the walls of the building on McKinney Avenue. That's because the phrase "What's up, doc?" was a common greeting among students at North Dallas High in the 1920s. It seems "doc," like "dude," or "guy," was an all-purpose appellation. So in a sense the North Dallas High School of the 1920s is evoked every time you hear Bugs Bunny say, "What's up, Doc?" L

Editor's Note: *This article is based on research conducted for an entry by the author in the* Handbook of Texas Online*, published by the Texas State Historical Association. To read the entry, go to tshaonline.org/handbook.*

The LAKEWOOD

Deconstructing the Myth

By Teresa Musgrove Judd



The original Lakewood Rats all attended Woodrow Wilson High School, graduating between 1941 and 1943.

RATS

The notorious troublemakers called the Lakewood Rats terrorized East Dallas from the late 1930s into the 1950s. The stories surrounding their exploits and bad reputation endure even today, especially in the Dallas history groups on social media.

Some of the memories and comments in these groups include the following:

"My mom was afraid for me to go to Lakewood for fear the Lakewood Rats would start a riot and I might get caught in it!"

"My parents moved out of Lakewood so that I could go to Hillcrest instead of Woodrow all because of the Lakewood Rats!"

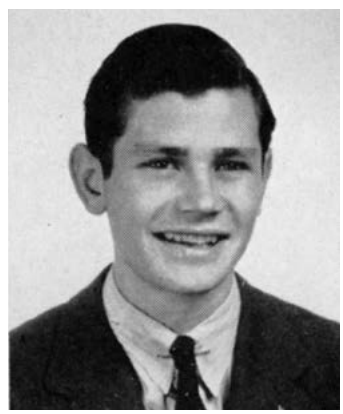
"My aunt used to say, "Watch out for those Lakewood Rats. They don't care who they hurt."

"One time, the entire Adamson High School football team went to Lakewood to challenge the Rats to a fight."

"To become a Lakewood Rat, your initiation was to swim across White Rock Lake naked."

LAKEWOOD

Robert Barnett was an athlete at Woodrow who served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and later worked as a building contractor in Dallas and Houston.



Jack Ogilvie was also an athlete at Woodrow. He flew for the U.S. Army during World War II and later founded the Ogilvie-Tunnel Paper Company.

Jack Vaughn played football for Woodrow and later worked for Vaughn Petroleum Inc., founded by his father. He served on the boards of several Dallas corporations and performing arts organizations.

The following East Dallas personalities and Woodrow Wilson High School alumni have been mentioned as members of the Lakewood Rats: Former Texas Attorney General Jim Mattox, race car designer and driver Carroll Shelby, former Dallas Mayor Jack Evans, and Heisman Trophy winner Davey O'Brien. All were NOT Lakewood Rats, although Carroll Shelby did occasionally hang out with them, and Davey O'Brien was said to have played sandlot football with them.

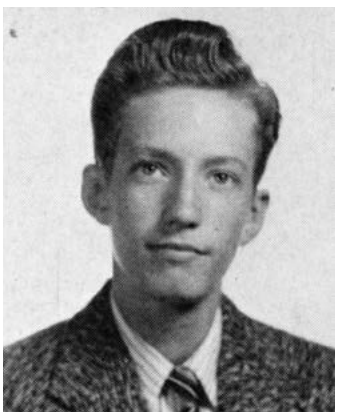
Even *Dallas Morning News* columnists John Anders and Bob St. John carried on a friendly back and forth in the newspaper during the late 1970s regarding the very existence of the Lakewood Rats.

Bryan Adams High School alum John Anders took the position in a 1978 column titled "Illusory Rats" that the Lakewood Rats were an urban legend. When anything bad happened in 1950s East Dallas, from a baseball thrown through a window to a stolen car taken for a joyride, the acts were blamed on the Lakewood Rats. Anders maintained that the Lakewood Rats were a cautionary tale. He wrote: "They may largely have been a wonderful myth, a device employed by a generation of Lakewood parents to keep their children in line."[1]

North Dallas High School grad Bob St. John took the opposite stance in 1979, stating that the stories of the Lakewood Rats' activities were true

RATS

John Fort provided transportation for the Rats in his 1936 Ford convertible with a V-8 engine. He served in World War II as an Aviation Machinist's Mate and later founded a company that built and repaired church organs.



Charles Fanning played baseball at Woodrow and was also a talented musician, participating in the school's band and orchestra. He served in the U. S. Marine Corps during World War II and later became an evangelical preacher.

Doc Harrell, who ran a pharmacy in the Lakewood Shopping Center, was one of the few adults the Rats respected and obeyed.

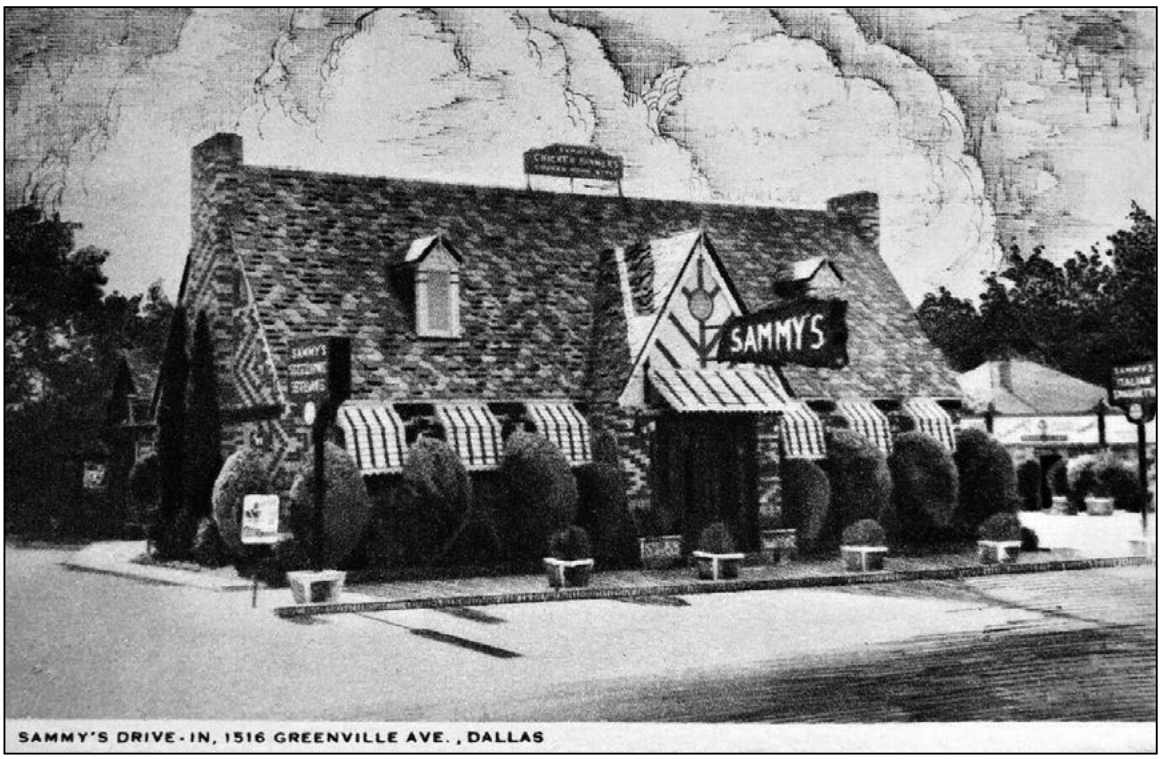
in a *Dallas Morning News* column titled "The For-Real Rats." St. John wrote about his encounter with the Lakewood Rats as he walked home from the Lakewood Theater during the summer of 1950. A car pulled up beside him and three guys got out of it; one of them carried a bike chain. St. John ran through backyards and alleys as fast as he could to get home, certain that he had escaped a fate worse than death at the hands of the Lakewood Rats.[2]

Who really were the Lakewood Rats? It appears to have been a group of teenage boys, most of whom lived in Lakewood and attended Woodrow Wilson High School, although a few of them lived in other sections of Dallas. Numbering anywhere from 8 to 40 (depending on the source), the boys were generally from upper to middle class families. Their first activity began after sandlot football and baseball games at city parks where after the game, the Lakewood boys would start a fistfight with the other team. These park fights began in 1938 and continued into the early 1940s.

The East Dallas oral histories collected by the Lakewood Library in the 1970s have helped to identify the original core group of six members, whose names were mentioned in interviews and newspaper articles more than once.

Robert Barnett, who lived on Lakewood Boulevard was quite the athlete at Woodrow,

Marion Underwood, the first librarian at the Lakewood Library, was once locked in the building by the Rats but refused to name the culprits to avoid embarrassing their families.



Carlo Messina, co-owner of Sammy's Restaurant on Greenville Avenue, recalled numerous pranks played by the Rats at the café.

participating on the football, baseball, track, and tennis teams.[3]

Like Barnett, Jack Ogilvie, a resident of Junius Heights, took part in four sports at Woodrow.[4]

Harold "Snooky" Hubbard, who lived at 6800 Lakewood Boulevard, was the youngest son of oilman and Dallas Park Board president Ray Hubbard, for whom Lake Ray Hubbard is named. Snooky had a pickup truck in which he transported the Rats to and from their rendezvous. No photos seem to exist of camera-shy Snooky.[5]

Jack Vaughn, who also lived on Lakewood Boulevard, played on Woodrow's football team.[6]

John Fort, a resident of the Mount Auburn neighborhood, became a member of the group because he owned a 1936 Ford convertible with a V-8 engine. The car was perfect for racing down Northwest Highway or chasing ambulances, both activities in which the Rats participated frequently.[7]

Charles Buckner Fanning, who lived in the Santa Monica neighborhood, played baseball at Woodrow, and was a talented musician, participating in band and orchestra.[8]

In a 1982 *Dallas Morning News* interview, John Fort described how the group got its name. The boys participated in pranks beginning in 1938, including spraying graffiti on rocks and railroad trestles near White Rock Lake. Dallas Mayor Woodall Rodgers vowed in a 1940 speech before the City Council to clean out the "little rats" who had been vandalizing public property in the area. The next night, the group spray-painted "Lakewood Rats" on every bridge and underpass in East Dallas.[9]

One of their favorite pastimes was stealing

A second group of Rats almost fought a rival gang at Flagpole Hill in 1942, before police told them they were still inside the Dallas city limits.

hubcaps off parked cars. In her 1976 Lakewood oral history, Mrs. Marshall Barnett recalled finding hubcaps in her garage, which her son Robert "allowed" the Lakewood Rats to store there. Little did Mrs. Barnett know that her own son Robert was the main instigator (or maybe she pretended not to know)![10] Doc Harrell caught some of the boys stealing hubcaps from autos parked at his store and made them put the rims back on the cars. Doc Harrell was one of the few men that the Rats respected and obeyed.[11]

Marion Underwood, the first librarian of the East Dallas Branch Library (later the Lakewood Library) recalled in a 1973 oral history her run-in with the Lakewood Rats. One evening in the late 1930s as she locked up the library, someone suddenly grabbed her keys and shoved her into the building, locking the door from the outside. She looked out the window and saw about six boys milling around, fighting and tussling with one another. She called the police from her office phone, but they did not arrive she said, until an hour later. About thirty minutes after they locked her in, one of the boys said, "Oh, let's leave Mrs.

Underwood alone," and they unlocked the door and scurried away. Mrs. Underwood refused to name any of the boys during her interview, because they were from prominent families and she didn't want to embarrass them.[12]

Carlo Messina, co-owner of the Sammy's restaurant on Lowest Greenville near Ross Avenue recalled in his 1974 oral history the pranks that the Lakewood Rats played at his café. They would sit down and place an order, and while they waited, put salt in the sugar shaker and sugar in the salt shaker, then get up and leave before the order arrived. After a couple of incidents like this, Messina refused to let them in the restaurant. In retaliation, the boys walked down the street to a watermelon stand, stole several melons and brought them back to throw at Sammy's front door. Messina opened the door and received several melon splashes in the face. He picked up the pieces and threw them back at the boys. Finally, the cooks came out of the restaurant holding butcher knives and the boys ran away. Messina said that he had to scrub the door for three days and that they were the only group he had seen that did such pranks. Messina also bemoaned the fact that the boys' parents refused to believe that their sons had taken part in these activities.[13]

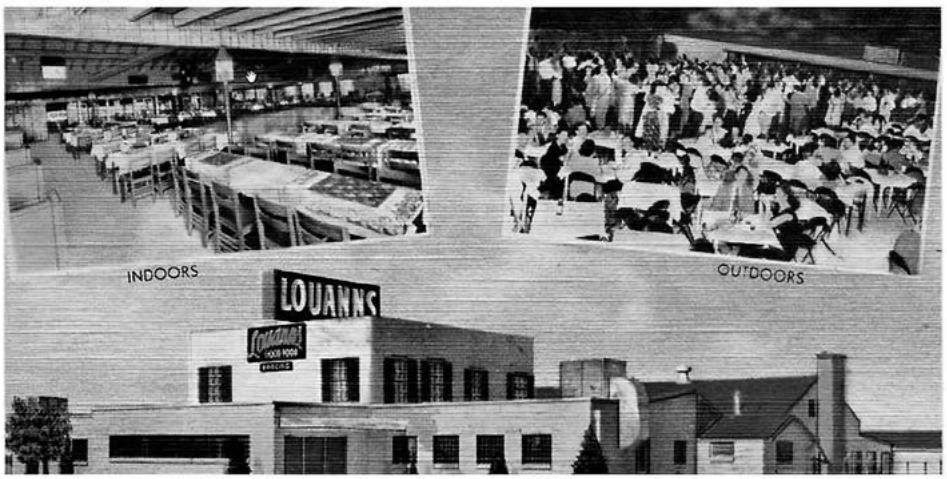
By the fall of 1942, Barnett, Vaughn, Ogilvie, Fort, and Hubbard had graduated from Woodrow and enlisted in the service. Buckner Fanning, who was the only founding Rat left, cleaned up his act and threw himself into school activities, serving as the Woodrow band's drum major during 1942-43. But the news of the Lakewood Rats' exploits began to get press as another group formed. This new wave, made up of high school boys who wanted to emulate the earlier Lakewood Rats, replaced the pranks with rougher and more destructive activities.[14]

In June 1942, *The Dallas Morning News* reported about an anticipated fight between the Rats and a rival gang from Exall Park. The two groups, numbering about 150 total, gathered about 9 P.M. in the 1600 block of Greenville Avenue, across the street from Sammy's restaurant. Police had been tipped off and showed up as well, telling the kids that they couldn't fight within the city limits. So both groups of boys piled into automobiles and drove to Flagpole Hill, this time followed by a group of adults wanting to see what was going to happen.

Police met the groups at Flagpole Hill and told the boys that they were still inside the city limits. So they piled into cars again and drove to Garland Road and Buckner Boulevard, which was then outside of the Dallas city limits, and the kids began slugging it out until they were stopped by Dallas County deputy sheriffs. Aside from some bloody noses and black eyes, there were no serious injuries. The youths departed, promising to continue the fight at a later date.

During a Halloween night mischief in 1942, ten boys threw rocks and bois d'arc apples at the homes of Woodrow principal G. L. "Pop" Ashburn and Woodrow ROTC commandant Col. R. M. Neher. Both homes sustained broken windows. In early November, police arrested six of the boys, but none of them admitted to being a Lakewood Rat. However, the newspaper attributed the crime to the erstwhile gang because of who the victims were and from the statement "most of the boys arrested carried cards showing membership in the troublesome organization known as the Lakewood Rats." These printed cards contained an American flag and the words, "Lakewood Rats, Inc." on which was written a number and the member's name. In Jack Vaughn's oral history from 1976, he stated that the original group was very loosely organized and never had anything like membership cards. It is unknown if the membership cards reported in 1942 were real or hearsay. Two of the boys arrested for throwing rocks pleaded guilty and paid $35 in fines and court costs. Charges were dismissed against the other four and Principal Ashburn considered the case closed. [15]

A few days later on November 9, 1942, a



Louann's, a popular spot for dinner and dancing on Greenville Avenue, banned anyone resembling a Lakewood Rat from entering.

headline read: "Lakewood Rats Crash Dance, Eat Goodies, Beat Up Guests." The article reported that a dozen northeast Dallas boys invaded a private party at Lee Park in Oak Lawn, eating and drinking up the refreshments, and then fighting with the party guests when they were told to leave. When the police arrived, the gang was long gone, but the partygoers told them that it was definitely the work of the Lakewood Rats.[16]

Dallas County District Attorney Dean Gauldin called for a grand jury investigation into the gang. A member of the city's juvenile department stated, "We are receiving reports that indicate virtually every high school has some sort of gang . . . but none has reached the proportions of the Lakewood Rats."[17]

After the Woodrow Dads' Club vowed to help end the gang, and Dallas City Manager and Lakewood resident V.R. Smitham appealed to parents to be more vigilant about their children's activities, the stories about the Lakewood Rats tapered off a bit.[18] But then, whenever trouble reared its head in Lakewood, the newspapers automatically mentioned the Lakewood Rats in their write-ups. Beginning in 1943, all teenage pranks and fights in East Dallas were attributed to the Lakewood Rats. Wild auto chases, New Year's Eve firecrackers, and shoplifting were all blamed on the gang.[19]

Doc Harrell's widow Ruth recalled in her 1973 oral history that in the late 1940s, Harrell would not allow any boy or young man into the drug store wearing a leather jacket.[20] At Louann's, the large establishment for dinner and dancing located at Greenville Avenue and Lover's Lane, anyone resembling a Lakewood Rat was not allowed entrance by owner Ann Bovis. Other drive-ins and establishments likewise banned the leather jacket wearing toughies, who delighted in turning over drive-in trays or roughing up customers.[21]

The last mention in *The Dallas Morning News* of the Lakewood Rats occurred when a wintertime dispute developed with rival gang Columbia Rats. The news of a pending fight on January 28, 1953, was leaked to the police, who arrived in five squad cars at the intersection of Gaston Avenue and Abrams Road where twenty-eight kids prepared to do battle outside Harrell's Drug Store. This was the worst potential fight attributed to the Lakewood Rats. In earlier years, no weapons were ever used in a fight. But in this

case, police confiscated air rifles, knives, golf clubs, baseball bats, and boards. Charges were filed on the participants, who later appeared in a justice of the peace court to await their fates.[22]

After this incident, all news stories about the Lakewood Rats ended. It is not known why; it is possible that locking up some members in jail or having a criminal record was enough to deter more gang type activity. Intervention attempts by groups like Young Life, the YMCA, and area churches to give teenagers opportunities to expend extra energy in after school clubs and mentorship may have caught on and worked. It's not that gangs died, but their activities did not receive the press that the Lakewood Rats had received. Maybe the media realized that bringing the name front and center made the Rats celebrities. By ignoring them, they never had the glory again. Reports of leather jacket-wearing toughs in and around Lakewood continued into the mid-60s, but these groups by and large only lived the look.

An interest in the Lakewood Rats resurged in the 1970s with nostalgia for the days of leather jacket-wearing toughs as portrayed in *American Graffiti* and other movies. When the Lakewood Library launched its oral history project in 1972, several of the interviewees recounted their memories of the Lakewood Rats. This new attention to the group prompted mention in the local media. A 1978 newspaper story in *The Dallas Morning News* entitled "The Rats Built Tough Reputation," while well-meaning, was very thinly researched and repeated myths about the group. For example, the writer stated: "A 1951 issue of *Life* magazine classified them as 'one of the 10 toughest gangs in the United States.'" [23] The truth is, all of the *Life* magazines are currently available on Google Books, and a search for "Lakewood Rats" turns up nothing. This myth has been repeated many times over the years.

Why did the Lakewood Rats become so legendary after such a short period of existence? One reason is that the group defied the usual description of a teenage gang. Gangs usually grew out of economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and typically included teenagers who dropped out of school. The Rats were from well-to-do families and all participated in school activities. The members of the Lakewood Rats who were interviewed years later insisted that they were not a gang, but just a group of friends who participated in pranks. Another reason for their legendary status is that the original Rats were never caught by police, never arrested, and apparently never had to make restitution for their crimes. Because of this, the Rats became as notorious in Dallas as Bonnie and Clyde, but the later versions of the Rats were not as successful at evading the law.

In response to a 1991 Bob St. John column, Robert Barnett wrote a lengthy letter to set the record straight about the Lakewood Rats. In an interview with St. John, Barnett said that the Rats were "restless and revolting against parents and teachers . . . we challenged each other. The key word was 'guts.' I'm still not ashamed to say I was an original Lakewood Rat."[24] Barnett graduated from Woodrow in 1941, enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1942, and was discharged in 1943. He graduated from the University of Texas in 1949 with a degree in real estate and insurance. Barnett worked as a building contractor in Dallas and Houston; he passed away in 2006.[25]

Jack Ogilvie held a reunion of the Lakewood Rats at his home in Rockwall in 1999. John Anders reported on the get-together. Ogilvie stated that their fist fights did not "have the stigma then that they have today . . . it was something to do. Half of the guys you fought later turned out to be your best friends."[26] Ogilvie, member of Woodrow's class of 1941, enlisted in the Army Air Corps after Pearl Harbor. He attended flying school and flew over one hundred missions dur-

ing the war, serving for six tours.[27] After the war, Ogilvie attended SMU and worked as a salesman. In 1962, he founded the Ogilvie-Tunnell Paper Company. He passed away in 2020 at the age of 97.[28]

Jack Vaughn participated in the Lakewood Library's oral history project in 1976, sharing his memories of growing up in Lakewood and of Woodrow Wilson High School. He admitted to being a member of the Lakewood Rats, but did not name any others. He stated that the group did not continue after the spring of 1942, which was his graduation year. Vaughn registered for the draft during WWII but did not serve due to a physical ailment. He graduated from the University of Texas in 1947 with a business degree. Jack and his brother Grady worked for the Vaughn Petroleum Company, founded by their father.[29] Upon the death of his older brother, Jack became director and owner of Vaughn Petroleum Inc. He also served on the board of directors of Dr Pepper and First International Bancshares, as well as supporting and serving on the boards of the Dallas Museum of Art and the Dallas Civic Opera.[30] Jack Vaughn passed away in 1977.[31]

John Fort served in the U.S. Navy during World War II as an Aviation Machinist's Mate. After the war, Fort traveled with Billy Graham Campus Crusades, and entered SMU in 1949 to study for the ministry. While a student, he worked part-time for the Herman Boettcher Organ Company, and in 1958 founded his own company, the John T. Fort Organ Company, which built and repaired church pipe organs. Fort was a longtime member of East Grand and Wilshire Baptist Churches; he passed away in 2016.[32]

Harold "Snooky" Hubbard served two years in the Army Air Corps after graduating in 1942 and then attended East Texas State University. He and his two brothers, Ray Jr. and Morgan, founded Three Brothers Oil Company. Snooky lived and worked in Abilene during the 1950s to attend to the family business. He returned to Dallas in the 1960s where he was often found at the Brook Hollow Golf Club. Snooky passed away in 2005.[33]

Buckner Fanning enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps upon graduation from Woodrow in 1943. He was in the wave of Marines who entered Nagasaki after the atomic bomb in 1945. Witnessing firsthand the bomb's aftermath of horror, destruction, and despair led Fanning to enter the ministry when he returned home. He entered Baylor University, graduating in 1949 with a degree in religious studies. He then earned a theology degree from the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Fanning became friends with evangelist Billy Graham, and they remained close for the rest of their lives. Graham encouraged Fanning to begin an evangelical ministry, and Fanning traveled and preached at revival meetings for several years before answering a call in 1959 to become the leader of the Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio. Fanning led Trinity Baptist for forty-two years, growing its membership to 10,000. Rev. Fanning often mentioned his years as a Lakewood Rat in his sermons as a way to illustrate how a person could change his ways for the better. Buckner Fanning was inducted into the Woodrow Hall of Fame in 2004; he passed away in 2016.[34]

As teens, the original Lakewood Rats rebelled in a rite of passage full of pranks and fights. When they grew up, they realized what the experience taught them about their parents, neighbors, and themselves. But most of all, the members became part of a legendary fraternity, about which only they could understand. As Jack Ogilvie ironically reminisced, "[The Lakewood Rats] kept me from getting into trouble."[35] L

NOTES

[1]John Anders, "Illusory Rats," *The Dallas Morning News* (hereafter cited as *DMN*), September 21, 1978.

[2]Bob St. John, "The For-Real Rats," *DMN*, January 15, 1979.

[3]Woodrow Wilson High School, *Crusader*, 1941.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Don Bullock, *Buzzard Tales and Lakewood Rats*, [self-published], 2017.

[6]Woodrow Wilson High School, *Crusader*, 1942.

[7]Mike Shropshire, "Ratting on Lakewood's Teen Gang," *DMN*, April 27, 1982.

[8]Woodrow Wilson High School, *Crusader*, 1943.

[9]Shropshire, "Ratting on Lakewood's Teen Gang."

[10]Interview with Mrs. Marshall (Eunice) Barnett, March 11, 1976, Lakewood Oral History Project, Dallas Public Library, Dallas History Division.

[11]Interview with Mrs. E.C. (Ruth) Harrell, February 27, 1973, ibid.

[12]Interview with Marion Underwood, April 24, 1973, ibid.

[13]Interview with Carlo S. Messina, May 1, 1974, ibid.

[14]"Deputies Halt Gang Fight of 150 Youngsters: Lakewood Rats and Exall Crowd Out to Settle Fuss," *DMN*, June 30, 1942.

[15]"6 Boys Face Complaints in Stoning Homes," *DMN*, November 4, 1942.

[16]"Lakewood Rats Crash Dance, Eat Goodies, Beat Up Guests," *DMN*, November 9, 1942.

[17]"Effort Begun to Clean Up Boys' Gangs," *DMN*, November 11, 1942.

[18]"Smitham Appeals to Parents, Irked by Lakewood Rats," *DMN*, May 6, 1943.

[19]"City to Let Pranksters Go to Jail," *DMN*, January 6, 1944.

[20]Ruth Harrell interview.

[21]Tom Peeler, "Remembering Louann's," *D Magazine*, February 1, 1977.

[22]Roy Johnson, "28 Arrests Nip Youths' Battle," *DMN*, January 29, 1953.

[23]Don Fisher, "'The Rats' Built Tough Reputation," *DMN*, May 8, 1978.

[24]Bob St. John, "Ex-Rat Resents Any Links to Today's Gangs," *DMN*, June 11, 1991.

[25]"Robert Hicks Barnett, Sr.," obituary, *DMN*, July 19, 2006.

[26]John Anders, "Lakewood Rats Trapped Kids Into Good Behavior," *DMN*, April 18, 1999.

[27]Anne Fox, "Legion Honors WWII Vets," *Rockwall County Herald-Banner*, December 15, 2015.

[28]"Jack Lewis Ogilvie," obituary, www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/dallas-tx/jack-ogilvie-9008254.

[29]Interview with Jack C. Vaughn, April 29, 1976, Lakewood Oral History Project, Dallas Public Library, Dallas History Division.

[30]"Jack Calvin Vaughn to wed Mary Jo McCorkle May 24," *Austin American-Statesman*, April 20, 1952.

[31]"Vaughn Funeral Set for Today," *The Mexia Daily News*, October 8, 1977.

[32]"John Taylor Fort, Sr.," obituary, www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/dallas-tx/john-fort-6863332.

[33]"Harold G. "Snooky" Hubbard," obituary, *DMN*, September 2, 2005.

[34]"Buckner Fanning, a San Antonio Institution, Dies," *Baptist Standard*, February 17, 2016.

[35]Anders, "Lakewood Rats Trapped Kids Into Good Behavior."

Legendary Lady of the Law: Louise Ballerstedt Raggio and the Reform of Texas Marital Property Law

By Samantha Dodd

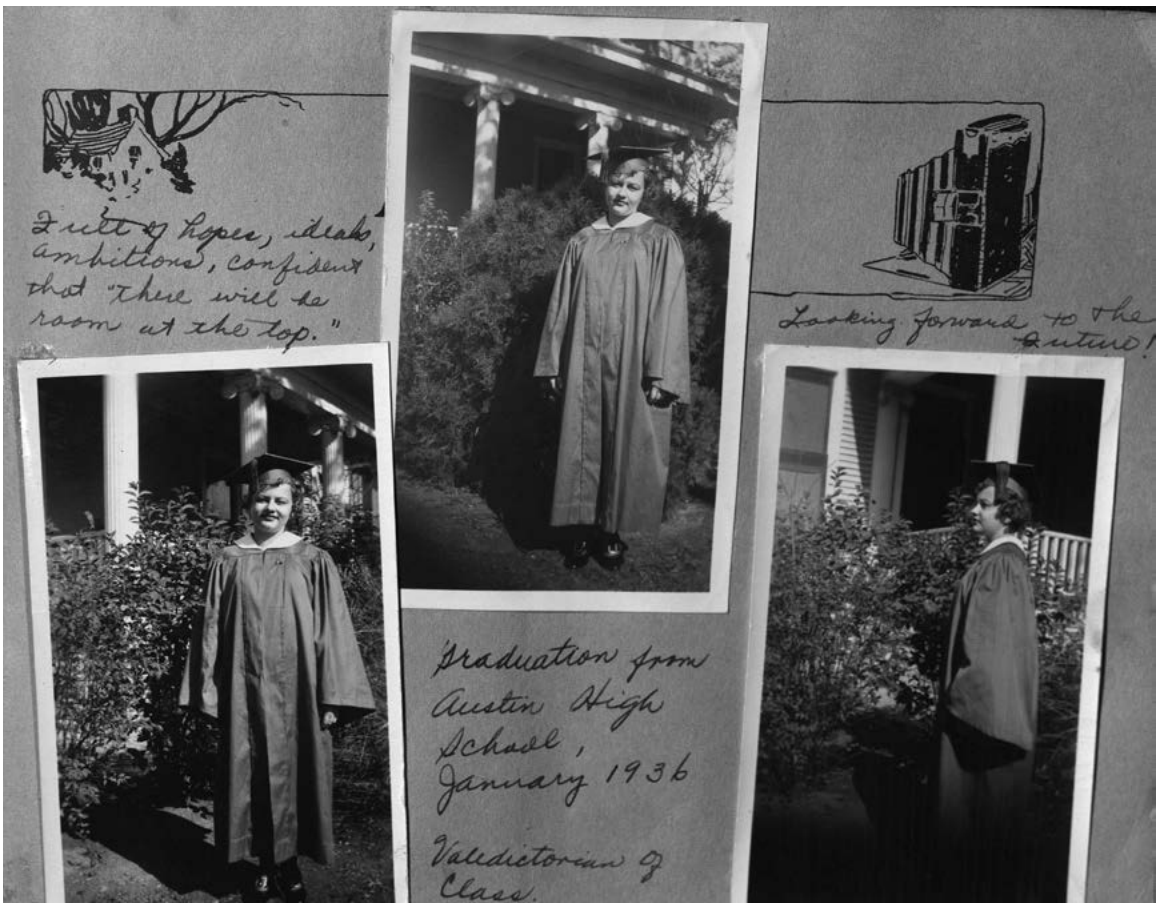
On August 18, 1920, women in the United States gained the right to vote with the passage of the 19th amendment. Despite this victory, women's rights battles were far from over. Across the country women still faced countless legal obstacles and limitations and women in Texas faced considerably more. At the time, Texas' legal statutes were an inherited code of laws from its six different governing entities (Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the Confederate States of America, and the United States of America). This amalgamation of legal statutes resulted in a mutated common law heritage affecting women, married women in particular.

Frustrated by the situation's impact on her own life and career, it was Louise Ballerstedt Raggio who set about rectifying women's legal rights in Texas. Prior to 1967 married women could not buy, sell, or own property; they could not sign contracts or make decisions regarding their children; they could not control their paychecks or open their own bank accounts; married women needed their husbands to co-sign every legal document. "Legally, married women were equated with children, prisoners, and the insane. None of the four groups could sign a legally binding contract of any kind."[1] Louise helped to guarantee married women the right to own, manage and control their own property, and she was instrumental in codifing marriage, divorce, and others family laws in Texas by directing a task force to draft new marital property laws, and ultimately a new family code for the State of Texas.[2]

Louise Ballerstedt was the adored only surviving child of German and Swedish immigrants. This studio portrait was taken when she was 3.

The daughter of German and Swedish immigrants Louis and Hilma Lindgren Ballerstedt, Louise Hilma Ballerstedt was born June 15, 1919, on her grandparents' farm near Austin, Texas. Louise grew up as an only child after her mother's two previous miscarriages and was thus the sole recipient of her parents' affection and adoration. Realizing the importance of educating her daughter, Hilma had Louise reciting poems and essays while standing on a chair in the kitchen, and coached her on public speaking. When Louise continued attending school beyond the early grade school years, it caused quite the scandal in their rural farming community. Many residents questioned her mother's decision to send her to school: what was the point? Louise would grow up and get married; school would be a waste of time and money. Despite the community's disapproval, Hilma continued to support and fight for Louise's education.

Unable to sustain and support the farm when the Great Depression hit, the Ballerstedts relocated to Austin to stay with extended family. The move opened the door to a better education for Louise. She attended Austin High School and graduated midterm in January 1936 as the valedictorian of her class. Louise enrolled at the University of Texas at age 17. While she was in college her family returned to their farm, leaving Louise on her own for the first time. In order to



Louise Ballerstedt was valedictorian of her Austin High School class in January 1936.

afford the twenty-five dollar per semester tuition, she often worked two to three jobs while managing a full slate of classes. Louise dreamed of becoming a journalist. However, there were few jobs available, and no jobs for women in particular. Journalism was considered too radical a field for women, exposing them to too much unsavory content. Career options for women were limited to teacher, librarian, secretary, or nurse. So Louise opted to pursue her teaching credentials.

Her senior year at UT comprised a full course load, three jobs, and student teaching. As her impending graduation date approached, Louise found herself filled with dread about becoming a farmhouse school teacher in rural Texas. She saw a notice on a bulletin board for the Rockefeller Foundation's post graduate work in public administration and promptly applied and interviewed. Forty men and ten women, including Louise, were selected for the program. In 1939 Louise graduated as the salutatorian of her class from UT and she spent the next year in Washington, D.C. as a White House intern with the Rockefeller Foundation. In addition to graduate coursework in public administration at the American University, working with legislators, attending foreign diplomatic meetings and conferences, Louise was assigned to work in the National Youth Association (NYA), a New Deal agency sponsored by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The program focused on providing education, jobs, recreation, and counseling

Louise and Grier Raggio had three sons, Grier Jr., Tom, and Ken. The demands of motherhood delayed Louise only temporarily in finishing law school.

for male and female youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five.[3] Though Louise wanted to stay in D.C. and continue her graduate studies, she returned to Texas and accepted a position working for the NYA in Austin.

Not long after her return to Texas, Louise met Grier Raggio at his office in Georgetown. Grier was a lawyer, holding master's degrees in law and patent law. After knowing each other for only three months and five days, the couple married on April 19, 1941, in Dallas. Louise quit her job and made a home for Grier, acting as his secretary and typist. At the time, Grier worked for the Department of Agriculture, investigating food stamps claims and usage. He was also an early draftee of the lottery in 1941, but was deferred from active service. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Grier was called back into service in the United States Army. At that time Louise found out she was pregnant with their first child. Grier was able to delay his deployment until after the birth of his son. Grier Jr. was born on August 6, 1942, and Grier Sr. deployed to the South Pacific. During this time when Louise and Grier were separated (March 1942-September 1945), Louise and Grier Jr. lived with her parents on the farm. Louise stayed active working as a substitute teacher and president of the League of Women Voters in Austin while settling into her new role as a mother.[4]

At the end of World War II Grier returned from deployment, and the Raggio family moved to Dallas. The ending of the war did not end the struggles and obstacles for the young couple. Grier returned from the war with PTSD, and shortly after, the Raggio family "found themselves caught in the crossfire of Sen. Joseph McCarthy's communist witch hunt" during the Red Scare.[5] Despite trips to Washington and inquiries as to why and who had accused Grier of being un-American, it was not until long after his death that Louise finally learned the depth of the accusations. Grier began doing legal work for the Veterans Administration in Dallas, and

Louise gave birth to their second son, Thomas, on September 11, 1946.

It was Grier who encouraged Louise to go to law school. The professors at Southern Methodist University at the time dismissed women in law and told Louise that ". . . law was a male profession, that the rough-and-tumble charges and countercharges of the courtroom was no suitable contest for a lady . . ." and that if admitted, she'd "only be taking up space that could be occupied by a man who would do something with his degree."[6] Despite their effort to deter her, and with Grier's support, Louise enrolled in February 1947. She took care of her sons during the day while Grier continued his work with the VA, and then she went to class at night. Though she often hated the classes, Louise loved her classmates. While the professors dismissed her, her classmates did not. Grier pulled his weight at home taking care of the children while Louise attended her classes. Meanwhile, government suspicion surrounding Grier's activities resurfaced, and he was fired from the VA.[7] Grier refuted the charges with Louise's help and got his job back, but the Raggio family was still treated with suspicion.[8] Knowing that she might become the sole provider for her family should the un-American claims continue to plague Grier's career, Louise continued to pursue her law degree.

While in law school Louise found out she was pregnant with her third child. During her pregnancy Louise continued attending classes, and the Raggio family moved to the Park Cities in September 1949 to be closer to campus. After Kenneth Gaylord Raggio was born October 18, 1949, Louise dropped out of school and remained home the following spring. She re-enrolled in fall 1950 alongside another woman, Barbara Culver (later named justice to the Texas Supreme Court). In an effort to catch up and finish, Louise began taking classes both during the day and at night. On top of balancing her family responsibilities with her course load, Louise served as the dean of the Dallas Chapter of Kappa Beta Pi, a women's legal sorority with chapters throughout the world.[9] She graduated from SMU in June 1952, number fifty out of her class of one hundred. That summer she traveled to Austin where she completed the Bar exam, passing alongside twenty-three others from Dallas. The Supreme Court held a special session on August 25 to administer oaths to the new attorneys.[10] Louise was a full-fledged lawyer, but one without a job as no law firms would hire her, and even SMU's employment bureau would not send her out for interviews because "they said it would be unkind . . . to go to these law firms and be turned down one after another."[11]

It was not until 1954 that she finally found work, and it was thanks to another woman of the law, Judge Sarah T. Hughes, who encouraged Louise to apply and interview with Dallas County District Attorney Henry Wade. Wade offered Louise the position of assistant DA and put her in charge of child support, juvenile cases, delinquent fathers, and everything dealing with families. She was the first woman to work in the Dallas County DA office, and news of her appointment made headlines: "DA's Staff Adds Feminine Touch"; "Federal Official Hires Woman Aid"; "This Crime Stopper Wears Petticoats." It was noted in all of the articles that the DA's office had added a touch of pulchritude, or beauty, to the staff with the hiring of Louise:

> Mrs. Louise B. Raggio, a five-foot, two-inch, blue-eyed brunette, not much heavier than a short stack of law books, has joined the staff. Previously Wade had 27 men working for him. The lady barrister, who weighs 114 pounds, works on child dependency, support and neglect cases.[12]

On her first day of the job, Louise encountered approximately 400-500 cases of "marital squabbles" and child support. The Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement Support Act, passed in 1950 and amended in 1952 and 1958, allowed Louise legal enforcement of nonpayment for

Louise and Grier Raggio opened a private practice as partners in 1956.

child support across state lines. After its passage Louise suggested that copies of the new law be handed out with each new marriage license as "far fewer fathers would desert their families . . . if they realized that it was no longer possible to escape their obligations by crossing a state line."[13] A year after she started at the DA's office, child support starting coming into Dallas in 163 of her cases.[14] Louise disrupted the boys' club of the DA's office but proved herself. According to Wade, Louise was "one of the best DA's he'd ever had. . . . he didn't realize that a woman could do the job."[15]

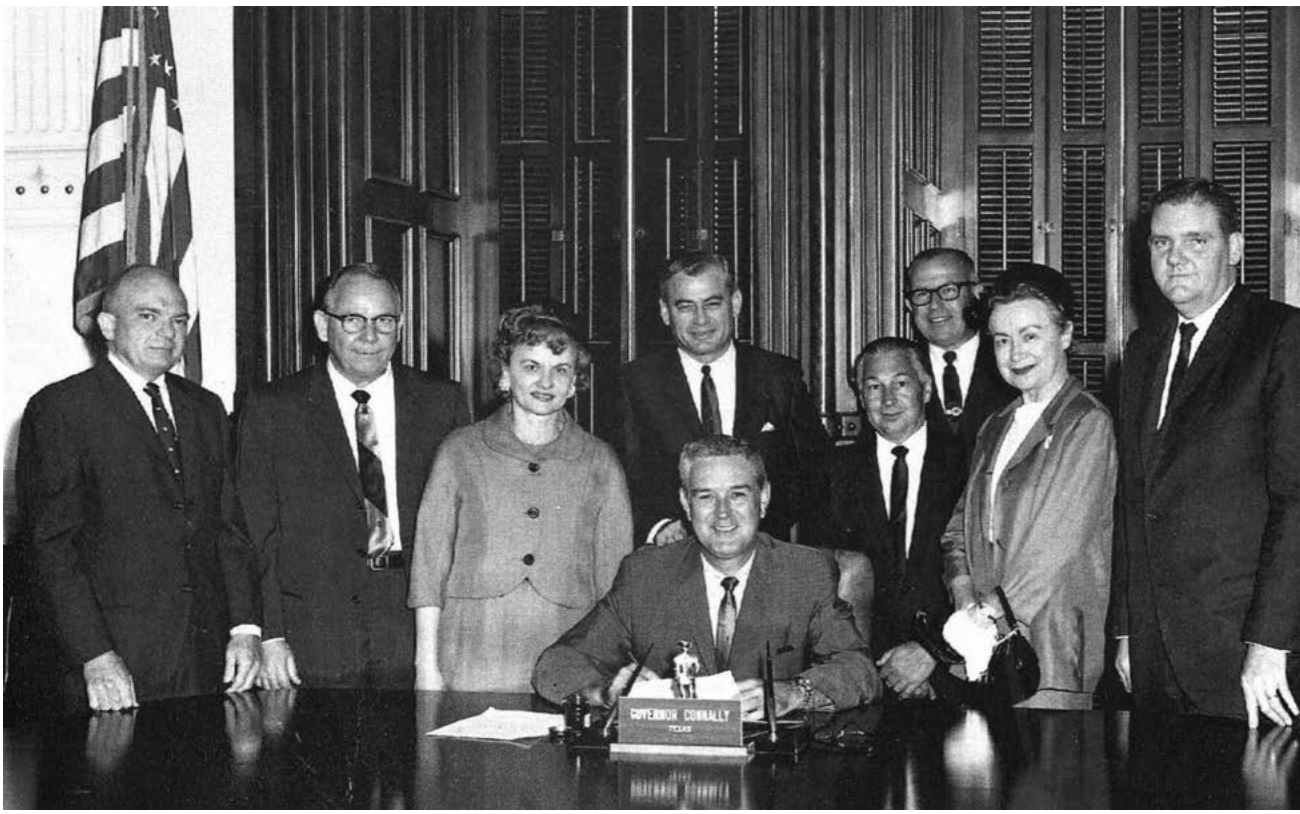
Louise's cases were difficult and emotionally challenging, often involving issues of incest, rape, and abuse. She worked diligently through her backlog and found ways to expedite the process for her clients, representing men and women 50/50 among her caseload. During her time with the DA's office Louise noticed significant discrimination against married women due to the state of Texas' outdated legal statures, which descended from coverture, a legal doctrine that meant a woman's legal identity was absorbed into that of her husband upon marriage, resulting in significantly impeding a married woman's ability to control her finances, custody, or other aspects of her life.[16]

In 1955 Louise was assigned to do criminal prosecution and became the first woman in Dallas to prosecute a criminal case.[17] Her first case, a man charged with driving while intoxicated, also coincided with the first time when woman could serve on juries in Texas.[18] Louise tried her case in front of the first all-women jury in Texas. In April 1955, Grier, frustrated with the government, quit his job and opened a practice with Ennis Walden. He convinced Louise to leave her job at the DA's office to join him in private practice. A year later in April 1956 the couple opened their own law firm, Raggio and Raggio.

Louise kept a list of people she helped and talks she gave to various groups and organizations while at the DA's office. These connections helped populate her client list at her firm. She started out by taking credit collection, misdemeanors, criminal work, wills, anything that brought in money. Her first big case at the firm was a divorce case. "He had heard of a woman lawyer in Dallas who could perform miracles, and he needed a miracle."[19] In working with her clients on divorce cases, Louise noted that "money may not be the root of all evil, but it plays a central role in a marriage."[20]

While building her practice with Grier, Louise continued to engage with professional organizations in her community and raise her three sons. "Good moms find a way to work it out, no matter what path they choose."[21] Grier and Louise made a point of attending State Bar conventions. The exposure led to recognition and involvement within the organization. In 1960 Louise was asked to serve on the newly created Family Law Section of the State Bar, and by 1964 she was elected vice chair, eventually becoming the first woman to chair a State Bar committee. As a legal specialty, family law "was among the least esteemed of the types of law practices, and so was more easily open to women."[22] Louise had lived the legal restrictions of a married woman, both professional and personally. As a lawyer, she needed her husband's signature on court documents; as an only child, her inheritance from her parents was legally controlled by her husband.[23] Lawyers like Louise essentially practiced law without a right to do so. Her work on the Family Law Section marked a turning point for women and families in Texas Law.

Texas was one of seven community property states, meaning that property acquired or earned during marriage belongs equally to husband and wife; a wife's bank account became her husband's after marriage and if she owned property before the marriage, it became his and she needed his signature to do anything with it. While Louise was working her way up in the State Bar Family Law Section, there was a strong push to pass and ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in

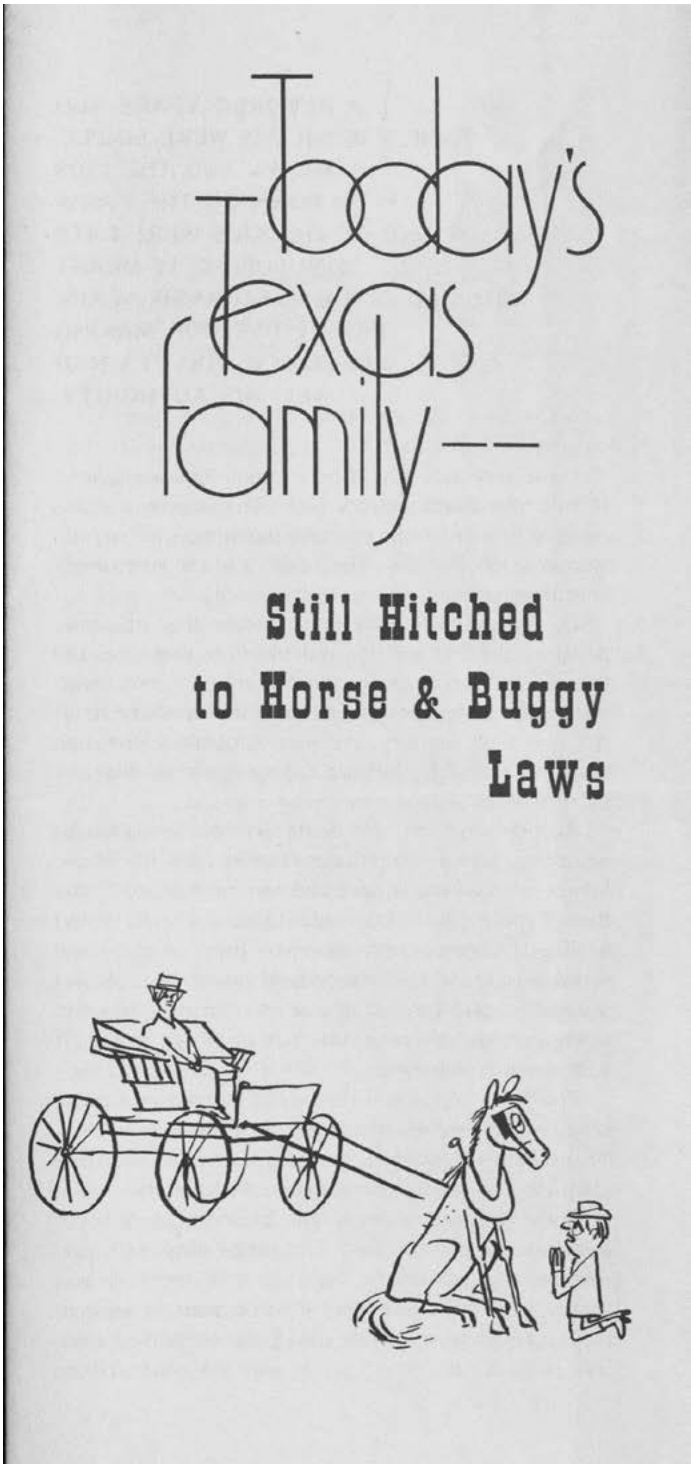


Louise Raggio posed proudly with Governor John Connally in 1967 when he signed the Marital Property Act, which she had been primarily responsible for developing.

Texas. The Texas Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, among others, tried unsuccessfully to pass the ERA on several occasions, but the leaders of the State Bar, "including many female members, opposed the constitutional amendment because of the probable havoc it would wreak on the state's property law if it became effective without prior statutory reform."[24] Louise voted against the ERA and in doing so made many enemies, some calling her a traitor to women. While fully supportive of women's rights, Louise saw that Texas law lacked the infrastructure to support it and that the ERA would likely be repealed.

Instead she directed her attention to the forty-four different laws which discriminated against married women in Texas. Her "way of being sure that equal rights would work was to put the statutes in place first."[25] In an effort to make significant changes to these laws, Louise had the forthcoming marital property act assigned to the family law section. Louise approached the president of the State Bar of Texas at a party about the bill. "I don't know whether he really heard what I said, but he said 'yes.' And then immediately after I got back to Dallas, I wrote him a letter thanking him for assigning it to us."[26]

In 1965 Louise spearheaded a team of lawyers and judges to work on what would become the first part of a new family code project. "Instead of relying on family law attorneys, she recruited experts from other legal disciplines



After seeing the Marital Property Law enacted, Louise Raggio and allies tackled the Texas Family Code, resulting in a thorough revision in 1979. This brochure was among the publicity tools she and her allies employed.

The Raggio family posed for a group photo in 1987. All three sons became attorneys and joined Raggio & Raggio law firm.

such as criminal, corporate, tax and real estate law. Community property and every facet of the law was affected by these changes. . . " so she needed to make sure the bill functioned like a fine Swiss watch.[27] Two years and seven drafts later, the committee had a drafted a new marital property bill for review before the Bar Legislative Committee.

Key provisions of the bill allowed married women control in community property including their personal earnings, something they would have if they were single.[28] Married women in Texas could legally conduct their own affairs, or as noted in *The Dallas Morning News*, a "little woman now can spend her paycheck as she wishes."[29] Another important component of the bill made a wife responsible for support of her husband should he be unable to support himself. The bill truly aimed for equality between a husband and wife. Many of the supporters of the ERA, including Hermione Tobolowksy, another Dallas attorney and chairman of the Texas Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, found the bill to be discriminatory towards women, and possessing many inadequacies.[30] However, because Louise was opposed to the ERA, and not considered one of "those women," she managed to garner increased support for her bill, which passed unanimously in the House.

Governor John Connally signed the Marital Property Act into law in June 1967 but Louise asked the Governor for a postponement until January 1, 1968, in order to conduct seminars and to prepare Texas lawyers for all of the chang-

This formal portrait of Louise Raggio was taken in 1984.

Louise considered herself an evolutionary, not a revolutionary, because she preferred to work in the background of the feminist movement and to work within the system to change it. She capitalized on her image as a quiet, innocent woman who didn't stir the pot.

es going into effect. Because of the success of the Marital Property Act, Louise was asked to chair the American Bar Association Committee on Family Law in the fifty States. Her work was used as a model for marital property laws in other states. In 1967 she received the State Bar of Texas' Citation of Merit award for the Marital Property Act. The revised marital property laws helped to facilitate the eventual passage of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Texas Constitution in 1972.[31]

The president of the State Bar of Texas then tasked the Family Law Section to complete a revision of all family laws in Texas, a project that took more than twelve years to complete. Headquartered at SMU, the project required extensive coordination. Four committees worked on drafting new "legislation for the codification and revision of all other aspects of law relating to the family . . . in the areas of marriage and divorce, custody and support, adoption, and juvenile delinquency and dependency."[32] A symposium was held in which Louise and her team engaged with representatives of various religious faiths and consulted with sociologists, psychologists and psychiatrists, law enforcement officers, social workers, and marriage counselors.[33] Because of the extensiveness of rewriting these laws, funding from the Hoblitzelle and Moody Foundations helped hire a research staff.[34] In 1979, the new Texas Family Code became the first fully codified set of family laws in the world, streamlining marriage, family, and divorce laws that had been scattered in more than fifty volumes of law books.[35]

In 1979 Louise Raggio became the first woman elected to the board of trustees of the Texas Bar Foundation.[36] She also made history at the State Bar when she won election as a Bar director in 1979, and in 1984 when she was elected chairman of the Bar Foundation.[37] Louise was actively involved with the American Bar Association, Texas Bar Foundation, State Bar of Texas, Dallas Bar Association, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Family Place, Women's Foundation, as well as other professional and civic groups. She was also an elite member of the "Dirty

Thirty," or the Matrimonial Network, a group of thirty top divorce lawyers in the country.[38]

Louise considered herself an evolutionary, not a revolutionary, because she preferred to work in the background of the feminist movement and to work within the system to change it. She capitalized on her image as a quiet, innocent woman who didn't stir the pot. "This 'innocence' was a ploy that worked well . . . at the district attorney's office, with the state legislators, and with the fellows at the American Bar Association . . ." until her credentials and her reputation earned her the respect of her male colleagues.[39]

Her career and legal legacy garnered numerous awards, citations, and acclamations before her death on January 23, 2011, including: State Bar of Texas Citation of Merit (1967), Southern Methodist University Outstanding Alumni Award (1972), Women's Center of Dallas Award for Service to Women (1979), American Bar Association Award for Family Law Service (1980), Texas Women's Hall of Fame Inductee (1985), President's Award for Outstanding Lawyer of the Year State Bar of Texas (1987), Sarah T. Hughes Outstanding Attorney award (1993), American Civil Liberties Union Thomas Jefferson award (1994), Margaret Brent Outstanding Woman Lawyer award (1995), Texas Trailblazer award (1996), Texas Women of the Century award (1999), and the Lifetime Achievement award, Family Law Section, of the American Bar Association (2002).

It was her "dedication to see that all women be equal with men under Texas law" that led her to work on what would be her most notable contribution.[40] Prior to 1967, Texas had the worst laws when it came to married women. After the passage of the Marital Property Act and the Texas Family Code, it had one of the best. No provision of the Marital Property Act of 1967 was ever ruled unconstitutional.[41] Louise's legal legacy earned her the title of "the mother of family law." Her accomplishments for equality and legal reform afforded both men and women the opportunity to make choices.[42] L

NOTES

[1]Louise Raggio, *Texas Tornado: The Autobiography of a Crusader for Women's Rights and Family Justice* (New York: Citadel Press, 2003), 4.

[2]"Just doing what had to be done: The Life of Legal Reformer Louise Raggio," documentary pre-production, Box 43, Folder 10, Louise Raggio papers, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

[3]Kenneth E. Hendrickson Jr., "National Youth Administration," *Handbook of Texas Online*, September 24, 2020.

[4]Narration for "Just Doing What had to be Done," Box 43, Folder 9, Louise Raggio papers, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

[5]Debra Baker, "A Lone Star," *ABA Journal,* 84, No. 11 (November 1998), 59.

[6]Raggio, *Texas Tornado*,111.

[7]Grier was wrongfully accused of being a communist and being involved in other "un-American" activities. "We knew that our telephones were tapped. We knew that we were under constant surveillance, but for what we did not know." Jeanne C. "Cezy" Collins, "Louise B. Raggio: Handing the Torch to Today's Generation," *In Brief* (Fall 2004), 2.

[8]After Grier's death in 1988, Louise received hundreds of pages of governmental files under a freedom of information act request. Grier's job with the Department of Agriculture was to determine whether or not ration stamp regulations were being upheld by merchants. The investigation into Grier began when he left behind a training booklet marked restricted during one of the family's moves. The landlady turned it over to the sheriff who turned it over to the FBI; "thus setting off a chain of investigations that haunted us for the rest of Grier's life." Raggio, *Texas Tornado*,116-117; 252-256.

[9]"Madam Nehru of India Will Speak in Dallas," *The Dallas Morning News*, April 11, 1952 (hereafter cited as *DMN*).

[10]"23 From Dallas Licensed After Taking State Bar Exams," *DMN*, August 12, 1952.

[11]Narration for "Just Doing What had to be Done," Box 43, Folder 9, Louise Raggio papers, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

[12]"Federal Official Hires Woman Aid," *Lubbock Evening Journal*, April 9, 1954; "DA's Staff Adds Feminine Touch," DMN, March 21, 1954; "This Crime Stopper Wears Petticoats," St. Albans *Daily Messenger*, April 9, 1954

[13]"Tot-Support Laws Cited by DA's Aid," *DMN*, June 10, 1954.

[14]"Child Support Plan Spreads to 47 States," *DMN*, April 22, 1955, 15.

[15]Narration for "Just Doing What had to be Done," Box 43, Folder 9, Louise Raggio papers, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

[16] Allison Faber, "Raggio, Louise Hilma Ballerstedt," *Handbook of Texas Online*, March 31, 2021.

[17]"Woman New Prosecutor," *DMN*, July 30, 1955.

[18]"First All-Woman Jury has Faith in the Law," *DMN*, September 15, 1955.

[19]Louise Raggio, *Texas Tornado*, 167.

[20]Ibid., 170.

[21]Ibid., 165.

[22]Louise Raggio, "Women Lawyers in Family Law," *Family Law Quarterly,* 33, no. 3 (Fall 1999), 503.

[23]Louise Raggio, *Texas Tornado*, 173.

[24]Louise Ballerstedt Raggio and Reba Graham Rasor, "From Dream to Reality: How to Get a New Code on the Books," *Family Law Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Summer 1974), 107.

[25]Louise Raggio, *Texas Tornado*, 202.

[26]"Just doing what had to be done: The Life of Legal Reformer Louise Raggio," documentary pre-production, Box 43, Folder 10, Louise Raggio papers, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

[27]Debra Baker, "A Lone Star," *ABA Journal*, Journal 84, No. 11 (November 1998), 60.

[28]"Dallas Woman Lawyer Appeals for Bill," *DMN*, February 8, 1967.

[29]Marquita Moss, "'Little Woman' Now Can Spend her Paycheck as She Wishes," *DMN*, May 31, 1967.

[30]"Dallas Woman Lawyer Appeals for Bill," *DMN*, February 8, 1967.

[31]Narration for "Just Doing What had to be Done," Box 43, Folder 9, Louise Raggio papers, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

[32]Eugene L. Smith, "Family Code Project," *Texas Bar Journal*, 30, no. 1 (January 1967), 27.

[33]Ibid., 28.

[34]Mary Brinkerhoff, "Property Law Praised by Mrs. Raggio," *DMN*, March 3, 1967.

[35]Narration for "Just Doing What had to be Done," Box 43, Folder 9, Louise Raggio papers, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

[36]Kimberly Garcia, "Marking a Mark on Legal history," *Texas Bar Journal* 54, no. 11 (December 1991), 1190.

[37]Allison Faber, "Raggio, Louise Hilma Ballerstedt," *Handbook of Texas Online*, March 31, 2021.

[38]Emily Couric, "The Dirty Thirty: America's Elite Divorce Lawyers," *ABA Journal,* Vol. 77, No. 6 (June 1991), 64-69.

[39]Raggio, *Texas Tornado,* pg. 216.

[40]Narration for "Just Doing What had to be Done," Box 43, Folder 9, Louise Raggio papers, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

[41]Elizabeth York Enstam, "Women and the Law," *Handbook of Texas Online*, March 31, 2021.

[42]Narration for "Just Doing What had to be Done," Box 43, Folder 9, Louise Raggio papers, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

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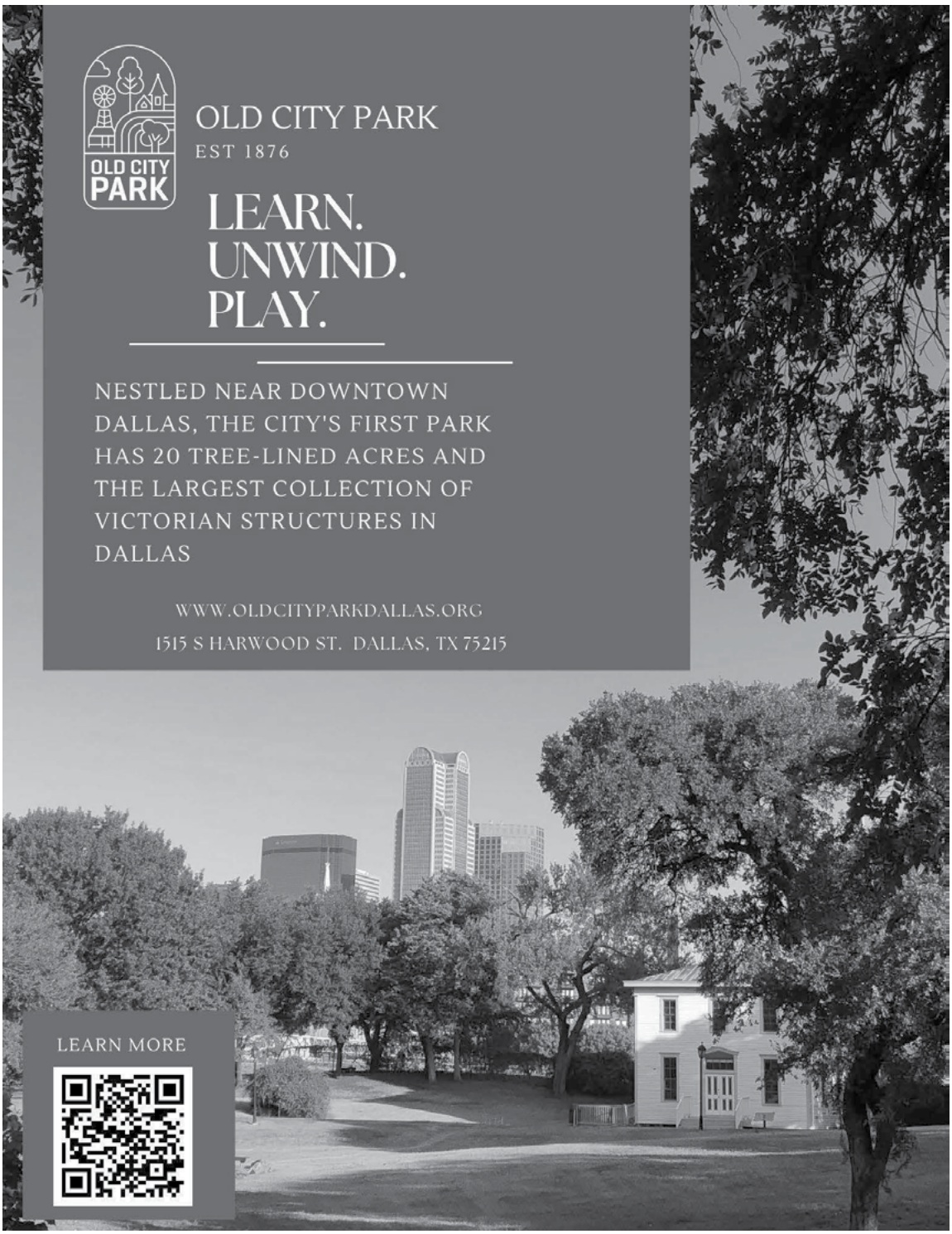
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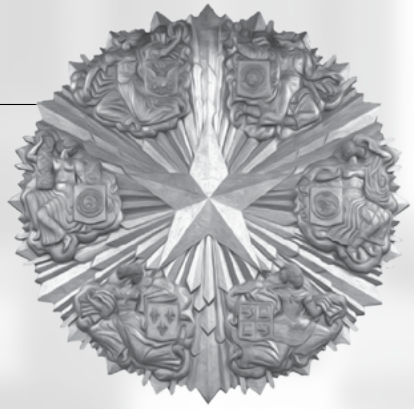

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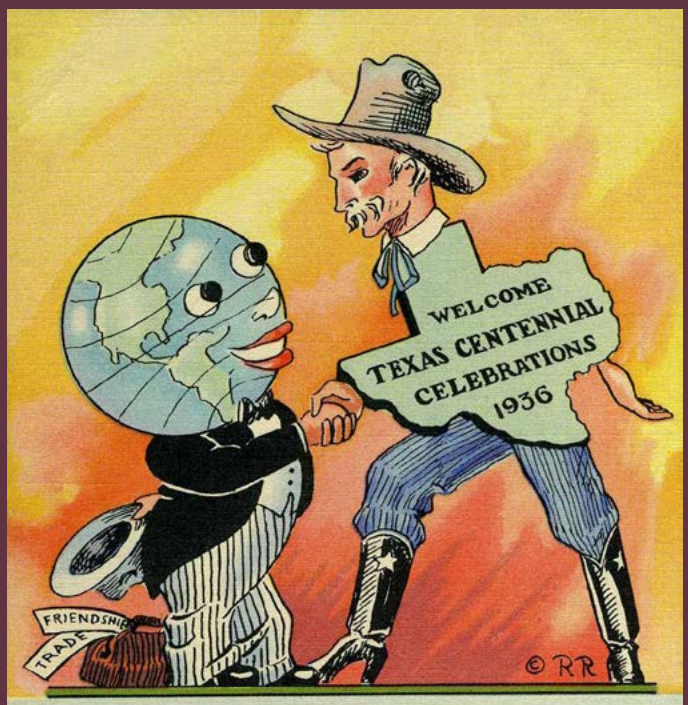
Katy Building

In 1895, the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad Company moved its administrative offices from Denison to Dallas, recognizing that Dallas was becoming the nexus of North Texas commerce. After a few years of renting space in the Gaston and Linz Buildings, the M.K. & T. (or "Katy") Railroad agreed to take the majority of space in a new speculative building to be erected by local businessman John N. Simpson. The site chosen was at the corner of Commerce and Market Streets, with construction beginning in 1911. Architect H. A. Overbeck designed the attractive dark-brick structure, featuring elaborate and colorful terra cotta detailing. The railroad occupied five floors in the building when it was completed in 1912. As rail traffic declined after WW II, so did the railroad's need for office space. By the 1970s, the M.K. & T.'s presence in the building had been reduced to two floors. The old building was carefully remodeled and adapted for multi-tenant configuration and continues to thrive today near the seat of Dallas County government.

—Mark Rice



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