



Old Red Museum of Dallas County History & Culture



ISSUE 7 WINTER 2004

\$350,000 in new federal support announced by Congressman Sam Johnson

Additional federal support for the Old Red Museum of Dallas County History & Culture was announced in February by Congressman Sam Johnson (3rd District) at Old Red Courthouse.



New funding in the amount of \$350,000 will add to the \$1,343,551 of federal support already committed. The grant will bring the total pledges received by the Campaign to Make History at Old Red to \$11,915,282 against a goal of \$13.7-million (please see Development News on final page).

“Old Red will again serve as a beacon, illuminating our past and attracting more people to Dallas,” said the congressman. The announcement, attended by Dallas-area media, continued with a tour of the second floor of Old Red, site of the Museum, and a display of some of the historical photographs recently acquired.

Congressman Johnson’s district includes parts of Collin and Dallas Counties, including residents of Dallas, Garland, Richardson, Rowlett, Sachse, and Sunnyvale.



Reporters join Rep. Sam Johnson on a visit to the site of the Museum.

Beyond Artifacts and Photographs: Witnesses to History

When Old Red Museum of Dallas County History & Culture opens its doors, visitors will be able to see objects and photographs that truly tell the story of Dallas, from fragments of mammoth tusks and John Neely Bryan’s Bible to J.R. Ewing’s Stetson hat and the first

integrated circuit which paved the way for today’s computer.

Artifact identification and collection phase of the

Old Red project is winding down, but an equally important collection process has been underway since the first of the year—the compilation of oral history interviews.



When completed, the Museum will have more



than 100 audio/visual kiosks throughout the exhibit allowing visitors to see and hear images of Dallas’ past. Most of the footage will be from available archival sources

such as film clips, audio recordings and still photography, but several original oral histories produced by Doyle Calvert and conducted by Dr. Darwin Payne will be an integral part of the exhibit.

The collection includes interviews with prominent African-American attorney L. A. Bedford regarding early civil rights efforts in Dallas County; Walter Humann who discusses the development of the interstate and tollway system; Adlene Harrison, the first woman mayor of Dallas; *(continued within)*



The annual Advisory Board reception was an opportunity to showcase the year's artifact and photograph acquisitions. Old Red Museum's leadership, donors and supporters were fascinated by the samples, including audio-visual and digital displays, but the show-stealer was the Museum's youngest member, Regan Alexis, daughter of board member Raymond and Regina Basye.

Eyewitness accounts bring stories to life

(continued from page 1)

Stan Fong, who was the first Asian member of a Dallas County City Council (Garland); Jac Alder, longtime director of Theatre Three in Dallas; and John Schoellkopf who discusses the demise of the Citizen's Charter Association.

The exhibit will also incorporate interviews with Mariangel Rodriguez, local businesswoman whose family ran the Spanish-language Pan-Americano (later the Festival Theater); Pedro Aguirre, former Dallas City Council member who spoke for the Mexican-American community following the Santos Rodriguez incident in the early 1970s; and three prominent Dallas County

women: Elizabeth Blessing, who also served on the Dallas City Council and was the first woman to run for mayor of Dallas; Jan Hart Black, first woman City Manager of Dallas, and executive director of Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce; and Nancy Judy, the first woman elected to the Dallas County Commissioners Court.

These oral histories will be invaluable resources to Old Red's visitors and researchers and will continue to provide the museum's various audiences with first-hand accounts of Dallas' story told in the voices of those who lived that history.



Witnesses to history caught on camera during interviews: Page 1, top, Dr. Smith and Dr. Payne with Elizabeth Blessing below, Stan Fong interviewed by Dr. Payne. On this page, right, Adlene Harrison; below, Jac Alder.

PEOPLE WHO CHANGED THE WORLD: PROFILES OF DALLAS

Bette McMurray Nesmith Graham: Inventor, Entrepreneur, Philanthropist

by Susan McMath Platt

Everyone makes mistakes. Bette Graham made a fortune covering them up.

Born in Dallas in 1924 and raised in San Antonio, Bette Clair McMurray dreamed of being an artist like her mother. Her plans changed when she fell in love with a soldier named Warren Nesmith and left high school to marry him. The Nesmiths had one son, Michael, who found his own fame with the musical group *The Monkees*.

The Nesmiths' marriage ended in divorce, leaving Bette to find a way to support herself and her young son. She landed a secretarial job in Dallas in 1951, working for the chairman of the board of Texas Bank and Trust. Not content with her day job, she also pursued her career as a freelance artist.

In 1954, Bette was inspired to transfer a technique from her art to her office job. Instead of trying to erase her typing errors, she would paint over them. Using a tempera waterbased paint that she blended to match the company stationery and one of her watercolor brushes, she covered her mistakes. Her boss never noticed.

But another secretary did. Bette found a bottle at home, filled it with the correcting fluid, and wrote "Mistake Out" on the label. Her friend was delighted, and soon other secretaries in the building were clamoring for Bette's invention.

Consulting with a chemistry teacher from St. Mark's School, an office supply dealer, and an employee of a paint manufacturing company, Bette spent her spare time trying to refine her formula. Set up in her garage, she used an old mixer to blend paint and chemicals. Her son and his friends were recruited to help fill bottles.

"Mistake Out" was renamed "Liquid Paper," and in 1958, a mention in an office trade magazine brought in 500 orders. General Electric placed the first really large order, requesting 400 bottles in three colors. GE's order was four times Bette's monthly production.

Not even Liquid Paper could help Bette when she mistakenly typed her own company's name on a letter for her boss. She was fired. With her days suddenly free, Bette could devote all her time to Liquid Paper. Her energy paid off. The company sold a million bottles in 1968 and moved into its own plant. Then in 1975 the Liquid Paper Corporation established its international headquarters in Dallas and was generating 500 bottles a minute.



Advances in typewriters, word processors and computers notwithstanding, Liquid Paper is still an office necessity.

Bette said she had built her company to enhance her employees culturally, spiritually and educationally. She helped design the plant, which included a child-care center, a library, and a greenbelt. Bette also displayed art, some of them her own works.

Using her wealth to help others, Bette established two foundations, the Bette Clair McMurray Foundation and the Gihon Foundation. These organizations support projects concerning women's welfare, career guidance for unwed mothers, and shelter and counseling for battered women. The Gihon Foundation's collection of paintings includes works of Georgia O'Keefe and Mary Cassatt.

The Gillette Corporation bought Liquid Paper Corporation in 1979 for nearly \$48 million. Six months after selling the company she had worked so hard to create, Bette Nesmith Graham passed away. At the time of her death, she was planning a building to house both of her foundations and the artwork collection.

People Who Changed the World: Profiles of Dallas is a column that will periodically focus on people in Dallas who made a positive impact on many lives. If you have a suggestion for a profile, please contact the Museum office. Information is provided on the back page.

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Hatton Sumners Foundation Kicks Off Legal Campaign

The Hatton W. Sumners Foundation has pledged \$250,000 to the Campaign to Make History at Old Red Courthouse for the restoration of the Historic Courtroom located on the fourth floor.

The Foundation is named for one of the brightest lights ever to shine from Old Red Courthouse.

Hatton William Sumners (1875-1962) began a distinguished career of public service that spanned the first half of the twentieth century when he was elected Dallas County Attorney, officed at Old Red, in 1900.

His election in 1912 to an at-large Congressional seat propelled him into the federal arena. In 1914, he was elected to represent the 5th Congressional District, continuing in this service until 1947. He and Sam Rayburn were acclaimed as the two most influential congressmen then serving in the House. Among other accomplishments, he was responsible for the Federal Reserve Bank coming to Dallas.

The Sumners Foundation is taking a leadership role in the campaign to raise \$1,000,000 for the Courtroom restoration. An upcoming issue of this newsletter will be devoted to the Dallas legal community's efforts in our restoration.

Mitchell Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas boosts total

The Margot W. and Ben H. Mitchell Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas has become a major benefactor, pledging \$100,000 to the Campaign to Make History at Old Red Courthouse.

The late Ben Mitchell, president of Employers Casualty Insurance Company, and his late wife, Margot, cared deeply about the civic needs of Dallas. Grants from the Margot W. and Ben H. Mitchell Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas cover the arts, education, medical issues, social services, children's organizations and medical services.

Scaling History

Fundraising campaigns traditionally indicate progress on a thermometer of giving. We scaled ours against the march of time of Dallas County history. Our current total of pledges and gifts brings us to the year 1981.

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\$11.9-m

Campaign nearing \$12-million

The Campaign to Make History at Old Red Courthouse has received \$11,915,282 in gifts and pledges toward the goal of \$13.7-million.

Major Benefactors (\$100,000 and greater) include:

Crystal Charity Ball 50th Anniversary

Linda & Mitch Hart

Federal Economic Development Grant

EDI Special Projects Grant

Summerlee Foundation

Hillcrest Foundation

The Rosine Foundation Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas

Anonymous

Meadows Foundation

Pauline Allen Gill Foundation

Hoblitzelle Foundation

Bosque Foundation

The James M. Collins Foundation

The Hatton W. Sumners Foundation

The Eugene McDermott Foundation

Rosewood Foundation

TXU

Bank of America

Belo Foundation

The Constantin Foundation

Dallas Foundation

The Patrick & Beatrice Haggerty Foundation

Margot W. and Ben H. Mitchell Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas

Simmons Family Foundation

Roy and Christine Sturgis Charitable and Educational Trust

Texas Instruments Foundation

We are grateful for the support of all donors at all levels; a list of benefactors is found on our website, www.oldred.org

OLD RED MUSEUM OF DALLAS COUNTY HISTORY & CULTURE

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