

Houston Philosophical Society

644nd Meeting

Cohen House

April 21, 2011

Under the leadership of President Herb Ward, the Society gathered for a reception and dinner meeting. Following dinner, an election was held for officers, section heads, and new members.

The officers:

President:

Fields Alexander

Vice-President:

Dr. Wade Adams

Treasurer:

Don Byrnes

Recording Secretary:

Dr. David Scott

Membership Secretary:

Pat Hughes

The Section Heads:

Section (A)

Engineering, Mathematics, and Natural and Life Sciences:

Pat Hughes

Section (B)

Health, Medicine, and Psychology:

Wayne Shandera, M.D

Section (C) Government and Laws:

George Barnstone Section (D)

Humanities and Social Sciences:

Will McCorquodale

Section (E)

Architecture, Fine Arts, Music, Theater, and Writing:

Walter Widrig

Section (F)

Business, Financial, Philanthropic, Religious, and Educational Organizations:

Charles Dunkin

New Members:

1. Dr. Melissa Marse (E)

Nominated By:

Michael Collins / Don Byrnes

2. C. E. (Ed) Rinehart (A)

Nominated By:

Lyda Vellekoop / C. Herb Ward

3. Dr. Anatoly B. Kolomeisky (A)

Nominated By:

James Kinsey / Robert Curl, Jr.

4. Emily Todd (E)

Nominated By:

Walter Widrig / George Barnstone

5. Dr. Sharon Young (B)

Nominated By:

Mitch Young / Graham Glass

6. Anthony Ray Chase (C)

Nominated By:

George Barnstone / Rufus Cornier

7. John M. Parras (C)

Nominated By:

George Barnstone / David Gerger

8. Dr. Emily Ballew Neff (E)
Nominated By:
Walter Widrig / Robert Patten

All nominees, section heads, and officers were elected by ballot of the members present.

President Ward introduced Gov. William P. Hobby,
Radoslav A. Tsanoff Professor of Public Policy, Rice University

Bill Hobby has devoted his life to public service to his country, his state, and his city--as a naval officer, journalist, parliamentary expert, governmental policymaker, university agent, Lieutenant Governor of Texas, university professor and Chancellor of the University of Houston System.

Born January 19, 1932, in Houston, Bill Hobby graduated from Rice University in 1953. After graduation, he served four years in the United States Navy. During his Navy days, he married Diana Poteat Stallings of North Carolina. They have four children and nine grandchildren.

Subsequent to his military service, he joined the staff of The Houston Post, the flagship of his family's communications business. He was President of The Houston Post for nearly 21 years when the family sold the paper in 1983. He then served as Chairman of the Board of H&C Communications until his retirement in 1996.

Bill Hobby received his first major exposure to the governmental process at age 27, as Senate Parliamentarian of the 56th Texas Legislature under the guidance of Lieutenant Governor Ben Ramsey.

After the Texas Constitution was changed to lengthen the term of office from two to four years, Bill Hobby won re-election in 1974, 1978, 1982, and 1986, serving longer than any Lieutenant Governor in Texas history.

From 1995 to 1997 he was Chancellor of the University of Houston System.. Currently, he is the Radoslav Tsanoff Professor at Rice University.

He serves as a director for The Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation and the Center for Public Policy Priorities, and is a past director for Southwest Airlines.

In 2010, his book *How Things Really Work: Lessons from a Life in Politics* (with co-author Saralee Tiede) was published by the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History.

Bill Hobby's and his family's era in Texas politics and public service brought tremendous progress in numerous areas--public education, mental health, water conservation, fiscal management, indigent health care, corrections, and public assistance programs, to name a few.

But none of his many achievements is more important than his determination that Texas must sustain its commitment to excellence in higher education, and his support for the resources that make that possible.

Presentation

A POLITICAL ATLAS OF TEXAS

CENSUS, APPORTIONMENT, REDISTRICTING

Census

Governor Hobby presented an informative and interesting discussion on the importance of census, apportionment, and redistricting for the State of Texas. The current census gives eleven additional seats in the U.S. Congress to eight states with Texas gaining four seats [+15%]. Louisiana lost one seat. Republicans will benefit from seven of the eleven additional seats.

The state legislature will redraw 232 districts: 36 congressional, 31 state senatorial, 150 state house, and 15 State Board of Education. Counties, cities, and school boards will redraw thousands more. The political maneuvering by the two parties for control is called Gerrymandering.

He presented the most famous political cartoon in history. It added "gerrymander" to our language. The definition of "gerrymander" is simple: I redistrict. You gerrymander.



Gerrymandering, drawing a district to elect or defeat a particular candidate, is a time-honored technique, practiced by the Founding Fathers, that frequently doesn't work. The gerrymander shown above occurred in Massachusetts in 1812. The Jeffersonian legislature tried to defeat an

incumbent Federalist congressman by drawing a district a cartoonist made look like a salamander. Elbridge Gerry was governor, hence the name.

The Federalist won. The gerrymander didn't work. Altering voting boundaries has been used since including Texas. Some states created state-wide districts to avoid the problem. The U.S. Congress prohibited at-large and multi-member districts in 1967. Tom DeLay famously gerrymandered the Texas map ten years ago.

Apportionment

The first apportionment controversy was in the Constitutional Convention when the Founding Fathers excluded 40% of the slaves from the apportionment base by counting them as three fifths of a person.

The second was when President George Washington cast the first-ever Presidential veto. He vetoed a bill favored by Secretary of State Jefferson but opposed by Treasury Secretary Hamilton probably because it gave New York too many votes. Over the years many battles were fought over trying to gain political advantage. Examples of issues over the years: Missionaries are not counted in the census. The status of prisoners in jail, and the status of members of the armed forces overseas have been contentious.

In Texas, Swisher County was left out of the census by the Legislature in 1922. The Texas Supreme Court put it back.

History of the Census and Apportionment

One of the earliest records of a census was by Moses to see if he had enough men to conquer the Canaanites. The Romans famously held a census on the day of the birth of Jesus. The question of undercounting was solved by Joseph Stalin when he killed the census takers in 1937 when he felt they had undercounted Soviet Union citizens. The 1939 census showed many more citizens. The Nazis used the census in Germany in the 1940s to find Jews.

The Census and Apportionment in our country have been at the heart of political discourse from the beginning. The small state/large state bias was solved with the establishment of a bicameral Congress. During reconstruction in the 1870s the knowledge that the South now had more votes than before even though they were defeated resulted in the passage of a number of amendments.

The momentous court decision affecting representation was Baker vs. Carr [1962]. The Supreme Court before this case had refused to hear re-districting cases. The decision in this case required states to henceforth reapportion by population and not by land. Thus the cities now were given equal representation at the expense of seats to rural areas.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is another key act that helped proper representation.

Recording Secretary

Earl J. Brewer MD