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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two of the authors of The Austin-Boston Connection: Five Decades of House Democratic Leadership, Dr. Tony Champagne and Dr. Jim Riddlesperger, will speak as part of the annual Poage Lecture Series on March 24, 2011.

For over 50 years, a balance of power between Texas and Massachusetts reigned in the House of Representatives with alternating party leaders. This powerful and steady alliance intrigued several political scientists, who dedicated 10 years to research this connection with the end result being, The Austin-Boston Connection.

Champagne is a professor at the University of Texas at Dallas and Riddlesperger is a professor at Texas Christian University; both are political scientists. Douglas B. Harris and Garrison Nelson also contributed to the book, but will not be present at the lecture.

Champagne hopes that the lecture will educate the audience on how these mentor-protégé relationships between Austin and Boston representatives shaped the history of Congress. "It [the lecture] will provide a good sense of Congressional history for the audience, as well as an understanding of the personalities that shaped Congress over this half-century in American politics," Champagne said.

The research accumulated for The Austin-Boston Connection included many interviews with people associated with Sam Rayburn, an important Texas figure, and "extensive archival research at numerous Presidential and Congressional libraries," Champagne said.

With the formation of this carefully constructed balance of power, an alliance formed in the New Deal era, contributing to the rebuilding of the North-South coalition and influencing regional and racial politics. These personal relationships mended political divisions, offering an ideal picture of a balance of power for modern American politics.

The lecture will take place in Packard Hall in Marrs McLean Science Building on the campus of Baylor University at 4:00 p.m. A reception in Poage Legislative Library will follow at 5:15 p.m. Faculty, staff, students and local citizens will attend the lecture, hosted by the Poage Legislative Library and co-sponsored by The Texas Collection and the Baylor Bookstore/Follett Higher Education Group.

The lecture, reception and book signing are free and open to the public. Please contact the Poage Library (254-710-3540) for further information or questions about visitor parking permits.

For more information, contact Ben Rogers, Director of the W. R. Poage Legislative Library by email at Ben_Rogers@baylor.edu or by phone at (254) 710-3540.

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