

Baylor libraries pay tribute to the memory of Sept. 11 | The Baylor Lariat

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W.R. Poage Legislative Library's 9/11 exhibit, "Not Forgotten," will be open until Dec. 2. The exhibit is a visual memorial of Sept. 11 and seeks to honor those who lost their lives in the attacks and those who were left behind.
Ambika Kashi Singh | Lariat Photographer

By Ashley Yeaman
Reporter

A new exhibit at the Poage Legislative Library presents a visual memorial of the Sept. 11 attacks, focusing on the sequence of events, the initial responses and the lasting aftermath.

Marking the 10-year anniversary of the event that transformed America, "Not Forgotten" salutes both those who lost their lives that day and those left behind.

[Ben Rogers](#), director of the library, said the exhibit was designed to focus on Americans rather than their attackers.

"In the last 10 years, we've collected videos and books and magazines and anything related to 9/11 and terrorism," Rogers said. "But for this particular part of the exhibit, we didn't want to go into the terrorism aspect of it.

This is just commemorating the people who died and the event itself."

At the Wall of Remembrance in the exhibit, visitors can write their thoughts and memories of Sept. 11 on comment cards that are then pinned to the wall for visitors to read.

"An integral part of the exhibit is people's response to the event," Rogers said.

To get a head start on the wall before the exhibit opened, the library sent out comment cards to individuals in the Baylor and Waco community.

The returned cards describe a mixture of feelings, from shock and hopelessness to courage and determination.

Pattie Orr, vice president of information technology and dean of university libraries was in Boston, Mass., working at [Wellesley College](#) on the day of the attacks.

"I remember that we all went to give blood, thinking the victims would be sent to Boston hospitals later that day, but they never came. So sad. No victims to help and so many lives lost," Orr wrote.

Sinai Wood, an associate professor and documents librarian at Baylor, said on her comment card that the attacks left a permanent mark on America.

"The day unfolded and so did the realization that our lives and our country would be changed forever," Sinai wrote. "We have to always remember the bad, but also the very good that makes our country what it is, the 'can do' spirit, the American spirit of never giving up, persevering."

The exhibit at the Poage Library seeks to capture the dual nature of the attacks, illustrating both the tragedy as well as the will of a nation to carry on.

Rogers said immediately after the Sept. 11 attacks, the library began to collect newspapers from 24 different cities, including Dallas, Houston, Waco, Miami, San Francisco and Washington, D.C., to document the events.

These front pages and other articles are on display at the exhibit, along with supplementary exhibits at [Moody Memorial Library](#) and [Jesse H. Jones Library](#).

The newspapers have also been scanned and are now available to researchers online through the library's Project 9-11, an attempt to preserve as many of the original publications as possible.

The Poage exhibit also memorializes victims of all three attacks, including the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and Shanksville, Pa., where United Airlines Flight 93 crashed.

Amid the tragedy there are also stories of survival.

Texas Sen. [Brian Birdwell](#), representing District 22, which includes McLennan County, was in the Pentagon when it was hit.

He survived after receiving third-degree burns on more than 60 percent of his body and has since received more than 39 surgeries to treat his injuries.

Many of Birdwell's personal artifacts are on display at the Poage Library, including military awards and a piece of the Pentagon, along with his book "Refined by Fire."

A short documentary of Birdwell recounting his personal story is being shown as well. The documentary can also be viewed online at www.iamsecond.com.

Birdwell will be the keynote speaker at "Baylor Remembers: A Service of Remembrance" at 5 p.m., Sunday in Waco Hall.

Humanitarian relief efforts are also documented at the Poage exhibit, which includes a display of commemorative T-shirts designed by [Mimi Irvin](#), co-owner of [Village Bakery](#) in West.

The sale of the shirts helped raised money for Los Angeles firemen.

Lasting impact from the attacks is illustrated through displays of changes in airport security, along with pictures of buildings to be placed around the [World Trade Center Memorial and Museum](#).

The exhibit is the result of work done by [Rachel Carson](#), curator; Emily Carrington, graphic designer; and assistants [Mary Goolsby](#) and Edwin Cook.

Carrington hopes the exhibit is a vivid reminder of the events of Sept. 11.

"It is important that events such as 9/11 are remembered so we can better understand the world we live in," Carrington said. "I hope that anyone who sees the exhibit takes some time to remember that day. It is sometimes easy to become distant and numb with events such as this. But 10 years was not that long ago, it is still fresh, and I think we need to remember the impact this event had on our country."

Likewise, Rogers said he hopes the exhibit educates individuals about the event, as well as the Poage Library.

"It's really an educational exhibit to bring Baylor students up-to-date on what happened," Rogers said. "We see the exhibit as bringing the Baylor community up-to-date, as well as hopefully bringing in the Waco community. We also do the exhibits to let students know that there is a library here that

collects political materials.”

The exhibit will be on display through Dec. 2.

On the “Wall of Remembrance,” [Neal T. Jones](#), a former Hill County prosecutor and state representative who currently co-owns a lobby practice in Austin, submitted a comment card about the perseverance of Americans in the face of tragedy. His statement captures the overall theme of the exhibit.

“The immediate response of the American spirit was incredible to witness,” Jones wrote. “I was moved by Americans who united to seek God’s guidance, his strength and his grace to carry on in the face of terrorism. 9/11 will be forever etched in our beings, but so will the American spirit and will to overcome.”