

Wichita Falls Times Record News

Achievements of a lifetime

By Jessica Langdon/Times Record News
August 26, 2006

A man who helped shape history in North and West Texas is making plans to leave much of his own passion for history where future generations will be able to see it.

Jack Hightower, who for decades served the state and the nation — with a career that included terms in the Texas House, the Texas Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives — celebrates his 56th anniversary with his wife, Colleen, today, a few days before another milestone in his life.

Hightower will turn 80 on Sept. 6.

His alma mater has several projects in the works to celebrate his years, as well as the Hightowers' careers and contributions over the decades.

Jack and Colleen Hightower and their three daughters graduated from Baylor University. Hightower earned his law degree in 1951 and has agreed to leave his collection of more than 2,700 signed books with the Baylor Collections of Political Materials at the W.R. Poage Legislative Library.

Hightower has built the collection throughout most of his life and has concentrated on significant authors, he said by phone from his Austin home this week. He focused on important figures, with an emphasis on Texas.

Hightower admitted he's a bit of a packrat when it comes to keeping papers, and he provided Baylor with his papers collected throughout his career.

The university has already received some of his materials, but will take on the significant portion upon his death, Hightower said.

Works include writings of five U.S. presidents before Abraham Lincoln, "and every president since Lincoln," he said. He'd love to add something of Lincoln's to the set, but has found price tags to start at around \$100,000 for those.

Hightower joked that he has to mention that type of purchase to his wife first.

The library has started building a special state-of-the-art book vault to hold treasures from Hightower's compilation, plus other important pieces from other collections. The library welcomes gifts in honor of Jack and Colleen Hightower, and those donations

will go toward that project.

The Poage Library also wants to create a different type of collection in the coming weeks. It asked friends and colleagues of Jack and Colleen Hightower to help shower the couple with letters and cards in honor of Jack Hightower's birthday, as well as the couple's years of service.

The library hopes to have all those materials by Oct. 1 to have them bound into a presentation volume.

Letters and cards may be sent to:

Jack Hightower
c/o Poage Library
One Bear Place No. 97153
Waco, Texas 76798.

An exhibit starting in early October at the Poage Legislative Library will be called "The Hightowers: Integrity - Justice - Service."

"I thought those three words summed up his life," said Ben Rogers, director of the Baylor Collections of Political Materials. He said integrity, justice and service are words by which Hightower has lived.

"They really had West Texas at their heart," Rogers said of the couple.

Jack Hightower had the opportunity to represent his hometown, Memphis, Texas, as well as Colleen's hometown, Tulia, in addition to Vernon, where they settled and lived for years, and Wichita Falls, among many other communities.

Materials from the Poage Legislative Library offered a summary of the Hightower's works.

- Texas State Representative
- 46th Judicial District Attorney
- Board of Trustees, Midwestern State University
- Texas State Senate
- 13th Congressional District representative
- First Attorney General of Texas.
- Texas State Supreme Court justice

Colleen Hightower retired in summer 2001 after 58 years of involvement in church music. She had been assistant organist at the First Baptist Church of Austin.

When she retired, she wrote about the beginning of her love of music and the sacrifices her father made to get her a piano when he realized she was serious about learning to

play.

A formal reception will be held for the Hightowers on Nov. 30 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the exhibit area of the Poage Library at Baylor University.

Those who plan to send a card or letter by Oct. 1, who would like an invitation to the Nov. 30 reception, or would like more information about the book vault may write to:

Ben Rogers, Director of Collections of Political Materials
One Bear Place 97153
Waco, Texas 76798-7153

Reporter Jessica Langdon can be reached at (940) 763-7530 or by e-mail at [langdonj\(at\)TimesRecordNews.com](mailto:langdonj@TimesRecordNews.com).

Copyright 2006, Times Record News. All Rights Reserved.

http://www.timesrecordnews.com/trn/local_news/article/0,1891,TRN_5784_4947186,00.html