



THE HIGHTOWERS: Integrity ~ Justice ~ Service

To commemorate the 80th birthday of Judge Jack E. Hightower, the Baylor Collections of Political Materials will open an exhibit about the life of service shared by Jack and Colleen Hightower. Opening on October 7, 2006 in the W. R. Poage Exhibit Gallery, this exhibit will highlight the Judge's years of public service along with Colleen's service as a church organist, wife, mother, and supporter. The theme of the exhibit will be "The Hightowers: Integrity ~ Justice ~ Service."

Jack Hightower developed an early interest in preserving history. Even before he visited the Texas Centennial exposition in 1936 at age 10, he had already made scrapbooks about George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and the King George of England. Traveling by train from Memphis in the panhandle to Dallas opened the eyes of a young boy to his future world. While his parents operated a greenhouse and nursery, Jack had plenty of time to make scrapbooks, making two more about the Centennial when he returned home. He also learned to type at an early age in order to label his creations.

When Hightower graduated from high school, he spent one summer at Baylor before enlisting in the Navy in 1944. After discharge, he returned to Baylor a step up on other veterans entering as freshmen. While a student, he met Colleen Ward from Tulia, Texas, another west Texas panhandle town. She had also traveled by train to Dallas in 1936 for the Centennial, but did not meet Jack until enrolling at Baylor. At Baylor, Jack worked for six years in The Texas Collection with Guy B. Harrison.

After graduating from Baylor with a law degree in 1951, Jack and Colleen settled in Vernon, Texas, where they raised their three girls: Ann, Amy, and Alison. Just two years later, Jack was elected to the Texas House. After one term, he resigned to become District Attorney for the Forty-sixth Texas Judicial District. In 1961, Hightower ran unsuccessfully for the U. S. House. Not to be discouraged, he was elected to the Texas Senate in 1965 and served for ten years before running successfully for the U. S. House in 1974. He served the 13th Congressional District of Texas from 1975 to 1985. This included thirty-three counties stretching from Wichita Falls to Amarillo.

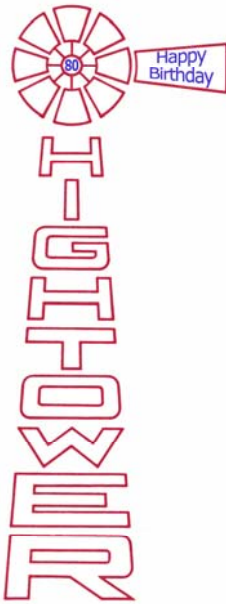


After a disappointing bid for a sixth term in 1984, Hightower served as First Attorney General of Texas until his election to the Texas State Supreme Court in 1987. He presided on the Court until his retirement in January, 1996.

After *retiring*, Judge Hightower was appointed by President Bill Clinton to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. He served as Commissioner from 1999 to 2005. Since 2001, he has served as Sovereign Grand Inspector General of the

Scottish Rite of Free Masonry of Texas; Chairman of the Board, Scottish Rite Hospital of Texas in Dallas; and Chairman of the Board, Scottish Rite Education Association of Texas.

Jack and Colleen Hightower have been members of the Baylor library's Board of Advisors for a several years and are lifetime members of the Baylor Alumni Association.



In 1985, Judge Hightower began depositing his political and personal papers in the Baylor Collections of Political Materials documenting his service as a Texas State Senator and as a U. S. Representative. In the intervening years, he has continued to add materials from his years as First Attorney General of Texas and as a Texas Supreme Court justice as well as numerous items documenting Texas and U.S. history. Among these are original 19th century legislation related to Texas, newspapers and magazines about important historical events, and fifty years of media from vinyl recordings to computer tapes, In addition, he will also be depositing over 2,700 autographed books from John Quincy Adams to George W. Bush.

If you would like to participate in honoring the Hightowers, please send a card or letter to the library. These will be bound into a presentation volume and presented to the Hightowers at the opening of the exhibit on October 7th.

Poage Legislative Library
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