

The Growth of Development of the Public Library in Buda: Profile in Courage

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Library Board of Trustee Inservice and Orientation

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There have been many players in the growth of development of the public library for the City of Buda. There have been many dedicated persons with a tremendous amount of energy and courage in the interest of having a public library from the first library that came to Buda in the 1960s, the Book Mobile.

The Book Mobile was a multicounty agreement that was signed in June 1962 for a free bookmobile demonstration that had seven stops in Hays County. **The Rural Service Division of the Texas State Library** had five bookmobiles which had a custom made body built on a two ton truck chassis that had a carrying capacity of 1,500 to 1,800 books. They were equipped with air-conditioning and heating units. There was a driver, librarian and clerk for 8, 500 books in each demonstration. The program was under the **Rural Library Service Act** and administered through the **Texas State Library** and in turn the Commissioners Court of the various counties. That was 32 years ago. The bookmobile would first stop at the Buda School—at that time, grades 1-12—then park in downtown Buda, near the Moore Building for the public to use.

The bookmobile service lasted from July 1962 and ended January 1965. Books were divided among the various libraries. The next time the public used the library system, they went to the Buda City Hall where a 6' x 48" bookshelf was placed behind the door next to the south window. When you opened the door, you couldn't see the "Library." It was based on the honor system; you took a book, signed the card and left it in the provided box and checked yourself in when you returned the book. That was 23 years ago.

The **Buda Community Women's Club** breathed life into the library by volunteering. They loved and cared for it from the beginning. They tried to get the old Christ Church Building that was vacant at the time, and not being successful, they turned to the Buda United Methodist Church. They were persistent and found the first donor, Mrs. Minnie Belle Heep, who gave \$15,000 towards a Butler Building that was sold at a reduced price. The 1200 sq. ft. building received books from Luling, Lockhart, Jourdanton, Austin, Kyle, San Marcos, Gonzales and Navasota. The tin structure had its grand opening in April 1984. An antique desk was donated by the Commissioner's Court from the Hays County Courthouse for the librarian. A volunteer, Dorothy Schwartz, worked 20 hours a week for 14 months.

In 1980, The Buda Community Women's Club went to the Buda City Council and asked the city to adopt an ordinance to accept the library as a department of the city so that the Buda Library could obtain state and federal funds for the operation and improvement of the library. Also, they asked the city to create a Board of Trustees. Edythe Brown and Joy Thedford had served as co chairs before Dr. Charles McCormick became the first President of the Board of Trustees when the building was dedicated on April 23, 1984.

In 1980 when the ordinance was requested, the mayor at the time was Dr. McCormick, who signed the document which read: "*The Board shall have no power to create obligations which are binding on the City of Buda. All actions of the Board are subject to review, revision and veto by the Buda City Council. The Buda Public Library shall be a self sufficient and self sustaining entity. No funds from the City of Buda are to be appropriated for its operations; provided, however, that the City of Buda may at its option, provide suitable premises for the Buda Public Library to conduct its operations.*"

In 1985, the library qualified for membership in the **Central Texas Library System**, and in 1985, the Buda City Council began funding the library, giving the library budget \$1,000. Hays County Commissioners gave the budget \$5,000. Both the city and county increased the amount each year but the gap began to narrow. For example, in 1988, the city gave \$3000 and the county gave \$5,000. In 1992, the city gave \$7,000 and the county gave less, \$6,300. This coming year, the city is budgeting \$10,000 and the county is budgeting \$11,000.

Quoting **Librarian Marjorie Martinez**, "The state and federal funding is 7%, the City of Buda is 24% and Hays County 26% and local contributions are 43%. The Buda Community Women's Club, the Friends of the Public Library of Buda, Texas, P.E.C. employees, the **Buda Lions Club** and library trustees fundraisers are the sources of local contributions.

The library is on land that was termed "The Reservation" by Mrs. Trimble when she set aside land for the railroad and the public's use in the 1880s. The library (The Basil Anthony Moreau Memorial Library) is on land close to where the first train depot was located and later moved to Houston and Main Street. There was, at one time a road connecting to Main Street and Cherry between the present library and the gazebo on the Green Belt and at one time, there was a skating rink south of the library.

There have been three hired librarians after volunteer Dorothy Schwartz. Mary Lowther served 1984-23, Lynn Herms served 1985-89, and Marjorie Martinez was hired July 1989. Mary Lowther resigned to work for the Green Thumb Older Worker Program Inc., which operates the Senior Community Service Employment Program sponsored by the Texas Farmers Union. Mary worked in the Hays Consolidated ISD elementary library, and last year returned to work in the Buda Public Library, the Basil Anthony Moreau Memorial Library, the City of Buda Library.

Following Dr. McCormick a Board of Trustee President was Mary Lou Kelly, 86-87; Bea Campbell 87; Jim Calderon 88-89; Mary Giberson 89-90; Barbara Pecuch 90-91 and 92; and George Cuningham 93-94.

Librarian Lynn Herms was persistent and diligent in encouraging on-coming board members to apply for a \$100,000 grant administered by the Texas State Library to build a large facility for the fast growing library. Grant money began in 1984. The Frank Dobie Library Trust gave \$4,000 for books from the Graduate School of Library and Information at UT Austin. A computer system grant was received in 1986 from the Central Texas Library System.

Buda could qualify for a 5,000 sq. ft building, according to the state's demographics. The project is funded by a U.S. Dept. of Education grant administered by the Library Construction Service Division of the Texas State Library.

Material had been gathered on another Butler building in 1988, and in 1989 Butler was contacted and **David Besset (who later designed the present Buda City Hall)** designed 2,400 sq. ft. building that would cost an estimated \$150,000. We needed a 5,000 sq. ft. building and we thought we could raise \$100,000 to qualify us for the \$100,000 grant money, but we needed an architect according to Dr. Bill Gooch, Texas State Librarian.

Dr. Gooch advised the board, answered many questions and said from the beginning, "You can do it!" At library reports to the Buda City Council, their questions were answered and the city was told about the interest of **Robert Hill** in the project. Robert, architect, who had been contacted by the library board, was a native of Buda, graduate of the Hays schools, graduate of UT at Austin School of Architecture, member of a large architectural firm in Houston and winner of gold and silver architecture awards. He was the choice of both the Board of Trustees and the City of Buda. Meetings were held and the space was studied and walked to make a final decision about the site. Robert said, "I want to design a building that contrasts, but not competes with other buildings; one

that visitors should take note of and remember the town for it." That he did!

The next important step in building the new library was to find some major contributors. An anonymous donor gave \$15,000. Minnie Belle Heep again gave \$15,000, and Lois and Hy Price gave \$10,000. They were the first believers!

The Board of Trustees wanted to have a fundraiser that involved the whole community. Marianne Hennig organized the silent auction, dinner and dance at the Buda Elementary School. Because of the event, three donors gave \$1,000 a piece: Cele and Wally Scott, Orlena Hehl and Joe and Betty Rogers. The board had accumulated \$4,000 in the building fund that was drawing interest, and the board felt that they were well on the way. This was the year, also, that the Buda Fest committee gave \$1,000. **The Buda Lions Club** had been interested in the project and later pledged \$7,000 to be paid over a seven year period.

In 1990, the building fund received the largest contribution from the **Santa Cruz Catholic Church** in Buda when Barbara Pecuch was president of the Board of Trustees. They pledged \$75,000. It was a gift to commemorate the church's 50th Anniversary and they asked to have the name Buda Public Library changed to The Basil Anthony Moreau Memorial Library. Now the building fund amounted to \$136,000, and chances of applying and receiving the \$100,000 grant from the state looked good.

The Board of Trustees submitted their grant proposal and on June 6, 1991, they were notified that they had been selected as one of eight libraries in the state to receive \$100,000! Under the grant guidelines, the City of Buda administered the funds. Annette Chambers, city clerk, says that the building's cost was \$230,000. The city donated \$10,000 plus in kind services to the library.

An example of excellent fundraising techniques was achieved by the Board of Trustees appointing a task force to finish and furnish the library. The joint Board of Trustees and Friends of the Public Library of Buda task force was empowered to conduct a fundraising campaign. The initial objective was \$40,450 if we had to purchase everything. Landscaping (was completed by) the [Edwards Aquifer Conservation District](#), [Marbridge Foundation](#), Dahlstrom Construction and the Girl Scouts. The actual cash collected was \$23,700 and donated services were \$13,500, which was 37,200 or 78% of the original goal. Much of the other expenses were offset by the gracious donation of assorted shelves and reference books from the Bergstrom AFB Library being inactivated as a result of the base closure which means that the amount was 90% of the target. Another Buda success story! Serving on the committee was taskforce

chairperson Bob Elder, Eileen Altmiller, Audrey Elder, Neil Franklin, Mary Giberson, Jacque Glomb and Barbara Pecuch.

Ground breaking ceremonies were October 31, 1991 with a tight schedule to meet grant money guidelines. At this time, suggestions were made to select another site for the library building. Suggestions were made to change the style of architecture, and suggestions were made that the building was a "threat to downtown-historic Buda". Because the board had explored other sites and was not in the eligible historic block, the board proceeded according to plan. Someone has recently said, "Well, the library is there, and so is historic downtown Buda."

It seemed that so many people had a chance to become involved. The move out of the tin building and the move into the temporary building at 101 North Austin St. in Buda was a major effort. The tin building was donated by the City of Buda and was dismantled and moved to FM 2770 property. **The Texas Lehigh Cement Company** employees poured the cement slab, a \$17,000 donation. **RGD Builders of Austin** bid \$229,720. and Neil Franklin, board of trustees member was Building Liaison. The library was finished the first of May and the move into the new library was May 11, 1993.

The Grand Opening was on September 12, 1993, attended by County and City officials, past and present Board of Trustees, past and present librarians, and the State Librarian Dr. Bill Gooch and many patrons of the library community. **The Buda Community Women's Club** joined the celebration and expressed extreme pleasure in the big accomplishment. Their \$1,000 yearly contribution has always been something the library has depended on in their planning as well as the annual contributions of the Friends of the Public Library of Buda, Texas.

St. Edwards University in Austin donated or loaned items that made the opening so successful. Basil Anthony Moreau and the brothers of his Holy Cross Order, founded St. Notre Dame, St. Edwards and Santa Cruz Catholic Church in Buda in 1941 and the order has been interested in education and libraries in particular.

The library in Buda has served so many people, involved in the community with service to the **Onion Creek Senior Citizens** and the schools in the area. The "Night of a Thousand Stars" is a popular night of literary readings. There is a record number of school children attending the summer reading program and storytime for preschoolers on Wednesdays. The inter-loan system allows the library user to receive books from other libraries.

There is fiction and nonfiction, basic reference, adult literacy support, large print books, Caldecott and Newberry Award Books, Texas Bluebonnet and Lone Star Books, periodicals and local newspapers, videos, computers for public use, photocopy, a public meeting room—a giant step from a small book shelf in the Buda City Hall!

Reflecting on growth, until 1988 the Board of Trustees consisted of five members and was changed to seven members that served two year terms. In 1991, members could choose to serve an additional two years. In 1994, the board was expanded to nine members.

The library budget is now \$39,903, for the 12,000 volume library. The librarian works 40 hours a week instead of 20 hours in 1984. Librarian Marjorie Martinez says that total visitors have increased 137% and circulation has increased 87% since October 1992.

Now we have a \$300,000 building and \$500,000 in contents. This has been accomplished in ten short years. **Imagine what will be accomplished in the next ten years!**