

96TH ANNUAL
BATTLE OF FLOWERS® ASSOCIATION
Oratorical Contest

EXTRA! EXTRA!
Texas Journalists
Making History



FEBRUARY 26, 2021 • SAN ANTONIO



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2021 Oratorical Contest
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Order of Events

- 9:00 am Morning Round
- 1:30 pm Afternoon Finals Round
- 3:30 pm Awards

*The Contest is being held online due to the pandemic.
It can be viewed in real time at*

<https://bofoc2021.conferencecontent.net/>





The Battle of Flowers® Association... celebrating Texas history!

President, Anna-Laura Block
Oratorical Contest Chairman, Helen Eversberg

Mission Statement

"The object of The Battle of Flowers® Association shall be educational and patriotic...designed to teach the history of our state and to keep alive the patriotic traditions of Texas and San Antonio."

In 1891, one hundred and thirty years ago, a group of women in San Antonio decided to have a parade that would honor the heroes of the Alamo and honor the anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto. What began as a small affair of finely-dressed ladies in horse-drawn carriages pelting each other with fresh flowers on Alamo Plaza has grown into one of the oldest and largest parades in the United States. And while the Parade is always a fun and festive event, all participants are asked to bring floral tributes which are laid on the front lawn of the Alamo to honor and remember our forefathers whose lives paid for our liberty.

The Oratorical Contest—Then and Now

In keeping with our mission statement, the Oratorical Contest creates awareness and fosters appreciation of our Texas heritage while providing Texas college and university students a unique and highly-prized forum in speech competition. The topic of the contest changes each year, but it is always based on events and ideals of Texas history. The speeches must be original, historically accurate, and delivered by memory.

The tradition of the Oratorical Contest began on April 21, 1926 at the Battle of Flowers® luncheon held at the Menger Hotel. Members and guests listened to University of Texas law student Percy Foreman deliver the first Oratorical Contest's winning speech entitled, "Stephen F. Austin." Since then our contest has been held annually for 96 years, and it is the oldest such contest in the state of Texas. Today, contestants represent many of the top-tier colleges and universities from around the state.

To stimulate interest and research into our Texas history, the Association originally offered a prize of \$100 to a Texas university student who wrote and delivered the winning oration. Today, the first through fifth place winners each receive cash awards, with the coveted first prize being \$5,000.

In recognition of the support our contestants receive from their universities and sponsoring professors, the top three winning orators will receive additional prize money presented as a donation from The Battle of Flowers® Association to the university departments associated with the winners' sponsoring professors.

2021 Contestants

in alphabetical order

JOSEPH AARON BAHR—Texas State University
George Waverly Briggs: Reshaping the Texas Penitentiary System

DEVAN CAMERON KARP—Trinity University
The Galveston Daily News Making Our History

COLEMAN LAMBO—Rice University
Refusing to Sit on the Sidelines: The Story of Joe Galloway

ZACHARY W. LYMAN—Schreiner University
Joseph Martin Dawson: A Heart and Soul for Texas Journalism

ALONSO SEBASTIAN MEDINA—Rice University
Language is a Gun and Journalism's the Bullet: The Ballad of Américo Paredes

BRIA ALI MURRAY—Rice University
Reed it and Weep: Julia Scott Reed Bridges Dallas' Divide

VIVIAN C. NOYD—Texas Christian University
Women's News Makes the News: The Story of Vivian Castleberry

HAYDEN GRACE OVANES—Southern Methodist University
Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: The Story of Caro Brown, Texas' First Woman Pulitzer Prize Winning Journalist

HUNTER SCOTT REYNOLDS—McMurry University
Gail Borden Jr.: Voice of the Texas Revolution

CAGE M. SAWYERS—Texas Christian University
A True Texan Facing the Nation: Bob Schieffer

ANDREW CARYL WARD—Schreiner University
History of an Industry

MADISON LEA YOUNG—Schreiner University
Amon G. Carter: Where the West Begins

2021 Universities & Faculty

McMURRY UNIVERSITY was founded by the Northwest Texas Conference of the Methodist Church and opened in 1923. “Shaped by Christian principles, McMurry University challenges students to examine our complex world from multiple perspectives in preparation for lives of leadership, service, and professional success.” **Stephen Hardin** is a Professor of History and author of numerous books and articles, including the award winning books *Texas Iliad: A Military History of the Texas Revolution* and *Lust for Glory: An Epic Saga of Early Texas and the Sacrifice That Defined A Nation*. When not engaged in the classroom, he serves as a commentator, appearing on such varied venues as the A&E Network, the History Channel, and NBC’s TODAY show.

RICE UNIVERSITY was chartered in 1891 by William Marsh Rice. In 1960, Rice University led the charge for “transforming extraordinary students into extraordinary leaders.” The Forensics program was established in 1954 and became The George R. Brown Forensics Society in 1984. **Shannon LaBove, J.D.** serves as lecturer, Associate Director of Forensics, and Director of the Law, Justice, and Society Scholars Program.

SCHREINER UNIVERSITY was named after Captain Charles Schreiner, the Texas Ranger and “Father of the Hill Country,” who provided the original land and endowment that started the university in 1923. The University was also borne of the vision of the Presbytery of Western Texas to provide a quality education for the people of the Hill Country so that their hearts and minds could be truly free. **Donald S. Frazier, Ph.D.** is the Director of the Texas Center at Schreiner University where he and the team that he leads are committed to the task of embracing and sharing the heritage and culture of the Lone Star State while preparing students for future leadership.

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY was founded by what is now the United Methodist Church in partnership with civic leaders in Dallas, Texas. Its award winning speech and debate team provides students with opportunities to develop his/her own voice and research skills along with service learning opportunities in the Dallas Independent School District. **Dr. Ben Voth**, Director of Debate and Speech at Southern Methodist University, is an academic expert in debate, communication, and public speaking; he has written four books, and his research and writing is centered on the goal of equipping individuals to have a voice in the world. His writing has been featured in *The Dallas Morning News*, *Fortune* magazine, and *American Thinker* among other publications.

TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY was founded in 1873 by brothers Addison and Randolph Clark. TCU included classes in rhetoric from its founding, and these studies were elevated to the School of Elocution & Oratory in 1888. Since then, the program has seen a succession of curriculum and name changes reflecting the evolving trends in the discipline. **Carrie Moore** serves as an Instructor in the Bob Schieffer College of Communication’s Department of Communication Studies.

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY founded The Chautauqua Literary Society in 1903 and celebrates over 117 years of debate and oratorical competition. Chautauqua is now the LBJ Debate Society, named for President Lyndon Baines Johnson who competed for Southwest Texas State Teachers College, now Texas State University. **Wayne Kraemer** is the Director of Forensics and also serves as the President of the Texas Intercollegiate Forensics Association (TIFA). The Texas Speech Communication Association named him the 2014-15 University Educator of the Year.

TRINITY UNIVERSITY was founded in 1869 in Tehuacana, Texas when Cumberland Presbyterians sought to create a “University of the Highest Order.” Having resided on four campuses in three different locations, Trinity has been located in the heart of San Antonio, Texas since 1942. **Jennifer Jacobs Henderson, Ph.D.** is the Chair of the Department of Communications and is a member of the Executive Committee of the Association for Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Morning Judges

CAROL HEBDON was born and raised in San Antonio and had a passion for teaching and inspiring others at a young age. After graduating from Incarnate Word College with a degree in education, she taught in both the private and public school systems. Married to Jack Hebdon, Jr., they have two daughters, Elizabeth and Annie, and two granddaughters. After retiring from teaching, Mrs. Hebdon volunteered with various organizations that are near and dear to her heart, including Mission Road Ministries, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, and Battle of Flowers Association. Mrs. Hebdon has served on the boards of MRM, BOFA, and the Vestry committee at St. Mark's. A member of the Battle of Flowers Association since 1997, she is entering her last active year of service to BOFA, having previously chaired both the Oratorical and Essay Contests. In her free time, Mrs. Hebdon enjoys spending time at the family ranch, cooking, and being with her family.

NOAH RECKER has taught and coached speech and debate at La Vernia High School for the past 14 years. In that time, he has coached numerous state medalists in all forensic events. Mr. Recker serves on multiple committees for the University Interscholastic League, the Texas Forensic Association, and the National Speech and Debate Association, all in an effort to positively influence the debate community. He has authored a policy topic for the National Federation of High Schools and has been a finalist for HEB's Excellence in Education Awards for teaching. He is a past President of the Texas Forensic Association.

S. GRIFFIN (GRIFF) SINGER has been on a 60-year journey with newspapers and journalism education. Although he retired from the University of Texas at Austin, School of Journalism and Media in 2003 after 34 years of service, he still contributes to the profession. Mr. Singer works with the highly respected Dow Jones News Fund's Center for Editing Excellence Intern Training Program at UT, established in 1998, serving as its director for 17 years. He has taught online courses in headline writing, news writing, and sports writing for the Texas Press Association. He has conducted countless seminars in aspects of journalism practice for national and state journalism organizations. His peers and former students voted him into the Texas Newspaper Hall of Fame in 2016 and the Friends of The Daily Texan Hall of Fame in 2019. The Texas Associated Press Managing Editors honored him with its Jack Douglas Award for Distinguished Service to journalism in 1998. Mr. Singer continues to participate in seminars and workshops conducted by state, regional, and national journalistic organizations, including the National and Texas Associated Press Managing Editors Association, the Texas Press Association, and the Society of Professional Journalists. He has been a judge in scores of state, national, and international journalism competitions.

BEKAH STOLHANDSKE McNEEL is a reporter, wife, and mother. Her work has appeared in *The Texas Tribune*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Christianity Today*, *The 74 Million*, ESPN's *The Undeclared*, as well as many local print, digital, and broadcast outlets. She is a native of San Antonio and graduate of the London School of Economics where she earned a MSc in Media Studies. Mrs. McNeel writes primarily on education, from beat coverage to in-depth analysis of state and local education trends. San Antonio's 16 independent school districts, community college system, city-operated prekindergarten, and numerous colleges and universities have yielded a range of stories, from profiles of exceptional students to controversial and innovative initiatives to improve failing schools. Texas being Texas, she has also covered the State Legislature's battle over school choice and the various lawsuits filed by school districts against

the state. Known for her ability to communicate the high stakes of education policy and bring clarity to complex systems, Mrs. McNeel has tackled some of the most complicated topics in Texas education, including the school finance system, which the Texas Supreme Court called “sclerotic” and “byzantine.” Her work outside of education has included coverage of the 2017 human smuggling tragedy in San Antonio, the city’s attempts to regulate pay-day lending, and local elections.

MICHELLE WATKINS was raised in San Antonio and attended the University of the Incarnate Word and the American College in London for undergrad work, receiving a BA in Theatre in 1997. She received her Master of Education in 2001 from Incarnate Word and completed a Master of Education in School Counseling from Lamar University in 2015. Ms. Watkins began teaching in 2001 at Garner Middle School in the areas of Theater Arts and Speech and Debate. She directed community theatre productions for the Northwood Junior Players in 2006 and 2007. In 2008, she transferred to MacArthur High School where she ran the Speech and Debate team. In 2015, she transferred to Claudia Taylor “Lady Bird” Johnson High School where she currently teaches Theatre Arts and Speech and Debate classes. She is a member of the Teachers of Speech Communication Association (served as a committee member), the National Speech and Debate Association (served as Central Texas District Committee and National Tabulation Official), and the Texas Forensic Association (served as Region 3 Representative on the Executive Council). She is also involved in the University Scholastic League (serves currently on Region Congress Committee, served on Regional Advisory Committee for Speech and Debate, serves currently as Lincoln Douglas Debate and Extemporaneous Director for 6A District 29 and Region IV 5A and 6A Administration Staff).

Afternoon Judges

ALISON BOONE is a life-long learner and a community volunteer who has served over 20 years in the Battle of Flowers Association. She chaired the Battle of Flowers Band Festival in 2002 and 2003 and chaired the Battle of Flowers Parade in 2007. Mrs. Boone also served as president in 2009 and 2010. In her spare time, Mrs. Boone enjoys reading, cooking, knitting, and playing with her four grandsons. She and her husband Taylor also look forward to one day travelling again.

KEN ESTEN COOKE is a fourth-generation newspaper publisher. He currently serves as the publisher of the *Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post* newspaper, *GoFredericksburg Visitors Guide* magazine, GoFred mobile app, *Rock & Vine Magazine*, *Fredericksburg Art Guide*, and other specialty publications. He has experience in all facets of the publishing world, including news writing, column writing, photography, newspaper design, management, and publishing. Mr. Cooke currently serves on the TPA board and is a past president of the South Texas Press Association. Among other talents, he speaks Spanish at an intermediate level and is considered a good drummer.

PATRICK COX, PH.D. is a sixth generation Texan, an historian, author, and ardent environmentalist. He and his wife Brenda live in scenic Wimberley, Texas where their land is in a wildlife management and natural area. Dr. Cox received his Ph.D. and a B.A. in History from the University of Texas at Austin and his M.A. in History from Texas State University. He published *Ralph W. Yarborough, the People’s Senator* (University of Texas Press, 2001) which garnered a number of state and national awards. He has authored and edited ten books and hundreds

of articles on U.S. history, Texas history, and conservation and sustainability. He is now retired from the University of Texas at Austin and serves as President of Patrick Cox Consultants LLC, a historical and nonprofit consulting firm. Dr. Cox was honored to receive the 2014 Distinguished Alumni Award from Texas State University. He is a Fellow of the Texas State Historical Association and will be serving as TSHA President in 2021. He is a Distinguished Alum of the College of Liberal Arts at Texas State University and a Fellow of the East Texas Historical Association. He is a member of the Texas Institute of Letters and the Philosophical Society of Texas. He is Texas State University Liberal Arts Council Chair and serves as the Executive Director of the Trinity Edwards Springs Protection Association (TESPA).

TASHA JONES is an instructor of speech and debate programming at Tulooso Midway High School, where she also serves as the UIL Academic Coordinator. Prior to being at Tulooso Midway, she served six years in similar positions with both Harlingen South High School and Harlingen High School. Before entering the field of teaching, Mrs. Jones worked with Stanford Campaigns, a political consulting firm out of Austin. During her time as a teacher, Mrs. Jones has been recognized as Teacher of the Year for Harlingen High and later was awarded the state-wide recognition of HEB's Excellence in Education Rising Star. She enjoys serving the communication field by volunteering her time on multiple committees and boards that strive to improve Speech and Debate activities for students. During the past 10 years of teaching, she has coached students who have won University Interscholastic League, Texas Forensic Association, National Individual Events TOC, and National Speech & Debate Association Championship titles. Much of her work has been in underserved communities and with students suffering from poverty. Mrs. Jones regards the numerous first generation college students and full scholarship attendees as her greatest achievements as a teacher, coach, and mentor.

JANA RIGGINS serves as State Director for the University Interscholastic League, directing the speech and debate programs for the State of Texas, including administering the state championship meets. Prior to joining UIL, she taught speech for twenty-one years, directing award-winning forensic programs. Ms. Riggins holds two degrees from Baylor University where she was named Outstanding Woman in Speech. Selected as Texas Speech Teacher of the Year, she has served as president of the Texas Speech Communication Association, receiving their Outstanding Service Award. Nationally, Ms. Riggins recently completed a term as Chair of the Policy Debate Topic Selection Committee, currently serves as Chair of the National Speech Advisory Council, and has been recognized with the prestigious Citation Award for her contribution to interscholastic speech, debate, and theatre. Last March, she met with congressional leaders on Capitol Hill to advocate for support of education of the Arts.

2021 Oratorical Contest Committee

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EXTRA! EXTRA!

Texas Journalists Making History

In the early days of the nineteenth century, when the land that was to become Texas was a vast expanse of wildness and political unrest, along with settlers came a stream of individuals who risked life and limb bringing the press to Texas. The earliest “newspapers” were single sheets and most often espoused or denounced a singular cause. They communicated passionate opinions about loyalty to Mexico or Spain, or they advocated for insurrection, revolution and statehood, or they announced important declarations.

Likewise, early permanent newspapers communicated the political, religious, and special interest voices of their journalists. Simple geography and inclement weather made gathering what we could call “news” difficult. But through an exchange system of printing the articles from each other’s papers, and personal eyewitness or word of mouth reports, they began reporting on military and political events and publishing key political documents. They contemporaneously captured the history of events while expressing their own opinions.

In that era, publishers, editors, and printers were men of fortitude, grit, and courage. They endured erratic revenue, paucity and delays of supplies, and unpredictable distribution. Most were part-time journalists, who were primarily engaged in other endeavors such as being civic leaders, soldiers, businessmen, or politicians. Nevertheless, by the Civil War Texas had spawned over 400 “newspapers.”

In each subsequent era of Texas history, evolving technology and demographics had an effect on how journalists told and distributed their stories and opinions. The railroads, telegraph, and telephone enhanced both content and distribution. Film, radio, and TV news and networks brought additional dimensions and a sense of urgency to reporting. Categories of coverage broadened to include agriculture, business, entertainment, social issues, sports, and law. Texas newsrooms, whether newspaper, radio, or television, went from one-room, one-man offices to buildings teeming with beat reporters and complex equipment.

Think of the headlines of the eras and the multitude of significant events that were reported about Texas. What were the headlines and stories of the era that journalists captured as they unfolded? Stories of jubilation and disaster, intrigue and corruption, politics and money, crime and law, causes and conditions, science and technology, and people and events. Some headlines may have touched on statehood, war, the Galveston flood, women’s suffrage, and the assassination of President Kennedy. And who were those Texas journalists who gave us the first reports of what was to become history? What defined them and made them extraordinary? How did their Texas heritage and experience affect their making or telling history?

Texas is rich with the legacy of journalists who, from their own points of view, in their own styles, cast in different roles, not only told the stories of Texas, but were an integral part in making history and creating change. Some participated personally in historical events. Many used their trade to advocate their politics. Some shined a light on abuses and conditions that in turn lead to reforms. Whether the arena was the small towns of Texas or the big cities, an editor or publisher exerted great influence by telling the other side of a story, calling out public officials, and bringing unknown facts forward in turn affecting elections and political movements. Small town editors, big city reporters, journalist scribes who painted word pictures of the era, media conglomerates, and TV anchors all individually made history while contributing to what we now know of our Texas and National histories.