

AUSTIN REMEMBERS.

“THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF AUSTIN & TRAVIS COUNTY”

WINTER 2019

OFF THE RAILS: The Rise and Fall of Austin’s Streetcars

By Rusty Heckaman

On Feb. 7, 1940, the intersection of Congress Ave. and 6th St. was closed. A temporary platform was set up, around which crowds gathered to witness ceremonies marking the end of the streetcar era in Austin. For 65 years, the streetcar had been traveling through the very intersection that people packed into that day. From 1875 to 1940, the streetcars were fundamental to Austin’s landscape, shaping the city by driving people’s decisions of where to live and work, serving as a battleground for racial conflict, and influencing city transportation policies.

Streetcars have been a ubiquitous feature of the city since the frontier days when mules pulled their cargo of passengers past the wagons and trolleys on the dirt lanes of Austin, before electricity powered them across a city crowded with automobiles. The streetcars rolled across the city as a symbol of Austin’s growth, bearing witness to her development and playing a critical role in it as well. The routes of their tracks drove more than passengers. From Hyde Park to Travis Heights and from **RAILS... PAGE 4** ➔



▲ Several streetcars on the road in front of the Scarbrough Building, 1915. C00323, Chalberg Collection of Prints and Negatives, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

Angelina Eberly Luncheon: Educators Raise Curtain on Theatre & Live Performance in Austin

By Beth Fowler

When people say “Take a bow,” they may be helping maintain a long-running phrase used in the oldest theatre and live performance building in Austin, the Millett Opera House. Opened in 1878, the venue is now a noted city, state, and national landmark and home to The Austin Club.

“What better place to showcase the history of theatre and live performance in Austin?” asked Charles Peveto, chairman of the Angelina Eberly Luncheon, the principle fundraising event presented

each year by the AHCA.

On Friday, February 1, 2019, The Austin Club will play host to this year’s Eberly Luncheon, featuring noted University of Texas drama chair Charlotte Canning and two theatre educators who will present the rich tradition of theatre and live performance that has grown from entertaining early Austinites to reaching worldwide audiences. Through their creative approaches that **EBERLY... PAGE 5** ➔

AUSTIN VOTERS APPROVE BOND FUNDING FOR AHC EXPANSION

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Austin History Center ASSOCIATION

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The mission of the Austin History Center Association is to help the community value our past and build a better future by supporting the Austin History Center to achieve excellence in its efforts to serve as the collective memory of Austin and Travis County.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Since the publication of the last edition of *Austin Remembers*, the Austin History Center has added approximately 117 linear feet of new donations to the collection.

Here are a few highlights of these recent acquisitions:

- The AHC recently acquired the papers of Virginia B. Wood, long-time food editor of the *Austin Chronicle*. Her cookbook collection was used as the inspiration for the Cookbook Café at Austin's Central Library. Of particular interest in her archives are all the notes for the creation and publication of the Fonda San Miguel cookbook.
- The AHC also acquired the Dennis Paddie Papers. Paddie, a playwright and poet, moved to Austin in 1965 to pursue a graduate degree in Art History at University of Texas. He was one of the founding members of the Gay Liberation Front in Austin and was involved in the formation of the Austin Arts Council. The majority of the collection consists of draft manuscripts of his writings but also includes personal correspondence and photographs.
- The AHC acquired the first installment of the James L. Haley Papers. Haley has written, co-written, or contributed to thirty books, in addition to magazine articles, newspaper features, television scripts, and book reviews. He has won the Spur Award of the Western Writers of America twice, the T. R. Fehrenbach Book Award of the Texas Historical Commission twice, as well as the Coral Horton Tullis Memorial Prize of the Texas Historical Association, the Texas Philosophical Society Book Award, and others. The papers comprise Haley's complete literary, professional, and personal archive, from his first unpublished efforts to date.

NEWLY PROCESSED COLLECTIONS

AHC staff and student volunteers continue to work to make the collections more accessible to the public, processing 15 unique manuscript and photograph collections and over 17,000 items in the last four months. You can view inventories of all of the AHC's processed collections online at: legacy.lib.utexas.edu/taro/browse/browse_ahc1.html. Here are a few collections recently completed:

AR.2012.029. Susan Fifer Papers

Susan Tolentino Fifer was born in the Philippines in 1953 and immigrated to Ennis, Texas in the 1970s to pursue a career in nursing. It was in Ennis where she met her husband John Fifer and the couple moved to Austin in 1980.

Susan Fifer worked at Seton Hospital for over 35 years as a stroke coordinator and has been recognized as Nurse of the Year. In 2002 Fifer was sent to the Philippines to recruit a class of 55 nurses to work for the Seton Healthcare Network.

Fifer is an active member within Austin's Filipino community and has served as the president of both the Austin Filipino-American Association and the Network of Asian American Organizations. Through her community work she has orchestrated cultural celebrations, health fairs for the Asian American community, and was part of the advocacy team in favor of building the Asian American Resource Center, which was successfully funded and opened to the public in 2013.

The Susan Fifer Papers consists of approximately 150 printed items and 15 photographs. The collection includes textual research on the Philippines, clippings and brochures related to Fifer's work with the Seton recruitment program for Filipino nurses, as well as Austin Filipino-American Association fliers, correspondence, and administrative records. The photographs in the collection capture Filipino cultural events as well as Susan Fifer's family and friends. legacy.lib.utexas.edu/taro/aushc/00658/ahc-00658.html



▲ Jennifer Kim being sworn in as new Austin City Councilmember, June 21, 2005. AR.2013.025, Jennifer Kim Papers, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

AR.2013.025. Jennifer Kim Papers

Jennifer Kim is an Austin area businesswoman and politician. Born in California in 1973 to a Korean-American father and a Chinese-American mother, Kim is a third generation Asian-American. Her father's work with the U.S. Department of Defense took the family all over the world before they finally settled in Texas.

As an adult, Kim became active in municipal and state politics, serving on several committees. She was a member of the Austin City Council Social Equity Commission, the Census 2000 Complete Count Committee, and the Commission on Immigrant Affairs. From 1998 to 2002, Kim worked for the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration as an economic development specialist. Kim became the first Asian-American Austin City Council member on June 11, 2005. After completing her term with the Austin City Council in 2008, Kim returned to work in the business sector.

The Jennifer Kim Papers contain personal papers, official documents, clippings, photographs, and video interviews which document her work in both the public and private sectors. Of particular interest are her 2005 election materials, correspondence with constituents, and documents pertaining to her wireless initiative and her earlier work with the Austin Equity Commission. legacy.lib.utexas.edu/taro/aushc/00653/ahc-00653.html

AR.2002.004. Tim Kerr Papers

Tim Kerr was born March 11, 1956, outside of the coastal city of Galveston. In 1974, he moved to Austin to attend the University of Texas where he earned a degree in painting and photography. After college, Kerr became involved in the "do it yourself: - DIY - punk movement. He had taken up skateboarding when he moved to Austin and in 1979, he and his skater friends formed a band called Big Boys. The band, which included Randy "Biscuit" Turner on vocals, Kerr on guitar, and Chris Gates on bass, is credited as being largely influential to the hardcore punk scene of the 1980s. Kerr has been a member of several bands on such record labels as Touch & Go, Estrus, Sympathy For The Record Industry, In The Red, Sup Pop, and Kill Rock Stars. Additionally, Kerr produced and recorded bands for those labels and others, both in the United States and abroad. Kerr was inducted into the Texas Music Hall of Fame in 1996 and the Big Boys were inducted in 2017.

Kerr is also a visual artist and his paintings have been exhibited internationally. He has been involved in painting murals in Texas, Nashville, New York, Alabama, and California. In 2015, he had a solo show at the Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery that traveled to other cities throughout Alabama. He still lives and works in Austin, where he has been actively painting and playing old-time fiddle and Irish music.



The collection documents three of Kerr's bands through posters, clippings, and memorabilia, as well as documenting skateboarding, music, and punk culture from the 1980s and 1990s. legacy.lib.utexas.edu/taro/aushc/00663/ahc-00663.html

◀ Flyer for a Big Boys concert at Club Foot, May 14, 1981. AR.2002.004, Tim Kerr Papers, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



▲ AHCA board member and author Lori Duran.

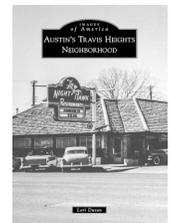
History of Travis Heights the Focus of New Book

Another AHCA board member has joined the ranks of those who have written books about an interesting aspect of Austin history.

Like AHCA executive committee secretary Monte Akers, author of *The Grande Dame of Austin: A History of the Driskill Hotel*, Lori Duran has had a lifelong interest in history, which drew her to the AHCA board and fueled work on her new book, *Austin's Travis Heights Neighborhood*.

The book tells the often-overlooked history of South Austin's most prominent enclave, exploring the early development of the area, the neighborhood homes, the schools, the green spaces, and other features of the community including the business district. Duran collected information and photographs from Austin residents, the Texas Historical Commission, the Texas School for the Deaf, and the Austin History Center.

Austin's Travis Heights Neighborhood is available for purchase on the AHCA website, austinhistory.net. Click the Store tab at the top of the screen and click Books from the drop-down window.



►... **RAILS** Lake Austin to East Austin, residential development across the city can trace its roots to the streetcar lines.

Archival material gathered from the collections of the Austin History Center illustrate this ubiquitous nature. Photographs and documents selected for the exhibit “Off the Rails: The Rise and Fall of Austin’s Streetcars” showcase familiar landmarks from across the city. Visitors will discover images of streetcars as they travel back and forth across a growing city. The network of rails that crisscrossed Austin offer connections to more than just the recognizable buildings and features. They also provide a link between the past and present.

Contemporary Austinites will recognize more than just the design of the city’s development along the rails of the streetcars. Issues that may seem as modern as conflict with rideshare companies, electric light rail, mobility, and transportation can find their origins in the story of the streetcars. In some cases they may even discover striking similarities to events that happened nearly 100 years previously, such as when the streetcars went to war with the Jitneys in 1915. The prospect of an electric light rail might seem like a modern concern, but the story of the streetcar proves otherwise. It is a story that demonstrates how such mass transit was once employed in the city and the way that its network integrated it into the fabric of Austin.



▲ Overturned streetcar at 3rd and Congress, September 25, 1913. C00598, Chalberg Collection of Prints and Negatives, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

Editor’s Note: *Rusty Heckaman is the reference archivist for the Austin History Center who curated the exhibit Off the Rails: The Rise and Fall of Austin’s Streetcars. The exhibit is free and open to the public in the AHC Grand Lobby and Hallway through May 26, 2019.*

Refreshed Loggia Leads Way for More AHC Maintenance, Restoration

Next time you come to the Austin History Center, step out on the front porch and look up at the ceiling to see some recently restored craftsmanship that has extended the life of one of the building’s most distinctive original features.

When the City of Austin built its new central library in the early 1930s, Peter Allidi and Harold “Bubi” Jessen painted the distinctive front porch loggia. Over the years, the original murals began to fade with time and exposure to the elements. When the Austin History Center moved into the building in the 1980s, the fading and loss continued despite a conservation treatment.



▲ Mark van Gelder of Art Conservation Services of Austin working on the AHC loggia frescoes. More maintenance and restoration work is slated for 2019.

Enter art conservator Mark van Gelder. For almost two years, van Gelder has been restoring the historic frescoes on the front porch loggia as part of a much needed, but long deferred, maintenance and repair project for the landmark AHC building, funded by the 2012 City of Austin bond election. The loggia restoration effort included painstaking color matching to the original paint, allowing van Gelder to completely restore the murals to a “like new” state.

The loggia restoration work is part of a larger ongoing effort to maintain the AHC building, and in some cases restore some of the building’s original features. Some of the work planned for 2019 includes:

- Repair and restoration of the exterior iron works and doors
- Restoration of the historic lighting for the lobby, hallway, and gallery
- Landscape improvements to improve lighting and visibility of building and for better security
- Structural repairs to exterior limestone
- Repair to exterior windows and other areas to better protect the building envelope
- Repair and refinishing of historic rubber tile floors
- New gallery lighting for public exhibit areas and improvements to the Holt Photo Gallery

In October, the Austin City Council approved an appropriation of \$500,000 from the City of Austin’s Hotel Occupancy Tax Historic Preservation Fund to augment these projects, specifically lighting improvements and restoration of the original 1933 lighting fixtures.

The firm of Limbacher & Godfrey Architects is working on the design and scope of work for the projects. Plans call for the design phase to be completed and approved by the City Council in the summer 2019, with work on the building beginning in the fall.

►... **EBERLY** inspire students and audiences of dance, theatre, drama, directing, performance history, and criticism, the panel of educators will offer their vision, from a first-hand vantage point, of how these expressive arts continue to evolve: Early History (1870s-1920s), Middle Period (1930s-1980s), and Contemporary Period (1990s-today).

No less a star of this year's luncheon will be the venue itself. The Austin Club has called the Millett Opera House home since 1981. Built by Captain Charles F. Millett in 1878, the building was designed by leading architect Frederick E. Ruffini. It had 800 moveable seats, 24-inch thick limestone walls, balcony, private boxes, and an exquisite hand-painted ceiling, a portion of which now hangs in the club's House Conference Room. In its heyday, the Millett Opera House staged programs ranging from medicine shows to legislative sessions while the new Capitol was being constructed.

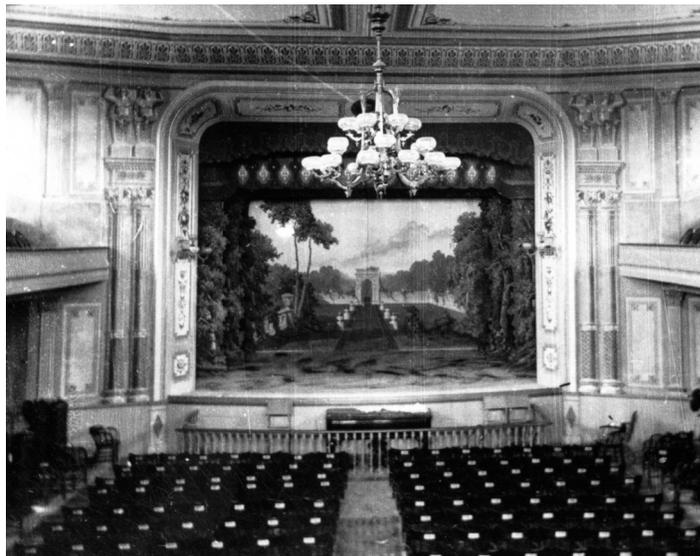
It also hosted services for St. David's Episcopal Church, political conventions, graduations, dances and recitals, as well as opera and theater productions. Notables who performed in front of its kerosene footlights include John L. Sullivan, Williams Jennings Bryan, John Phillip Sousa, Lily Langtry, Joseph Jefferson, James O'Neill, and Edwin Booth. The Millett Opera House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It's also a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark and an Austin City Landmark.

Proceeds from the Angelina Eberly Luncheon benefit the AHCA and the organization's work, which supports the Austin History Center archives for Austin and Travis County.

About the writer: *Beth Fowler is the immediate past president of the AHCA, chair of the Angelina Eberly Luncheon 2010-2015, Eberly Luncheon Committee member 2009-2019, and AHCA Executive Committee member 2014-2019.*

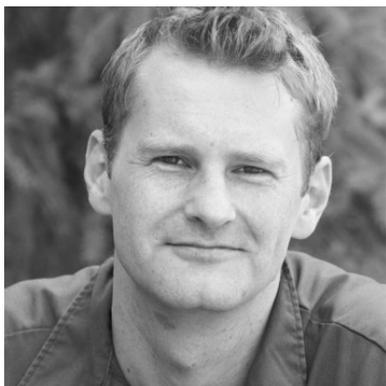


▲ C00123, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



▲ PICA 01704, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

2019 ANGELINA EBERLY LUNCHEON PANELISTS



Andrew I. Carlson, Ph.D., is the managing director of the Oscar G. Brockett Center for Theatre History and Criticism and assistant professor of instruction for The University of Texas at Austin Department of Theatre and Dance.



Marcus McQuirter, MA., Ph.D., is the chair of the Drama Department and an instructor at Austin Community College. His research interests include Black performance theory, vocal studies, and African-American theater history.



Panel moderator Charlotte M. Canning is the Frank C. Erwin, Jr. Centennial Professor in Drama Chair; Performance as Public Practice head, Oscar G. Brockett Center for Theatre History and Criticism for The University of Texas at Austin Department of Theatre and Dance; member of the executive committee of the University of Texas Faculty Council; and author of *On The Performance Front: US Theatre and Internationalism*.

Beneath Your Feet

By Ted Eubanks

There are roots crawling beneath Austin that cannot be seen. These are the roots of a past forgotten and memories lost. In truth, these same roots underlie the Austin History Center, the remnants of a past that have been erased from current memory.

Fortunately, this past is hidden only by the thin, almost transparent veil of the present. Pull at the corner of the veil and the past is revealed. Let's tug at the corner of the fabric that shrouds the Austin History Center and see what lies behind the facade.

Edwin Waller's original 1839 plan for Austin divided one square mile (640 acres or one section of land) into a grid system of city blocks. Waller dedicated land for the capitol (Capitol Square) and four public squares (now known as Brush, Hamilton, Republic, and Wooldridge). The blocks directly south of Hamilton and Wooldridge squares (Blocks 94 and 101, respectively) were, in part, dedicated to the establishment of churches.

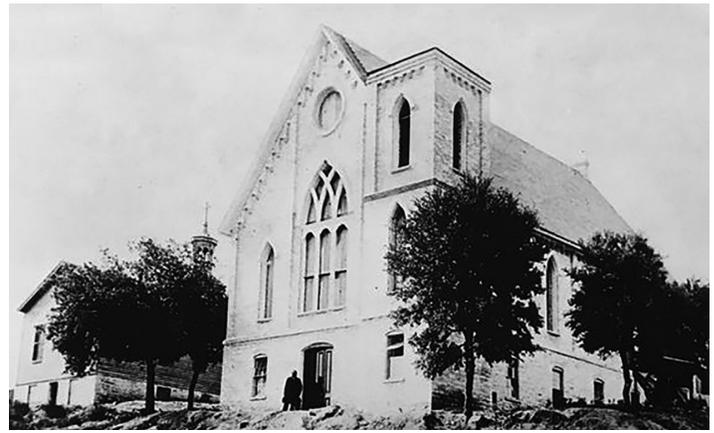
This property reserved for churches remained undeveloped for decades. Yet immediately following the Civil War, freedmen needed land to establish the first colored churches in the city. The land directly south of Wooldridge Square, the northern half of Block 101, became the location of two of the most important African-American churches in Austin. In addition, Swedish settlers built the first Swedish Lutheran church in Texas on this property.

A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots...

Marcus Garvey

The three churches built on Block 101 (where the Austin History Center is situated) were: First (Colored) Baptist Church (1869), Metropolitan AME (1873), and Gethsemane Lutheran Church (1874).

Several of Austin's early civic leaders were involved in the establishment of these churches. Jacob Fontaine helped organize the First (Colored) Baptist Church, built on Block 101 at the corner of West 9th and Guadalupe. The Reverend Jacob Fontaine would eventually help establish several churches (such as Sweet Home Baptist) in the region in addition to First (Colored) Baptist. Fontaine also helped convince black voters to support the establishment of



▲ Metropolitan AME Church was located on the northwest corner of Block 101, the block now occupied by the Austin History Center. PICA 01114, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

the University of Texas in Austin, even though African-Americans would not be allowed to attend the university until 1956.

Freedmen also organized Metropolitan AME (African Methodist Episcopal), the second of the African-American churches built on Block 101. In addition to their church, members of Metropolitan AME also founded the Paul Quinn College in 1872 at this same location. Paul Quinn is the oldest African-American liberal arts college in the state and one of the oldest west of the Mississippi River.

Swante Palm served as first secretary of the Gethsemane Lutheran Church, the third church built on Block 101. In 1897, Palm donated his sizable library to the new University of Texas in a gift that increased the size of the university library by more than 60 percent. Both Palm School and Palm Park are named for him.

By the 1920s, the three Block 101 churches had moved to other locations and were replaced by a new public library building, opened in 1933, that is now occupied by the Austin History Center. However, these original churches are still thriving at other locations in Austin. During your next visit to the Austin History Center, remember the prayers of the people of faith that still echo beneath your feet.

One important step that is being taken to restore this history is the installation of interpretive panels in Wooldridge Square. The first panel, discussing the visit of Booker T. Washington to Austin in 1911, should be installed in early 2019. This panel is sponsored by the Downtown Austin Alliance and the Friends of Wooldridge Square.

Austin Voters Approve Bond Funding for AHC Expansion

By nearly a three-to-one margin, Austin voters on Nov. 6 approved Proposition B, which included money dedicated to general repair of the John Henry Faulk Library building and preparing up to two floors of that building for expansion of the Austin History Center. Securing funding for AHC expansion has been a prime goal for AHCA for more than a decade.

"I'm really proud of the way we came together to get this win," said AHCA President Charlie Betts. "Our organization exists to support the Austin History Center and this effort to secure funding for expansion speaks to the very core of our mission."

With approval of Proposition B, dedicated funding for Austin

libraries, museums, and cultural arts facilities, \$14.5 million in bond spending will be set aside for building repairs and AHC expansion into the Faulk Library building. AHC staff have already begun moving some archives into the Faulk building to open space in the AHC building at 9th and Guadalupe. Lack of space at the AHC has long been a concern and expanding into the Faulk will open new space to store archives, create new and expanded exhibit spaces, and promote community engagement with the materials that hold Austin's history.

Look for updates on repairs to the John Henry Faulk Library building and expansion of AHC operations in future editions of the *Austin Remembers* newsletter.

AHCA Board Member Bob Ward chats with patron Dave Miller at the Nov. 7 opening of *Brothers in Arms: Forgotten Austinites of the Great War*. The exhibit commemorates the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I and explores the lives of a handful of Austin individuals and families impacted by the war. The exhibit will remain in the Austin History Center's David Earl Holt Photo Gallery through Jan. 27.



Know Your District History Project

In 2012, Austin voters approved a charter amendment that replaced the at-large election of city council members with a configuration of 10 geographic districts. For 2019, the AHC is launching a series of programs called “Know Your District History!” This project, partially underwritten by the AHCA, is a series of pop-up exhibits and programs designed to celebrate the history within each of the new city council districts. Though the geographic boundaries for each district are relatively new, they represent areas of Austin that have some unique characteristics and histories. Beginning with District 1 in January, the AHC will sponsor one Saturday afternoon event each month – one in each council district - to celebrate the history of the area and to provide an opportunity for the community in that district to share their stories. Each District History Day event will include:

- A pop-up museum for members of the community to bring items showcasing their histories for display during the event. The exhibit will also include information from the AHC’s collections about some aspects of the area.
- Oral history booth for community members to record short, Story Corps-style oral histories about their experiences.
- Brief presentations about the council district and its history.
- Children’s activities and games.
- Recycled Reads mini-book sale.
- And more...

The District History Day in September will feature District 9 and will be held on Sunday, Sept. 22 to coincide with Austin Museum Day. More information on the history day events will be shared on the AHC website as it becomes available.

SCHEDULE OF 2019 DISTRICT HISTORY DAY EVENTS

(all events Noon to 4 p.m.):

- District 1:** January 12, Carver Branch Library
- District 2:** February 16, Southeast Branch Library
- District 3:** March 2, Ruiz Branch Library
- District 4:** April 13, Little Walnut Branch Library
- District 5:** May 18, Manchaca Road Branch Library
- District 6:** June 8, Spicewood Springs Branch Library
- District 7:** July 13, North Village Branch Library
- District 8:** August 10, Hampton Branch at Oak Hill
- District 9:** September 22, Austin History Center
- District 10:** October 19, Old Quarry Branch Library

NEW OR RENEWING AHCA MEMBERS (October 1 – December 19, 2018)

Monte Akers	June and Harlan Cooper	Dane and Rita Hersey	Stephen Livingston	Virginia Nokes	Kay Taebel
Ascension Seton	Gabrielle Duran	Dr. Tom Holzbach	Janet Fotini Margos	Jerry and Phyllis Nugent	Texas Hotel & Lodging Association
BancorpSouth	Frederick Dure	Meta Butler Hunt	Sam and Carol Martin	Todd Olsen	Robert Tieman
Susan Moffat and Nick Barbaro	David and Susan Erickson	Jim Innes	Robert McBee	Karen Ratcliffe	Walter Timberlake
Tommy Bergstrom	Zachariah Evans	Mary Kevorkian	Mark McCormick	Oscar and Nancy Robinson	Beverly Thomas
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Garcia's Life Continues to Inspire

Gustavo "Gus" Garcia, Austin's first elected Hispanic mayor, died Monday, Dec. 17, 2018. He was 84.

Born in 1934 in the Texas border town of Zapata, Garcia came to Austin in the 1950's to attend the University of Texas, graduating with a degree in accounting. For years, he had his own accounting firm, but it was his groundbreaking role in local politics where he cemented his legacy. Garcia served on the Austin City Council for more than 10 years and on the Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees for six years. He was the first Hispanic AISD board president. AISD's Gus Garcia Young Men's Leadership Academy is named for him, as is the Gustavo L. "Gus" Garcia District Park and Recreation Center. Garcia served as Austin mayor from 2001 to 2003.

In his later years, Garcia brought his experience and wisdom to AHCA's Past Mayors Advisory Council. His inspiring life story is part of the Mayors Oral History Project and archived in the Austin History Center.



SAVE THESE DATES AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER (AHC) - 810 Guadalupe (at 9th)
Open Tue.–Sat. 10am – 6pm & Sun. 12pm – 6pm Call 512-974-7480

FEBRUARY 1
Angelina Eberly Luncheon
The Austin Club/
Millet Opera House

FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 1
Amplify Austin
Annual city-wide online
nonprofit fundraising event.
Donate to AHCA!

MAY 5
AHCA 2019 Annual Meeting
Honoring the 2018-19 Oral
History Interviewees
2 pm, AHC

THROUGH MAY 26
Exhibit: Off the Rails:
The Rise and Fall of
Austin's Streetcars
AHC

Visit AustinHistory.net for more specific information about these and other upcoming events.