February 16, 2019

To: The AASLH “Excellence in History” Award Committee

From: Randolph B. Campbell
    Regents Professor of History
    University of North Texas

I write to support the nomination of the Summer 2018 issue of the *Journal of the Texas Supreme Court Historical Society* for the AASLH Annual Meeting “Excellence in History” award. Having researched and written extensively on Texas history in general and on the history of African Americans in Texas in particular, I find the content of that issue of the journal deserving of special recognition for many reasons.

First, the issue is extremely valuable to Texas history and historians simply because it tells a story that heretofore largely has not appeared in print. A great deal of the history of what judges have handed down in applying the law to African Americans has been described at great length, but the stories of African Americans themselves as jurists are largely unknown. This history is relatively brief because Texas remained a bastion of segregation until the second half of the twentieth century, but that makes the stories of pioneer African American judges at all levels all the more significant.

An outstanding illustration of a contribution by this issue to the history of African Americans who were notable jurists in Texas is the article by John G. Browning on the career of Chief Justice Carolyn Wright. Browning opens with a reference to Charlye O. Farris (1929–2010), the first African American woman admitted to the Texas bar (1953) and the first black woman to serve as a judge in Texas (serving as county judge pro tem in 1954). Browning then shows how Farris’s legacy of “firsts” was passed on to another African American woman, Carolyn Wright. His article tells the story of how Wright became the first African American woman in Dallas to win a countywide election, the first in Texas history to win a multi-county election, and the first African American to lead a Texas intermediate appellate court as Chief Justice. He also notes that along the way, Wright was always quick to acknowledge the debt she owed to pioneers like Charlye Farris. John Browning brought impressive credentials to his work on the article, having served as the Chair of the Texas Bar Journal Board of Editors and as an adjunct law professor at SMU Dedman School of Law, Texas Tech University School of Law, and Texas A&M University School of Law.

The Summer 2018 issue of the *Journal* also offers invaluable primary source material on the experiences of African Americans as they traveled the road to joining the Texas Judiciary. Virgie A. Mouton’s account of a 1982 interview for a position as Briefing Attorney at the First Court of Appeals in Houston is an excellent example. Mouton remembered, “I was an eager
third-year law student, preparing to graduate, a wife and mother of two preschoolers. When I entered the interview room, all nine justices were seated in a semicircle facing the one lone chair on the opposite side. Judge Doyle was easily identifiable as he was the only black male justice sitting among the other eight white male justices. I felt confident as I sat in the chair facing them, although inside I felt nervous, not knowing what to expect. I felt as though I was in law school, where I was accustomed to professors asking me to recite cases and answer hypotheticals. I felt I was a law student attending class without reading the assignment, and dreading dismissal for being unprepared. To the contrary, the judges were polite and gracious. I began to feel calm once I realized that I was in the presence of my hero, Henry Doyle, the first graduate of my law school at Texas Southern University, now known as Thurgood Marshall School of Law. Prior to that interview, I had heard and read about the trials and tribulations Judge Doyle encountered while attending law school. He passed the bar in 1949, and graduated one year later in 1950 as the only member of our first graduating class. He was the namesake of the law school’s Henry Doyle Moot Court Competition. He was the distinguished keynote speaker at our law school Hooding Ceremony in 1981. Judge Doyle was our law school’s personal hero, our idol, a living legend engrained in the hearts and souls of our law school community.”

Mouton won the position and eventually became an instructor of law and the Assistant Dean for Student Development and Academic Support at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston. To repeat, this first-person account of a major milestone in her career is an invaluable source.

Yet another example of the value of this issue is found in the article by Bill Kroger entitled, “The Time to Preserve Texas’s Slave Case Records is Now.” Kroger reminded readers: “The Texas slavery records that are locked away in the district and county courts for Texas counties, especially those in East Texas, need to be preserved as soon as possible. I have seen these records—slavery lawsuits over ownership, titles, transactions, defects, murders, births, escapes, enslavements, or wrongful deaths. Some of these documents are property records in the county courts; some are court papers, journals, or records in civil litigation. Some of these files contain priceless exhibits, such as titles to enslaved persons. These records are often impossible to access, at least for most people. Few are digitized, and if they are, they are impossible to search. … They are probably the largest untapped, unstudied, unpreserved slavery records in the United States. They are a priceless historical resource for all Americans, but especially for African Americans who want to find and understand their family histories. County officials in Texas are generally supportive of preservation—they recognize the importance of these records. But many of the east Texas counties don’t have the money or skills for preservation. There should be public support—and funding—for this project, if it is to be properly thought through, planned and organized. It also would require a task force whose members bring different disciplines, expertise, and skills. Now is the time to undertake this project—to conduct a large-scale preservation of these records, so that they are saved for future generations, and become easy to access for families (and historians) to study.”
The project that Kroger calls for may never be undertaken, but he is absolutely correct in issuing the call. Local court records are unmatched as a source on slavery, especially because they were created not with the purpose of commenting on or judging the institution on moral grounds but as a matter of law and property rights in a slaveholding society. Holding humans as chattel property was fundamentally wrong, and the sources Kroger emphasizes show that truth in highly revealing ways. His article joins others in this issue of the journal to offer historians an important starting point for future research.
Randolph B. “Mike” Campbell

Regents Professor
Department of History
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas 76203-0650
Telephone: 940/565-3402
E-mail: mike@cas.unt.edu

Home Address:
924 Imperial Drive
Denton, Texas 76209
Telephone: 940/387-3276

Education:
Ph. D. - History, University of Virginia, 1966
  Dissertation - “Henry Clay and the Emerging Nations of Spanish America, 1815-1829"
M.A. - History, University of Virginia, 1963
B. S. - Education, University of Virginia, 1961

Experience:
Lone Star Chair in Texas History, UNT, 2013-2015
Lone Star Professor of History, University of North Texas, 2011-2013
Chief Historian, Texas State Historical Association, 2008-2017
Regents Professor, University of North Texas, 1988-
Professor, North Texas State University, 1977-1988
Associate Professor, North Texas State University, 1969-1977
Assistant Professor, North Texas State University, 1966-1969
Instructor, Madison College, Summer 1966
Instructor, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1963-1964
Graduate Assistant, University of Virginia, 1961-1962, 1965

Books:


**Articles:**

“A Sea of Blood and Smoking Ruin’: Reflections on Sam Houston and Slavery,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly, CXXII* (October 2018), 134-142.


“Reconstruction in McLennan County, Texas, 1865-1876,” *Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives, XXVII* (Spring 1995), 17-35.


“Political Conflict Within the Southern Consensus, Harrison County, Texas, 1850-1880,” Civil War History, XXVI (September 1980), 218-239.


“Local Archives as a Source of Slave Prices: Harrison County, Texas, as a Test Case,” *The Historian*, XXXVI (August 1974), 660-669.


**Chapters in Books:**


Encyclopedia/Dictionary/Handbook Entries:


Book Reviews:

Southwestern Historical Quarterly (12)

Journal of Southern History (8)

Journal of American History (4)

Journal of the Early Republic

Journal of Interdisciplinary History (3)

American Historical Review

Maryland Historical Magazine

The Historian (2)

Teaching History
East Texas Historical Journal (6)
Kentucky Historical Register (4)
West Texas Historical Association Yearbook
Military History of the Southwest
Social Science Quarterly
Concho River Review
Georgia Historical Quarterly
Arkansas Historical Quarterly (2)
Agricultural History
Mississippi Quarterly
Great Plains Quarterly
Texas Books in Review

Papers to Scholarly Societies and Symposia:

“‘A Sea of Blood and Smoking Ruin’: Reflections on Sam Houston and Slavery,” Awards Luncheon Address, Annual Meeting of the Texas State Historical Association, March 2018.


“Who Fought For the Confederacy: Harrison County, Texas, as a Test Case,” Annual Meeting of The Philosophical Society of Texas, Denton, December 2004.


“Reconstruction in a Multi-Ethnic Community: Colorado County, Texas, 1865-1876,” East Texas Historical Association (Spring Meeting), February 2002.

“Harrison County in the Civil War: A Rich Man’s War and Poor Man’s Fight?” East Texas Historical Association, September 2000.

“Who Fought for the Confederacy: Harrison County, Texas, as a Test Case,” Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association, April 2000.


“Writing Women’s History from County Records,” East Texas Historical Association, 1993.


“Slavery in Texas During the Civil War,” Texas Sesquicentennial Civil War Symposium, Sponsored by Civil War Round Table Associates, 1986.


“Planters and Plain Folk: The Social Structure of the Antebellum South,” to Symposium entitled Interpreting Southern History: A Symposium in Honor of Sanford W. Higginbotham, Editor of the Journal of Southern History, Rice University, 1983.


“Reconstruction and ‘Redemption’ in Harrison County,” Annual Meeting of the Texas State Historical Association, 1980.


**Session Chair/Discussant: Professional Meetings:**


Chair, “Civil Rights, Race, Gender, and Political Activism in Texas: Lessons Learned from Robert ‘Bob’ Calvert,” Texas State Historical Association, 2007.

Chair, Phi Alpha Theta Session, Texas State Historical Association, 2005. Discussant, Session entitled “Writing Texas History Textbooks,” East Texas Historical Association, 2005.


Chair, “Hanging Time in the Confederacy,” Texas State Historical Association, 1996


Chair, “Reconstruction in East Texas,” East Texas Historical Association, September 1986.


**Lectures, Workshops, and Consultant Work:**

Lecture and document-based Workshop on Slavery in Texas for teacher institute sponsored by Humanities Texas, Denton June 2017.

Advisory Consultant to Texas Historical Commission, 2016-2018.


Lecture and document-based Workshop on Slavery in Texas for teacher institute sponsored by Humanities Texas, Dallas, October 2013.


Lecture: “Benjamin Franklin: American Revolutionary,” Denton Public Library, Program as part of Traveling Exhibit on Franklin, June 2009.


Lecture and document-based Workshop on Texas from 1850 to 1865 for teacher institute sponsored by Humanities Texas at Trinity University, June 2008

Lecture and document-based Workshop on Slavery in Texas for teacher institute sponsored by Humanities Texas at the University of North Texas, June 2008


Lecture: “Practical Leadership in Times of Crisis: Sam Houston in Texas, 1832-1861” at Texas History Conference sponsored by Region VI, Education Service Center, Huntsville, January 2008


Lecture, “Texans and Their History in the New Millennium,” Clements Center Visiting Scholar Series, Southern Methodist University, 2003


Consultant, Hill College History Complex, Museum Exhibit on Texans in the Civil War, 1999.


“Slavery and the Cotton Economy of Antebellum Texas,” Luncheon Address to the annual American Cotton Conference, American Cotton Museum, Greenville, 1998


“Topics in Texas History, 1821-1876,” to In-Service for Richardson I.S.D., 1993

Consultant to Jones Farm 1820s Homestead Project at George Ranch Historical Museum in Fort Bend County, Texas, 1993, 1995.

Panel Discussion, Sam Houston Bicentennial Celebration, Sam Houston State University, 1993.


“The Portrayal of Slavery in Huck Finn” and “The Historical Context of Whitman’s Leaves of Grass,” Lectures to NEH Institute in Department of English at University of North Texas, 1989. As follow up to this institute, the lecture on slavery in Huck Finn was given at Irving Nimitz High School, Lewisville High School, a workshop for Dallas ISD teachers, Berkner High School, and a conference of high school social studies supervisors in Austin in 1990.


“Writing Local History,” Workshop at annual meeting of Texas State Historical Association, 1989.


“Slavery in Texas,” Lecture at Phi Alpha Theta initiation meeting, East Texas State University, February 1986.


Consultant to Project 150, an exhibition on Texas History to be presented by a consortium of museums and historical associations as part of the state’s sesquicentennial celebration, 1984.


“Research Methods in Texas History,” Graduate Institute Seminar, University of Texas at Austin, 1983.

“Antebellum Texas: Economic, Social, and Political Developments,” Lecture to Institute of Texas Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1980.

Consultant to Texas County Records Inventory Project, North Texas State University, 1979-1980.

“Recent Research and the Teaching of Southern History,” Conference on the Teaching of History sponsored by the American Historical Association and North Texas State University, Fall, 1978.


Professional Associations -- Memberships and Service:

Southern Historical Association
  Membership Committee, 1995
  Program Committee, 1987-1988
  Ramsdell Prize Committee, 1979-1981

Texas State Historical Association
  Chief Historian of the TSHA, 2008-2017
  Editor, Southwestern Historical Quarterly, 2005-2017
  Strategic Planning Committee, 2004
  Governance Committee, 2003
  President, 1993-1994
  First Vice President, 1992-1993
  Budget Committee, 1992-1993
  Second Vice President, 1991-1992
  Centennial Anniversary Committee, 1991-1996
  Long-Range Planning Committee, 1989-1990
  The New Handbook of Texas Advisory Committee, 1988-1999
  Advisory Editor, The New Handbook of Texas, 1984-1996
  H. Bailey Carroll Award Committee, 1974-1979

East Texas Historical Association
  Board of Directors, 1987-1990

Summerlee Commission on Texas History, 1989-1991

Special Service to Department of History, College, or University:

Supervisor of Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants in Department of History, 1975-1979

Faculty Coordinator for Texas County Records Inventory Project, 1980-1981

Editor, Institutional Self-Study for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1983-1985

Director of Center for Studies in Local History, 1988-1995


Member of Steering Committee and co-chair of section on Educational Programs, Institutional Self-Study for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1993-1995.

Member of College of Business Administration Dean Search Committee, 1995-1996.


Committee on the Organizational Structure of Engineering at UNT, 2001.


College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Planning Committee, 2005-2006.


Regents Professor Selection and Review Committee, 2006-2009

Faculty Advisor to UNT Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, 2017-

**Honors:**

Phi Beta Kappa, University of Virginia Chapter, 1966

Phi Eta Sigma, University of Virginia Chapter, 1958

Phi Kappa Phi, University of North Texas Chapter, 1975

H. Bailey Carroll Award from the Texas State Historical Association for best article in Volume LXXIII of *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. 1970.

North Texas State University Student Activities Union “Favorite Professor” Award, 1973

Charles W. Ramsdell Award from the Southern Historical Association for best article in *Journal of Southern History* for 1973-1974

North Texas State University Student Government Association “Honor Professor” Award, 1977

Sallie M. Lentz Award, Harrison County Historical Society, 1981

C. K. Chamberlain Award - best article in Volume XIX of the *East Texas Historical Journal.*

Fellow of the East Texas Historical Association, 1982

Fellow of the Texas State Historical Association, 1985
Toulouse Scholar Award, University of North Texas, 1988

H. Bailey Carroll Award from the Texas State Historical Association for best article in Volume XCIII of the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, 1991.

Coral H. Tullis Memorial Prize from the Texas State Historical Association for most important book on Texas published in 1989.

Summerfield G. Roberts Award from the Sons of the Republic of Texas for best historical or creative writing on the Republic of Texas in 1989.

Friends of the Dallas Public Library Award from Texas Institute of Letters for most important contribution to knowledge by a Texas author in 1989.

Ottis G. Lock Award from East Texas Historical Association for Best Book, 1990.

Texas Historical Foundation Book Award for 1990.

C. K. Chamberlain Award from East Texas Historical Association for best article in volume XXVIII of the East Texas Historical Journal.

University of North Texas Student Association Honor Professor, 1993.

Ottis Lock Award from East Texas Historical Association - outstanding university teacher, 1995.

C. E. Berly Award from the Texas Gulf Historical Society for best article in the Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record, 1996.


Elected to The Philosophical Society of Texas, 2000.

Elected to Texas Institute of Letters, 2002.

University of North Texas Student Government Association “Honor Professor” Award, 2003.

Annual Award for Best Book on Texas in 2003 from The Philosophical Society of Texas, 2004.

University of North Texas Student Government Association “Honor Professor” Award, 2005.

University of North Texas Eminent Faculty Award, 2013.