

# ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

**CASE NUMBER:** C14H-2008-0027

**HLC DATE:**

August 25, 2008

September 22, 2008

October 6, 2008

**PC DATE:**

December 9, 2008

**APPLICANT:** Historic Landmark Commission

**HISTORIC NAME:** Texas Blind, Deaf and Orphan School Gymnasium and Auditorium

**WATERSHED:** Colorado River

**ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE:** 7201 Levander Loop

**ZONING FROM:** P-NP to P-H-NP

**SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff does not recommend the proposed zoning change from public, neighborhood plan (P-NP) district to public – Historic Landmark – neighborhood plan (P-H-NP) combining district zoning with the adoption of a compromise solution to preserve the framework and the gymnasium, construction of an entry arch commemorating the architecture of the auditorium, and the installation of an interpretive historical plaque commemorating the history of the site and the school.

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION:** August 25, 2008: Initiated the historic zoning case. September 22, 2008: Postponed the case to a specially-called meeting on October 6, 2008 for a full Commission. October 6, 2008: Recommended historic zoning for the gymnasium and auditorium only. Vote: 7-0.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:** Recommended historic zoning for the gymnasium and the auditorium and a study to determine the feasibility of adaptive re-use of the buildings. Vote: 8-0.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The buildings are not listed in any city survey. The former East Campus of the Texas School for the Deaf are addressed in the Govalle/Johnston Terrace Combined Neighborhood Plan (2003) under several goals and objectives:

## **Public Lands**

### **Former Texas State School for the Deaf Property (now owned by City of Austin)**

This property is now owned by the City of Austin through the Health and Human Services Department. A large portion of the northern part of this site is affected by a power line that runs through the property. This power line constitutes a significant impediment to development of this part of the property.

Neighborhood stakeholders suggested that if it was possible to re-route these power lines that this site might be appropriate for residential development. Residential

development that was affordable and available to local families is supported by this plan.

If it is not possible to re-route the power line, other suggestions for this property were recreational uses including:

- Playing fields – since the cessation of soccer on the “informal” field at Oak Springs, there is a lack of places for soccer in this area. A baseball diamond was also mentioned as another form of playing field that would be appropriate;
- Small walking trail;
- Playground. (p. 47)

**Goal 15:** Protect and enhance existing parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces.

- Achieve and maintain a healthy, sustainable, robust, functional, and aesthetically beautiful parks and green space system within the planning area.
- Establish and maintain equity in the distribution of funds for parks and public facilities.
- Preserve and enhance existing parks and recreational facilities.

**Goal 17:** Provide opportunities for cultural arts, recreation and leisure activities/services for all ages.

**Goal 18:** Design public facilities and open spaces that serve as community gathering places. (p. 73).

**CITY COUNCIL DATE:** December 18, 2008

**ACTION:**

**ORDINANCE READINGS:** 1<sup>ST</sup> 2<sup>ND</sup> 3<sup>RD</sup>

**ORDINANCE NUMBER:**

**CASE MANAGER:** Steve Sadowsky

**PHONE:** 974-6454

**NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION:** Johnston Terrace

**BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

The gymnasium and auditorium at the former East Campus of the Texas School for the Deaf were built in 1959 and are therefore not yet 50 years old. They are located on city-owned property which is being developed as the new city animal shelter. Staff requests greater consideration of the potential for adaptive re-use of these buildings as the last remaining buildings on what was established as the Texas Blind, Deaf and Orphan School for African-American youth in 1959, and which later became the East Campus of the Texas School for the Deaf after integration of the facility.

**Architecture:**

The gymnasium is a Quonset-styled building with exposed metal exterior arches and glazing in the arch of the roof. The auditorium features a 1950s-1960s modern design. The primary material on both buildings is brick. The modern style of these buildings reflects the work of Houston architects George Rustay and Foy Martin,

who also designed many modern-styled houses in Houston in the late 1950s and early 1960s as well as the Calhoun County Court House in Port Lavaca, Texas, which has a similar architectural philosophy of clean lines, modern materials, exposed means of construction, and geometrical shapes.

#### **Historical Associations:**

The former East Campus of the Texas School for the Deaf was established in 1959 as the Blind, Deaf and Orphan School, an African-American institution, and was built on the site of the former Montopolis Drive-In Theater at what was then 601 Airport Boulevard. The Blind, Deaf and Orphan School was combined with the Texas School for the Deaf in 1965 with integration, although African-American students were still housed at the East Campus and bused to the main campus of the School for the Deaf on South Congress Avenue.

The auditorium was named in 1989 for J.C. McAdams, Jr., a prominent African-American educator and superintendent of the Blind, Deaf and Orphan School from 1951 until its integration in 1965. McAdams had a long career in education, having attended the Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia and being one of the first African-American students at Colorado State University. His father, J.C. McAdams, Sr. (1860-1940) was also a prominent educator, having graduated from Fisk University in Nashville, and teaching in segregated schools in the Shelbyville area of Tennessee. The 1900 U.S. Census shows J.C. and Lizzie McAdams living in Bedford County, Tennessee (Shelbyville), where he was listed as an African-American teacher. Prior to coming back to Tennessee, from 1896-1898, the elder McAdams was the principal of the Fessenden School, an African-American institution near Ocala, Florida. In addition, the elder McAdams also apparently served as principal of the Union School in Martin, Florida from 1897 to 1898. Around 1928, either the older or the younger McAdams was a teacher at the Hardeman County Training School in Tennessee; it is unclear to whom the reference is made, since both men were actively teaching in segregated schools at that time, although it would appear that it was J.C. McAdams, Jr., as his father was teaching in Shelbyville, Tennessee at that time. The younger McAdams then moved to Crockett, Texas, and finally to Austin, becoming superintendent of the Blind, Deaf and Orphan School here.

The buildings on the former East Campus were designed by the Houston architectural firm of Rustay & Martin (George Rustay and Foy Martin). George Rustay had previously been associated with noted Houston architect Joseph Finger, who designed many civic, institutional, organizational, commercial, and religious buildings in Houston and surrounding cities. After Finger's death, Rustay joined Foy Martin; they designed civic and commercial buildings, including the Calhoun County Court House in Port Lavaca, Texas. Wylie Vale joined the firm in the early 1960s; the expanded firm designed the Matagorda County Court House in Bay City, Texas. In addition to their commercial and civic buildings, the firm also designed a large number of modern 1960s residences throughout Houston.

**PARCEL NO.:** 02001801020000

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** Abstract 22, Survey 29, J.C. Tannehill (44.45 acres)

**ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT:** Exempt

**APPRAISED VALUE:** The entire tract is valued at \$1.9 million; there is no value ascribed to the improvements on the property.

**PRESENT USE:** Vacant

**CONDITION:** Fair

**PRESENT OWNER:**

City of Austin Real Estate Division

P.O. Box 1088

Austin, Texas 78767

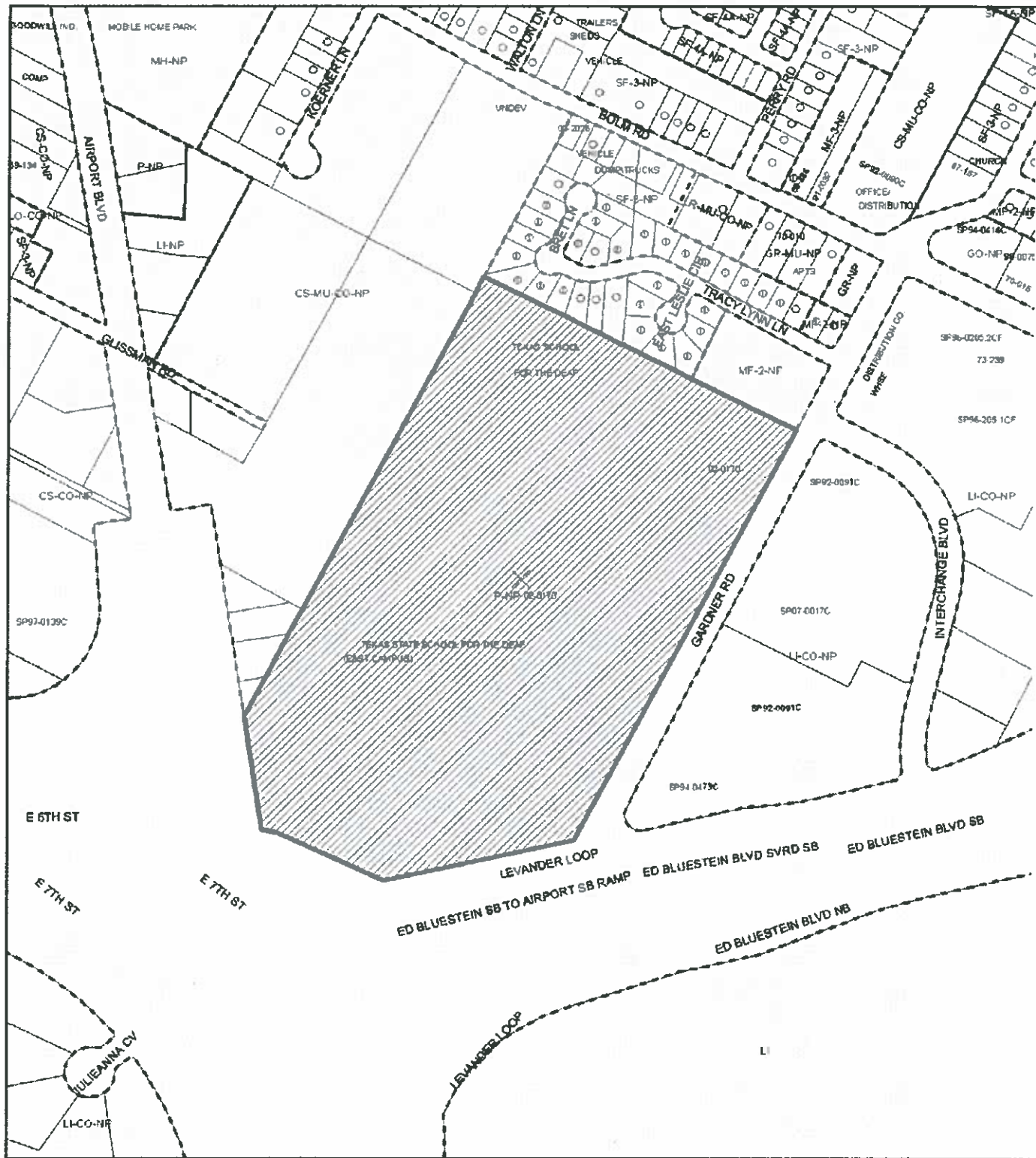
**DATE BUILT:** ca. 1959





**ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS:** None apparent.

**ORIGINAL OWNER(S):** State of Texas (1959)

**OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS:** None.

# LOCATION MAP




  
 **SUBJECT TRACT**
  
 **ZONING BOUNDARY**
  
 **PENDING CASE**
  
**OPERATOR: S. MEEKS**

**HISTORIC DEMOLITION PERMIT**  
**ZONING CASE#:** HDP-2008-0438  
**ADDRESS:** 7201 LEVANDER LOOP  
**SUBJECT AREA:** 0.000 ACRES  
**GRID:** L21 & M21  
**MANAGER:** S. SADOWSKY



This map has been produced by G.I.S. Services for the sole purpose of geographic reference.  
 No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.



Gymnasium





Details of gymnasium



J.C. McAdams Auditorium



State of Texas  
519 Oscar Robinson Tract  
Unplatted  
Masonry School Bldg.  
7423 10-20-59  
Stokes Construction Co.

601 Airport, Blvd.

\$1,156,448

MASONRY SCHOOL BLDG.

Building permit for the construction of the school campus - 1959

519  
Civic Union  
Unplatted  
519

WATER SERVICE PERMIT  
- See 57 Austin, Texas  
NE II  
Nº 26034  
INDEXED

Received of State of Texas  
Address 601 Airport Blvd.  
Amount Three Hundred Sixty 9 00/100 \$360  
Plumber C. S. Pierce Date 1-18-60  
Size of Tap 6"

Date of Connection 5-23-60  
Size of Tap Made 6"  
Size Service Made 6"  
Size Main Tapped 8"  
From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 24'  
From Prop. Line to Curb Cock 100'  
Location of Meter So. P.K.  
Type of Box  
Depth of Main in St. 3'  
Depth of Service Line 3'  
From Curb Cock to Tap on Main  
Checked by Engr. Dept. 2-5-60

No. Fittings	Size
1 C.T. Pipe 7" x 6" F.I.P.	7"
1 C.T. Coupling 5" x 4"	5"
1 Cop. to Iron ell	4"
1 Cop. to Cop. ell	4"
1 Cop. to Iron Coupling	4"
1 Cop. to Cop. Coupling	4"
1 C.T. Stop 1" x 6" x 4"	1"
1 Bushing	1"
1 Nipples	1"
1 Stop & Drain	1"
1 Valve	1"
1 Meter Box	1"
1 Lock Lid	1"
1 Drain Tile	1"
1 Drain Tile Lid	1"
1 Stop & Drain	1"
Job No. W 323-710-500	
Foreman Pierce	

CONDUIT 20" DIA. 2' TO 10'

BASTROP ROAD (ST. HWY 167)

AIRPORT 26' x 11'

BOULEVARD

601

100'

105'

Water service permit - 1960



# THE HANDBOOK OF TEXAS Online

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**TEXAS BLIND, DEAF, AND ORPHAN SCHOOL.** The Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School, a charity-sponsored institution for black children, was located on a hundred-acre tract on Bull Creek Road between 38th and 45th streets, about four miles northwest of the Austin business district. It was established as the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Institute for Colored Youth in 1887 by the Eighteenth Legislature. A \$50,000 appropriation was made to buy land and to construct appropriate buildings; the board of trustees included H. E. Shelley, J. T. Fulmore, and William M. Brown.<sup>¶</sup> Seventeen pupils and two teachers were present for the opening of the school on October 17, 1887. The initial campus consisted only of an eleven-room residence, but in 1888 a new two-story brick building was added to provide more classroom and dormitory space. In 1919 the school was placed under the jurisdiction of the newly created Board of Control.<sup>¶</sup> Various additions and renovations took place during the next several decades; by the 1940s the school had twelve brick buildings and one stone building, including dormitories, classrooms, hospital, superintendent's residence, and dining room. Instruction at the accredited high school emphasized training in trades and industries. Among the courses offered were manual labor, broom making, mattress making, shoemaking and repair, tailoring, cleaning and pressing, cooking, sewing, rug making, and other handicrafts. The hospital furnished surgical, medical, dental, and nursing services; specialists for eye, ear, nose, and throat ailments were employed part-time. Some poultry and farm products were raised each year for the home's own use.

When the State Colored Orphans' Home<sup>¶</sup> was combined with the institute in 1943, the name of the facility was changed to Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School. The school was moved to 601 Airport Boulevard, the former site of the Montopolis Drive-in Theater, in 1961, after the legislature appropriated \$1.5 million for the construction of eleven buildings to accommodate the 1,208 students. The school was placed under the jurisdiction of the Texas Education Agency<sup>¶</sup> in 1965, and its name was changed to Texas Blind and Deaf School. It was combined with the Texas School for the Deaf<sup>¶</sup> later that year. The campus of the former Texas Blind and Deaf School served as the East Campus facility of the Texas School for the Deaf, and housed programs in early childhood and elementary education, as well as the department for multihandicapped deaf students. In 1989 the legislature appropriated money for the renovation of the School for the Deaf's South Campus, and plans were made to move all of the programs to the new facilities once the construction was completed. In the early 1990s no decision about the future use of the East Campus facility had been made.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Vertical Files, Austin History Center. Vertical Files, Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin.

*James W. Markham*

The following, adapted from the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition, is the preferred citation for this article.

*Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "."

At-Texas School for the Deaf 15000 (1960)

# Integration Of Special Schools Told

By DEERO EVANS  
Education Writer

A group of 200 children who are among the city's youngest but most faithful commuters has brought about the peaceful integration of classrooms at the state's special schools this fall. This is the report from John Grace, director of special schools.

Each morning a bus carries the school for the Deaf in South Austin, taking 100 white children to attend classes with Negro children at the School for the Blind and Deaf on Airport Boulevard.

The bus returns with 100 Negro children who study each day at the School for the Deaf.

Meanwhile another bus is taking 80 Negro children from Airport Boulevard to participate in the day's classes at the School for the Blind in North Austin.

Grace terms the transition "very smooth," adding, "I know of no incidents among children, teachers, house parents, employees or anyone."

Integration of living facilities at the three schools is scheduled

for Sept. 1, 1965 Grace said.

By that date a \$336,000 building and renovation program will be completed at the three schools, Grace said. The funds were appropriated by the 59th Legislature.

The added facilities will permit the special schools to enroll "40 to 50" additional children, Grace predicted.

Enrollment at the three schools this year is 975, including 80-day students who live at home in Austin. About 200 Negro children live at the School for the Blind and Deaf.

Grace assumed the newly created post of director of special schools on Sept. 1, after 11 years as superintendent of the School for the Deaf.

Other new members of Grace's administrative team this fall are John Best, who came from the Idaho School

for the Blind to be superintendent of the School for the Blind here, and Albert W. Douglas, promoted to superintendent of the School for the Deaf after 11 years as principal.



# THE HANDBOOK OF TEXAS Online

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**TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF.** The Texas School for the Deaf was established by the legislature in 1856 as the Texas Deaf and Dumb Asylum. Governor Elisha M. Pease<sup>™</sup> appointed a board of five trustees and instructed them to find a site for the school. The trustees rented a fifty-seven-acre tract, a half mile south of the Colorado River in Austin, that had a two-room cottage, three log cabins, and an old smokehouse that could be made over for a school room. The school opened with three students in January 1857, and at the end of the first summer only eleven students had enrolled. Rather than being discouraged at the low enrollment, teachers at the school felt that it would quickly increase once a railroad to Austin was completed. Superintendent Jacob van Nostrand and the board of trustees asked for funds to begin construction of a carefully designed campus. In response, the 1858 legislature appropriated \$5,000 for the purchase of the rented property, for minor improvements and additions to the existing buildings, and for the construction of two frame buildings to serve as school and living quarters. During the Civil War<sup>™</sup> the school had no money for salaries; teachers and students supported themselves by farming and by making clothes from the wool of the sheep that they raised. A total of sixty students attended the school during its first thirteen years.

A change in the law in 1876 allowed the governor, rather than the board of trustees, to appoint the school's superintendent. The two superintendents who served during this period were Henry E. McCulloch and John S. Ford.<sup>™</sup> Neither man had special knowledge of teaching or of the deaf; nevertheless, they each took genuine interest in the school's well-being. They fought, though with little success, for higher salaries for teachers. In spite of a high turnover rate among the faculty, the school made good progress in areas such as vocational instruction. Among other new programs, the school's first monthly publication *The Texas Mute Ranger*, forerunner of the *Lone Star*, was established in 1878. In 1883 the legislature gave the power to appoint the superintendent back to the trustees in an effort to make the position less political.

A substantial building program, begun in 1875, continued under McCulloch and Ford and was completed in the late 1880s. In 1893 the method of instruction at the school was changed from a strictly manual form of communication to a combined manual and oral system, and an oral department was instituted to give students a chance to develop any residual speech ability they might have. A deaf-blind department was organized at the school in 1900 and was maintained until 1934, when it was transferred to the Texas School for the Blind.<sup>™</sup> In 1919 the legislature established the Board of Control<sup>™</sup> and placed it in charge of overseeing the school's administration. By 1923 the Texas facility was reported to be the second-largest school for the deaf in the country. It had 450 students in the mid-1940s and offered courses in a variety of trades, in addition to academic instruction. Acoustic work for children with residual hearing was instituted as part of the academic training. In 1949 control of the school was given to the new Board for Special Schools and Hospitals, and the name of the facility was changed to the Texas School for the Deaf. The school had gone by this name informally for years. Tensions rose, however, because the school was still categorized as an eleemosynary institution rather than an educational one. Students and teachers alike resented the

stigma that society attached to "charity cases." In 1951 the legislature reclassified the school and placed it under the jurisdiction of the Texas Education Agency.<sup>iv</sup> The school claimed the distinction of being the oldest public school in continuous operation in the state. Beginning in 1955 several of the old buildings on campus were razed, and a completely new physical plant was built. The School for the Deaf merged with the Texas Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School<sup>v</sup> in 1965. The two facilities were integrated during 1966, and the Blind, Deaf, and Orphan School became the East Campus of the School for the Deaf. The East Campus housed the school's programs in early childhood and elementary education, as well as the department for multi-handicapped deaf students.

In 1981 the Texas School for the Deaf became an independent school district and was also made a state agency. It served as a resource center for other deaf-education programs in the state, offering inservice training for teachers and staff, onsite testing programs, and conferences on various subjects in order to help raise the level of instruction for the deaf in both public and private schools. Also in 1981 Victor Galloway became the school's first deaf superintendent. In the late 1980s the school had 400 students, eighty of whom were day students; the rest lived on campus in cottage environments. The school received accreditation from the Texas Education Agency and from the Conference of Executives of American Schools for the Deaf. In contrast to the days when deaf children were taught only certain crafts and trades, society had begun to accept that the deaf could make significant contributions. Careers in such fields as computers, teaching, and law were becoming available, and between 40 and 60 percent of the school's graduates went on to attend a college or technical school. In 1989 the legislature appropriated funds for extensive renovation of the South Campus. The school planned to move all of its programs to the South Campus once the construction was completed but had made no decision about the future of the East Campus facility. Other superintendents of the School for the Deaf include William Addison Kendall (1887-95), T. A. Rose (1895-99), B. F. McNulty (1899-1905), Gus Urbantke (1913-19), Felix B. Shuford (1919-23), T. M. Scott (1923-39), E. R. Wright (1939-44), John F. Grace (1949-65), A. W. Douglas (1965-72), and Virgil Flathouse (1974-80). In 1987 Marvin Sallop became superintendent.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** William Wallace Blackburn, *Evolution of the State School for the Deaf from an Asylum to an Accredited School* (M.Ed. thesis, University of Texas, 1958). University of Texas at Austin LBJ School of Public Affairs, *Guide to Texas State Agencies* (Austin, 1956-). Vertical Files, Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin.

*Vivian Elizabeth Smyrl*

**The following, adapted from the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition, is the preferred citation for this article.**

*Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. ","  
<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/TT/kct26.html> (accessed August 18, 2008).

(NOTE: "s.v." stands for sub verbo, "under the word.")

The *Handbook of Texas Online* is a project of the Texas State Historical Association



**Marvin B. Sallop**  
Executive Director

*Austin History Center*

**Texas School for the Deaf**  
1102 South Congress Avenue  
P.O. Box 3538  
Austin, Texas 78764  
(512) 440-5300

September 8, 1989

Ms. Audrey Bateman  
Austin-Travis County Collection  
810 Guadalupe Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Ms. Bateman:

The Texas School for the Deaf respectfully requests your presence and participation in honoring the memory of two respected and notable leaders in the field of deaf education in Texas. On October 7, 1989, the Texas School for the Deaf will dedicate and name school buildings in memory of Jack H. Hensley and J. C. McAdams.

The South Campus library will henceforth be known as the Jack H. Hensley Library. Mr. Hensley graduated from TSD in 1939, as salutatorian, and later taught at the school for 30 years. He retired in 1984. He was a central figure in the deaf community, both personally and through his involvement in many local, state and national organizations. He was graduated from Gallaudet University and earned a Master of Educational Psychology from the University of Texas.

The East Campus auditorium will be named after J. C. McAdams for the many contributions he made in the field of civil rights and education, including serving as superintendent of the Texas Blind, Deaf and Orphan School from 1951 until 1965, when the campus at 601 Airport Boulevard became part of the unified Texas School for the Deaf. He received a B.S. in Agriculture from Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia and was one of the first blacks to graduate from Colorado State University, where he earned a master's degree in agriculture education.

Bronze plaques depicting the naming of the Jack H. Hensley Library and the J.C. McAdams Building will be unveiled during morning ceremonies at the two locations. Funds for these plaques will be raised privately. We invite you to participate with us in acknowledging these respected leaders through your tax-deductible donation to the TSD Dedication Fund, c/o Public Information Office, P. O. Box 3538, Austin, Texas 78764. A Dedication Fund Account has been established in the school's Business Office where all expenses for the dedication will be paid. An acknowledgement and official receipt will be mailed to you directly.

The enclosed articles which appeared in the TSD Lone Star will give you a brief overview of the many contributions and leadership both men provided to generations of deaf Texans. The dedication of these buildings is a small symbol of the esteem, admiration, respect and love we can offer for the many years of dedicated service both men provided to this school and countless students.

"An Equal Opportunity Employer"

## **J.C. McAdams**

**J.C. McAdams, age 88, of Austin, died Thursday.**

**Special services will be held Tuesday, at the Texas School for the Deaf, East Campus, 601 Airport Blvd. 7:00-8:00 PM. Funeral services, 3:00 PM, Wednesday, Wesley United Methodist Church, burial Evergreen Cemetery.**

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Obituary of J.C. McAdams

Austin American-Statesman, September 20, 1988



# MEMORIES



J.C. McAdams

J. C. McAdams, who died September 15 in Austin, will long be remembered for the many contributions he made as superintendent of the Texas Blind, Deaf and Orphan School.

He was superintendent at the school from 1951 until 1965, when the all-black campus at 601 Airport Boulevard became part of the Texas School for the Deaf.

Friends and colleagues of McAdams say he was a man they will never forget. They tell many stories about his leadership, his sense of humor, and his dedication to his students.

When McAdams arrived at the Texas Blind Deaf and Orphan School on Bull Creek Road in 1951, the school needed extensive interior and exterior renovation. McAdams brought about a complete change in the management of the school through extensive policies and controls.

The home economics department was remodeled with stainless steel St. Charles kitchens - the latest style. Opal Washington, now retired from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, went to the school and presented special demonstrations in cooking, sewing, crafts, money management, and personal grooming.

McAdams wanted students to have the opportunity to learn as many skills as possible. Former principal, William McConnell, recalled that training was offered in cosmetology, upholstery, fashion, and dry cleaning. Agriculture agents worked with students on a gardening program.

McAdams also began an Austin tradition - the planting of running roses on the fences of state property. The idea later caught on at other state properties, said former teacher Mrs. Eddie Langdon, but McAdams was first.

Staff meetings were upbeat and educational, Langdon recalls. McAdams loved reading *The New York Times* and best sellers; he asked her to do book reviews for staff meetings. He was always open to discussion and differences of opinion, she said. Langdon, who taught music to young blind children, went to the School for the Blind, along with the blind students, when the Airport campus became part of the Texas School for the Deaf in 1965.

The all-black school had moved from the Bull Creek Road facility to Airport Boulevard in 1960. Paul Smith, recruited by McAdams to be his Business Manager, said McAdams was effective and persuasive in working with his board and the Legislature. Jess Irwin, Jr. said McAdams secured the legislative appropriation for the property to build a school at the Airport location and was instrumental in its design.

Irwin, who worked for the Legislative Budget Board, often saw McAdams in action. He said that when McAdams dealt with the legislature, he had a sense of humor, but "he also had a sense of what he needed to do to carry out his responsibilities."

Others recall that McAdams had a unique ability to size people up, to know whether they would work with him. He was so keen that he could recognize people's voices, who they were, who they were with, and probably the last time he saw them.

McAdams kept in contact with members of the Legislature, knew them personally, and knew where their districts were located. Lloyd Nelson, who worked in the Business Office at the school on Bull Creek Road, remembers McAdams' ability to form coalitions and cooperative situations for the school. "He got just about everything he wanted from the Legislature because of this unique talent," Nelson said. Nelson added that McAdams was an energetic, dynamic man. He had an open door policy to his staff, and he loved the children and knew many of them personally.

McAdams provided a father image to the children, and was there whenever someone needed him. When the school showed movies in the auditorium, he popped the popcorn. When hula hoops were popular,

he bought boxes of them for all the children. McAdams was able to accomplish so much because he was interested in the welfare of the children. "He worked, he stayed on the job all the time," Irwin said.

Mrs. Washington said McAdams was a "hardworking man, a go-getter. He left no stones unturned. There were many things the students could not do without. He pushed for equal facilities for all," she said. "He really made opportunities available for a lot of people who would not otherwise have had them."

McAdams was among the giants in education, said Bill Whitt, Dean of Academic Affairs at Durham Nixson Clay Business College. "He was the finest schoolman, regardless of race, that I ever met," he said. Whitt shared an office with McAdams when McAdams went to work at the Texas Education Agency in 1966. When they would go to a school district to investigate a situation, McAdams could get the information he needed in about five minutes. "He'd shell them down like he'd shell an ear of corn," he said.

Wherever they went, people recognized McAdams because they'd seen him speak, not once but usually four or five times. He traveled the state, speaking at graduations and at churches.

McAdams was an eloquent speaker, said Lee Wilburn, assistant commissioner for instruction for the state when McAdams was a consultant, before his years as superintendent. "He knew his subject, he knew the people and he knew what he was talking about," Wilburn said.

The two visited schools in every part of the state, making sure facilities were up to state standards. Their friendship continued during the years McAdams was superintendent. When Wilburn and his wife moved to a new house, McAdams arrived with a four-foot pecan tree.

McAdams was an excellent gardener, growing things when no one else could. He had worked in agriculture before his work in education. He was one of the first blacks to graduate from Colorado State University, where he earned a master's degree in agriculture education.

In his 88 years, McAdams worked in three careers: in agriculture, in education, and in the integration of schools across Texas. Though he encountered prejudice in his work, McAdams kept a positive attitude. "If there ever was a man that was not prejudiced, it was J. C. McAdams," Whitt said.

Representative Wilhelmina Delco gave the eulogy

at the services for McAdams, calling him a God-fearing man "who lived God's word." McAdams' father was born a slave, and against all odds, became one of the first black lawyers in the State of Tennessee. He provided his son with the values and mental strategies for "becoming an overcomer." J. C. McAdams, Jr. became a man for his times," she said. "Although he lived most of his life in a hostile segregated society, he developed his full potential and became a trailblazer, showing others the way."

McAdams was first and foremost a family man. He worked as a team with his wife, Inez McAdams. She died in 1957 and he never remarried. McAdams is survived by a daughter, Bettye Joanne McAdams of Austin.

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The Editorial Staff of the Lone Star would like to thank the following individuals who provided invaluable personal and professional insights on the life and work of J. C. McAdams which enabled us to produce this story: to TSD staff Nancy Hawkins and Charles W. Horton Jr.; to former colleagues, Opal Washington, Jess Irwin, Jr., Mrs. Eddie Langdon, Lloyd Nelson, Bill Whitt, Lee Wilburn; William McConnell; Willie Lee Glass; and Paul Smith; to Rep. Wilhelmina Delco; and especially to Ms. Bettye J. McAdams for sharing her father's personal records and her private thoughts as only a loving daughter could.

### "Miss Mary"

Former TSD houseparent, Mary Henrietta Derstine, 80, died August 10, 1988 at an Abilene hospital.

"Miss Mary", as she was affectionately called, worked at the Texas School for the Deaf and Blind from 1942 until her retirement in 1973. She served as a houseparent on South Campus, working mainly in the football and volleyball cottages during her tenure at TSD. She later worked part-time as a substitute houseparent until she was 79. She was a member of Central Presbyterian Church of Austin.

"Miss Mary" was born in Merkel, Texas and graduated from Merkel High School. She attended Simmons College. She is remembered by TSD staff as a wonderful, lovable person who loved to knit and embroider during her off-hours. "Miss Mary" was a conscientious and dedicated employee, oftentimes working many hours without additional pay.

Although she never married, "Miss Mary" was devoted to the needs of other people within the TSD community and the larger Austin area. She loved the young students on South Campus but still found time to volunteer at the Austin Senior Citizens program providing many hours to assisting older citizens who could not otherwise help themselves.

A dear and devoted employee of TSD will be greatly missed.

Memorial to J.C. McAdams – Lone Star, date unknown (1988)

**John C. McAdams**

M, b. October 1860, d. December 1940



**Calhoun County Court House, Port Lavaca, Texas  
Designed by Rustay & Martin (1959)**



**Matagorda County Court House, Bay City, Texas  
Designed by Rustay, Martin & Vale (1965)**