Here and There with TCU Press Authors

Texas, as Don Graham noted in recent remarks, has many halls of fame but none honoring its strong literary heritage. The Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library decided to fill that need and inaugurated the Texas Literary Hall of Fame, reasoning no place could be better than Fort Worth, home at one time or another to John Graves, Larry McMurtry, Dan Jenkins, William Barney, Gary Cartwright, Mike Cochran, Patrick Anderson, Bud Shrake, Thomas Thompson, Jerry Flemmons, and a host of other literary lights. Judy Alter and Jim Lee joined Jeff Guinn of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram to make initial suggestions about the selection of honorees, and a selection committee chose John Graves, Horton Foote, Elmer Kelton, Shelby Hearon, Larry McMurtry, and the late J. Frank Dobie, Walter Prescott Webb, and Katherine Anne Porter.

TCU Press authors were prominent at the podium at the May 12 ceremony. The press has reprinted ten novels by Elmer Kelton, along with a new collection of nonfiction and an audio tape of Elmer reading some of his own speeches; we have reprinted two Shelby Hearon novels; John Graves and Larry McMurtry have both been exceedingly gracious with contributions to press projects over the years; Don Graham, who did a masterful job as the emcee, is the author of the 1998 collection, Giant Country, and is currently at work on another project for us; and Jim Lee accepted the honorary plaque for the late Walter Prescott Webb.

The evening was a complete success, from the unveiling of an original painting commissioned to commemorate the event and the clever introductions by Don Graham and the heartfelt...
appreciation of the honorees to Betty Lynn Buckley’s spur-of-the-moment rendition of “Amazing Grace.”

Hats off to the Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library and to our authors for earning such recognition. We’re proud to have them on our list.

Steve Davis’ *Texas Literary Outlaws: Six Writers in the Sixties and Beyond* made a splash in Texas even before books hit the warehouse, coming to public attention with a long and laudatory feature article by Patrick Beach in the *Austin American-Statesman*. Steve was Barnes & Noble author of the month in Austin in May. Gary Cartwright, one of the six writers and now senior editor at *Texas Monthly*, joined Steve for a discussion of the impact of the sixties on Texas literature on May 25 at the Barnes & Noble at The Village at Westlake Shopping Center in Austin.

And Steve, assistant curator of the Southwest Writers Collection at Texas State University-San Marcos, put together an exhibition or original manuscripts, letters, photographs and memorabilia from the archives of Billie Lee Brammer, Gary Cartwright, Larry L. King, and Bud Shrake housed at the collection. (Two other authors considered in the book are Peter Gent and Dan Jenkins.) A June 3 book signing and discussion at the Alkek Library, home of the Southwest Writers Collection, brought together Davis, Cartwright, and Shrake.

This spring, a scholarly study of the Mexican American War will lead the TCU Press list. *Wars within War: Mexican Guerrillas, Domestic Elites, and the United States of America, 1846-1848*, by Irving W. Levinson, studies two little-known guerrilla wars. Using information from twenty-four archives, including the normally closed files of Mexico’s National Defense Archives, Levinson argues that these conflicts—rebellions of class and race among the Mexican population—were critical to the course of the war and Mexican history. The book builds nicely on previous TCU titles, such as *Dueling Eagles: Reinterpreting the Mexican War, 1846-1848*, and critical biographies of Ricardo Flores Magón and Praexidis Guerrero.

Once again working with the Disciples of Christ Historical Society and author D. Duane Cummins, we will publish the first volume of *Alexander Campbell: Adventurer in Freedom*, a literary biography begun some seventy years ago by Eva Jean Wrather. Dr. Cummins was asked to work with the late Ms.Wrather to edit what was then an 800,000-word manuscript. Before Ms. Wrather’s health failed, they completed the first seven chapters, detailing Campbell’s physical journey from Scotland to America and his spiritual journey from the stern Calvinism of his youth to his own theology of a loving and kind God. Dr. Cummins’ first book for the press was *Dale Fiers: Twentieth Century Disciple*. Dr. Cummins hopes to follow with other volumes of the biography and to facilitate more joint titles with the Historical Society.

J’Nell Pate, a widely published historian, has published two books with TCU Press—*North of the River: A History of North Fort Worth* and *Hazel Vaughn Leigh and the Fort Worth Boys’ Club*. Now we are pleased to add her new manuscript, *America’s Historic Stockyards: Livestock Hotels* to our spring list. The work studies the beginning and growth of these markets in large cities and small and their eventual decline as trucks replaced railroads in the United States.
Our fictional entry in the spring will be *Galveston Rose*, by Mary Powell, author of *Auslander*, published in 2000. The novel traces the final big adventure of opinionated and independent Rose Parrish who at the age of seventy-six sets out to open the most exciting restaurant and nightclub that Galveston has ever seen. As she studies the history of Galveston and the life of pirate Jean Lafitte, Rose vividly brings to life the colorful city of Galveston.

In a first for the press, we’ll publish a comic book. Wait! It’s an educational comic book, explaining the natural history of the Panhandle. Titled *The Ancient Southwest & Other Dispatches from a Cruel Frontier*, the strips by George E. Turner were first published in the early 1950s in the *Amarillo Globe-News*. A cartoonist himself as well as cultural historian, Michael H. Price has restored the strips and added an introduction and annotations. A second strip, “The Palo Duro Story,” told mostly from Cabeza de Vaca’s point of view, and some college-newspaper cartoons done by Turner will be included in the slim volume.

And look ahead for a wildflower dictionary and a catalog for a museum exhibition—both firsts for TCU Press. We’ll add Leonard Sanders’ 1985 novel, *Fort Worth*, to the Texas Tradition Series and publish more strong regional fiction and history. Watch for a series of books about the literature of specific Texas cities and regions. *Literary Austin, Literary West Texas*, and *Literary El Paso and the Rio Grande Valley* are in the works.

Exciting times at TCU Press.

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**A friend of the press steps down**

Dr. Larry Adams, who oversaw the press for twenty years, stepped down from his position as associate provost to return to the sociology faculty at TCU. Over the years, Dr. Adams was a strong advocate for the press, guiding us through troubled financial times and severe budget cuts, always thinking of new ways to promote the press, praising the work done by the press, attending our events. Without his support, the press might well have shut down more than once. As a staff we remain deeply grateful to him.

TCU Press now reports to Bob Seal, newly named dean of libraries at TCU. Mr. Seal has been director of the TCU Library for ten years and a member of the TCU Press Editorial Advisory Board for that entire time. We look forward to working even more closely with him in the future.
Elmer Kelton visits Mansfield Public Library

Elmer Kelton spent a whirlwind two days in Mansfield, a growing upscale Fort Worth suburb, in April when his *The Good Old Boys* was chosen by that city for the “One City, One Book” program. The Friends of the Mansfield Public Library spearheaded a month-long program that began with a kickoff event at which Mayor David Harry proclaimed April “Mansfield Reads Month” and announced the selection of *The Good Old Boys*. Readers were encouraged to check out and/or buy not only that title but other Kelton titles and books about the Old West. There were brown-bag luncheons, a showing of the Tommy Lee Jones film based on the book, and a teen poetry coffee house.

The program culminated with a visit from Elmer and Ann Kelton. On Friday, April 23, Elmer spoke at the local high school and toured the historical museum. That evening he was honored with an invitation-only reception at the public library, where refreshments were served and the Phunky Phiddlers, a group of young girls, provided pre-program entertainment. Judy Lee, president of the Friends, conducted an informal interview, in which Elmer displayed his usual self-deprecating humor and his insight into the craft of writing.

The event had been planned to coincide with the library’s seventy-fifth birthday on Saturday, April 24. While Elmer signed books, guests enjoyed birthday cake, balloons, and music from the Mansfield Wind Symphony’s Low Brass Section (tubas!).

What a way to celebrate a book!