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in Texas government.



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MARCH 2007

March 28 Luncheon

Jerry Patterson, Commissioner, General Land Office
Joelyn Weeks, Program Director



What is the oldest state agency in Texas? It is the General Land Office. The Republic of Texas Congress established the General Land Office in 1836 shortly after Texas won its independence from Mexico. Originally, the General Land Office was responsible for managing the public domain by collecting and keeping records, providing maps and surveys, and issuing land titles. The agency's duties have evolved since then, but its core mission is still the management of state lands and mineral-right properties totaling 20.3 million acres.

Jerry Patterson, General Land Office Commissioner will introduce us to the General Land Office and its many responsibilities at the EWTG Monthly Luncheon on March 28, 2007.

A native of Houston, Commissioner Patterson has dedicated his life to public service. Prior to his election to the General Land Office, Commissioner Patterson served as State Senator for District 11, which includes Harris, Galveston and Brazoria counties.

EWTG is honored to have Commissioner Patterson join us on March 28 as luncheon speaker. Make your reservations now by emailing ewtg@ewtg.org or calling 512.248.2044. EWTG luncheons are \$20 and are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the Austin Woman's Club, 708 San Antonio Street.

If you would like to receive the current adopted minutes from EWTG Board meetings, please contact EWTG's Executive Director, Jennifer Royster, at ewtg@ewtg.org or 512.248.2044.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 8

Retirees Committee Meeting
Bennigan's, 7604 North IH 35 (just south of Hwy 183 on the west side of IH 35), at 5:15 pm. This monthly meeting is open to any EWTG member who is retired or who is interested in retirement issues.



March 8 Dallas Affiliate Meeting

The Dallas EWTG Affiliate meets on the second Thursday of each month at the A.W. Harris Faculty Club, 5323 Harry Hines Blvd, Dallas (214.688.2653). The regular meetings begin with an informal social at 6:00 pm, followed by dinner and a business meeting at 6:30 pm. The program begins at 7:00 pm. The cost is \$20 per person. If you would like to receive the Dallas Affiliate monthly email program announcement, or to RSVP regarding your attendance, please call Chris McDaniel at 817.792.7259 or email: chris.mcdaniel@dads.state.tx.us.

March 8 Houston Affiliate Meeting

The Houston EWTG Affiliate meets on the second Thursday of each month, Noon - 1:00 pm, in a conference room of the Elias Ramirez Building (5425 Polk St). The conference room location will vary, but information will be posted each month, directing participants to the proper room. This is a brown bag affair, though beverages are provided. For information, contact Rosa Wilks Broussard, Houston Affiliate Chair, at 713.748.2816 or email: rmbroussard@hotmail.com.

March 14 March Mini-Course

Carver Branch Library, 1161 Angelina, at Noon. Speaker: Amanda Crawford, Deputy Division Chief of the Open Records Division of the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). Topic: "Realities of the Public Information Act." For information and lunch option reservations, contact ewtg@ewtg.org or call 512.248.2044.

March 28 March Luncheon

Austin Woman's Club, 708 San Antonio, at Noon. Speaker: Jerry Patterson, Commissioner, General Land Office. For information and reservations, contact ewtg@ewtg.org or call 512.248.2044.

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President's Corner

Golden Opportunities
Connie Williams, President

Think of someone you know who is well connected in her relationships, information and resources: She probably appears to be confident with herself and is willing to help others advance personally and professionally. She listens to others, gains knowledge and moves comfortably among people with influence. What other special characteristics do you think she has that enable her to build relationships and to gain resources?

Catalyst, the leading research and advisory organization working with business and the professions to expand opportunities for women in the workplace, reveals that access to networks expands opportunities and career successes. Are you aware that EWTG has more than 700 members that are available for you to establish a network with? Your ability – and willingness – to make connections among these colleagues could very well determine your next *golden opportunity!*

A successful career is an investment. Through your EWTG membership you will establish a strong professional and personal network, receive quality training and position yourself for advancement – all within your busy schedule. Our busy schedules are, in part, created by technological 'connection tools', such as emails, cell phones, and other information devices. One of the challenges we now face is that many of us do not have the time to expand our networks. We may think it's so much easier to access the relationships we feel comfortable with. However, this choice can limit our potential to create and grow our networks and resources. Creating, expanding, and sustaining our networks through EWTG activities, committees, events and Executive Success Teams has become more important than ever.

Participation in EWTG events can help you facilitate interactions and expand your relationships, knowledge, and resources. Creating connections takes more than shaking hands and introducing yourself; it's about creating relationships that expand and interconnect your spheres of influence. A positive word about you that results from your networking, shared in a moment, carries an investment that could otherwise take years to nurture. EWTG helps to bring the presence of ideas and people together that may not meet by individual good fortune or happenstance.

Here are a few "golden opportunity" strategies for maximizing your connectedness:

- **Trust** – It is natural for other people to speak highly of you within their own networks when you build a connection of trust with them. This will potentially allow you to influence strangers based on the trust you built with the original person. A strong building has a durable and lasting foundation, its structure made solid brick by brick. Trust is created in that same way – building on solid foundation, conversation by conversation. Our connections become more durable with trust.
- **Listen** – One of the greatest gifts you can give someone is your individualized attention and focus. In our busy society, simply devoting your sole focus to another person, even for a few minutes, communicates your belief that she is worth more than anything else going on at the time. Such attention raises the quality of the conversation, and it will empower and influence her – and build trust.
- **Share** – Information is one of the major benefits of networking. Offer to be helpful by providing information and resources to others. People will be open to giving you information and connecting you with their vast network when you assist them in achieving their desired results.

When you blend trusting, listening, and sharing within your skills set, you create a winning combination of *golden opportunities*.

Preparation is essential for your growth. EWTG sponsored events are created for you! Visit the "Calendar of Events" on the website at www.ewtg.org to find the next EWTG event you will attend, where you'll share and receive *golden opportunities*.

Program Committee: March 14 Mini-Course

Amanda Crawford, JD: “Realities of the Public Information Act”

Joelyn Weeks, Program Director

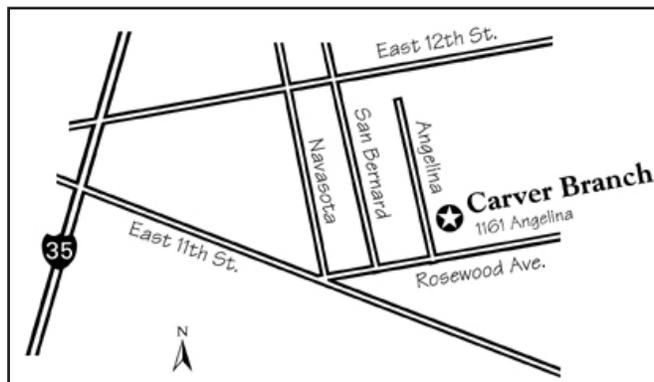
Email, calendar events, and other information necessary for managing our work and our time are generally subject to the Public Information Act. The way we complete our work has changed over time – from file folders to electronic files, email archives and PDAs. What are our roles, responsibilities and risks associated with electronic communication with regard to the Public Information Act?

Amanda Crawford, Deputy Division Chief of the Open Records Division of the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) will answer many of our questions about our responsibilities regarding information and communication. Ms. Crawford joined the OAG in 1999, serving as Public Information Coordinator and Assistant Attorney General in the Open Records Division prior to her current position. Ms. Crawford earned her BA from the University of Texas at Austin and her law degree from the University of Houston Law Center.

Mark your calendars for this information session scheduled for Wednesday, March 14. The mini-course will be held at the Carver Branch Library, 1161 Angelina, (just off East 11th Street).

To help you make the most of your lunchtime, EWTG will again have Mangia pizza, loads of fresh green salad and cookies for \$6 per person (or \$3 for salad only). You also are welcome to bring your own lunch. Pizza serving begins at 11:30 am, the program begins at Noon, and it ends by 1:00 pm.

For information and reservations, contact EWTG by email at ewtg@ewtg.org, or by telephone at 512.248.2044. Please state whether you want to purchase pizza and/or salad when you make your reservation. Also, because EWTG provides the pizza at cost based on reservations, please be mindful that EWTG may have to invoice those who order pizza but are unable to attend.



February Luncheon Recap: Sheriff Greg Hamilton ‘Wows’ the Crowd

Joelyn Weeks, Program Director

Our February Luncheon speaker, Travis County Sheriff Greg Hamilton, mesmerized luncheon attendees as he described the many activities of his administration, focused toward changing the historical mindset about law enforcement by working in the community and building “bridges” between citizens and law enforcement. He stated, “Building jails is not the answer for society’s ills.”

Since January 1, 2005, when he took office, Sheriff Hamilton has encouraged and developed new programs of involvement through a wide array of law enforcement activities.



Sheriff Greg Hamilton with EWTG members: (from left) Public Relations Director Reni Johnson, President Connie Williams, new member Mardi Wareham, and Finance Committee member Deborah Shaw-Boatner.

The Department recently started a program called Sheriff Posse for Youth: Through coordination with Capitol Metro and a local rancher, the program allows disadvantaged youth to experience horseback riding, cowboy breakfasts and other fun. The Sheriff’s Department is also teaming with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to work with underprivileged kids on various outdoors activities.

Sheriff Hamilton has led his department to work with SafePlace and other organizations on a mentoring and educational program to stop domestic violence, modeled after a similar program in California. He was so committed to this program that he started it up in the Sheriff’s Department without having any money allocated to its support. Since the beginning of the program, 164 individuals have graduated and are showing positive results in overcoming violent behavior.

Under his leadership, the Sheriff’s Department runs several inmate programs that include training, rehabilitation and self-improvement. Sheriff Hamilton believes it is important to give people hope and a second chance; but to make their return to public living more successful, he believes it’s also important to give them tools and training. Some of the inmate training programs are Educational Orientation and Training, GED Prep. courses, Language Arts and Mathematics courses, and *English as a Second Language*. Inmates are offered training in life skills, and there are computer labs where they can develop professional skills. Additionally, there are several self-help, medical treatment and mental health education programs.

Sheriff Hamilton’s understanding of the critical dimensions of law enforcement with respect to community relations was evident as he talked about the focus, energy and interest of his department in making Travis County a very safe community. His community relations initiatives include town hall meetings with various groups of citizens and extensive cultural diversity training for his staff. He works with the media to encourage them to report on some of the “good news” stories about the Sheriff’s Department work.

The Sheriff fielded several questions from luncheon attendees about his Department’s activities. His energy and enthusiasm about protecting Travis County, and doing more than just locking up prisoners, was felt by all who attended – and several luncheon attendees left the meeting ready to assist with some of the Sheriff’s Department programs.

It was an honor to have Sheriff Hamilton speak at our monthly luncheon.

February Mini-Course Recap: Maura Thomas Helped Reset Our Clocks

Joelyn Weeks, Program Director

Maura Nevel Thomas, with Burget Ave Management Services, Inc., presented the thirty-plus persons in attendance with a refreshing perspective on getting control of our time and responsibilities.

Maura shared some tips and taught how to get maximum effectiveness from email and calendaring applications. She pointed out that, when used properly, those applications can be more than reminders or ways of tracking activities they can serve as excellent planning tools. One tip she shared was how to create an effective filing system that complements the email and calendaring system, and that supports the user in a logical, meaningful way.

Participants were reminded how to use the familiar “importance and urgency quadrant.” It can be used as a tool to organize and simplify decisions for handling calls, emails, tasks and schedules; but it is not, by itself, an organizational system. Maura also highlighted time blocking as a tool for ensuring that important aspects of one’s life are prioritized.

As she stated, “Getting organized is a project.” Maura discussed some popular organizational concepts, and why she prefers categorical organizing to assist with meeting deadlines and priorities in an effective manner. She stressed the importance of paying attention to categories on our “to do” lists, and not

(continued on Page 5)

February Mini-Course Recap: continued

simply prioritizing each one. Categories of an effective “to do” list might include: Next Actions, Projects, Pending, Talk To, and Future Projects. Maura defined each category and made clear what makes each one distinctly useful:

- “Next Actions” are simple and single-step activities: One has the information to do them, but just needs to sit down and complete them.
- “Projects” are current items having multiple steps and multiple timeframes.
- “Pending” is a category that may be the most useful but is often the most underused. Items that go here rely on action(s) by others – either prior to one’s own action, or in order to consider the item complete. (Review the Pending category regularly, and ask others for assistance with completing the items.)
- “Talk To” is category for communications with those one deals with on a frequent basis, with the names of those persons used as section headers. This category is used like an idea “parking lot” to jot down items as one thinks of them so that all items needing discussion can be addressed in one conversation with each person. (Maura noted that this using this method can be freeing, with assurance that discussion items won’t be forgotten – without interrupting anyone’s work flow to talk about items as they arise.)
- “Future Projects” are for items that one wants to do sometime in the future. For this category, it may be helpful to create a physical folder for articles, pictures or other information central to each project. (She suggested reviewing this category on a regular basis – monthly, quarterly, or whatever frequency works best – to evaluate whether each item still belongs on a ‘want to do someday’ list.)

Participants departed from the February minicourse energized with great ideas for organizing their time and priorities. We appreciate that Maura Thomas organized her time so that she could spend a meaningful hour with EWTG.

Event Recap: EWTG New Membership Committee Orientation and Social

Shannon Franklin, Membership Director



Kathleen Donaho-Jaeger beams a welcoming smile. Seated next to her is guest Angela Jenkins, chatting with her “prize-winning” friend and new EWTG member, Katrina Burch.

Good food, good times, and the beginnings of new friendships: this was the atmosphere for the 17 attendees at EWTG’s New Member Orientation and Social in a private party room at La Palapa restaurant. Hosted by the Membership Committee, guests enjoyed quesadillas, guacamole, chips and salsa while several board members shared their EWTG experiences and briefly discussed their respective committees. Ginny Booton, past President and current Chair of the Scholarship Committee, spoke as well.

Current EWTG members who brought potential members as guests were entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift certificate to P.F. Chang’s restaurant. The winner was new member Mardi Wareham’s guest, Martha Jacobson. All attendees were eligible for the other drawing, and new member Katrina Burch won the prize – a beautiful crystal dish. However, no one left empty-handed, as Kathy Baca, the 2007 Member Services Committee and event organizer, set everyone’s place with EWTG pens, tied with a ribbon to new Texas maps.

Along with the fun prizes, good food and great conversation, three of the new members at the event volunteered for EWTG committees, and one guest joined our organization! The evening was a great success, and the Membership Committee encourages you to plan now to join us for our next new member orientation in the fall. As always, we’ll publish the details in the newsletter in plenty of time for you to mark your calendars.

Mentorship Committee News

Executive Success Teams: Sign Up Now!

Susan Durso, President-Elect

Mentors • Friends • Confidantes • Support • Motivation • Laughter
These are all benefits of the EWTG Executive Success Team experience.

Treat yourself to this unique members-only opportunity to learn from and share knowledge with your peers. It is time to sign up for your Executive Success Team.

Signing up is easy: Simply download a form, fill it in and send it to us. Obtain the form, Team Member Profile, from our website: www.ewtg.org. Click on the link to the Forms and Documents page, and you will see the form at the top of the list of choices. Download “Executive Success Team Form” – a Microsoft Word document. Send your completed form to Jennifer at ewtg@ewtg.org or directly to me at susan.durso@trcc.state.tx.us.

Open enrollment ends Friday, April 6, 2007. Make a decision to JOIN TODAY!

Conference Committee News

Planning Teams: Calling All Members!

Carol Jackson, Vice President

The EWTG 21st Annual Conference planning is underway, and we would love to have your help. If you are looking for an exciting way to contribute to our organization, join one of the conference committees. Each one has a unique purpose and importance that, combined, make for a successful conference. The committee functions – and the member talents we’re looking for — are described below. Within each description is listed the chairwoman to phone or email to get started on creating the event that women statewide look forward to every year.

These are the committees available for you to join:

- Program
- Facilities
- Silent Auction
- Exhibits
- Registration
- Evaluation

The **Conference Program Committee** secures workshop presenters for the conference and ensures that their presentation requirements are met. If you have talents in this area or if you have great organizational skills, this is the team for you. Please contact either co-chair for the committee: Anna Dunn (512.834.4335 / anna.dunn@tdi.state.tx.us) or Diana Maldonado (512.423.3551 / diana.maldonado@cpa.state.tx.us).

The **Facilities Committee** coordinates the logistical requirements for the conference, including coordination with the conference site hotel to ensure appropriate facility support for all aspects of the conference. This is an excellent opportunity to showcase your talent for attention to detail, so if this sounds like your team, contact Tamela Saldana (512.486.5513 / tsaldan@dot.state.tx.us).

The **Silent Auction Committee** coordinates donations for and collects the items sold at the conference's silent auction. This team solicits contributions throughout the year from a wide variety of sources for sale at this very popular conference event. If you are at ease when communicating with others about the benefits of our organization (or are willing to learn!), contact Carol Lauder (512.463.3619 / carol.lauder@cpa.state.tx.us).

The **Exhibits Committee** finds exhibitors for the conference that match the EWTG goals and vision, to benefit conference attendees. At the same time, this team ensures that each exhibitor is satisfied with their experience at our conference. If you are friendly and have excellent diplomatic skills, this is the team for you. Please contact Dawn Rehbein (512.491.1111 / dawn.rehbein@hhsc.state.tx.us).

The **Registration Committee** handles the registration on the day of the conference, but that’s just the visible part. This team does so much more to provide a seamless experience for attendees. Conference brochure development and printing is one of the major responsibilities of the Registration Committee. Attention to detail is very important on this team, so share your skills in this area by contacting Jennifer Hamilton (512.936.6274 / jennifer.hamilton@cpa.state.tx.us).

The **Evaluation Committee** develops the evaluation criteria, collects the evaluation information from the conference and tabulates it for delivery to the conference stakeholders (speakers, workshop presenters, exhibitors, etc.) This team helps us improve the conference each year through careful structuring of survey questions, and then analyzing evaluation data. There’s more than meets the eye to this team, and everyone is interested in the results of their work. Learn more and join in by contacting Sandra Kay Tate (512.463.9025 / sandra.tate@tea.state.tx.us).

All of these teams play an integral role in the success of the conference. Join us now or get more information about any committee Contact the committee chair of the team you would like to join or if you want more information to help you decide where your talents are best served. You are also welcome to contact me directly: (512.554.8908 / cj76704@yahoo.com). Let’s make the 21st Annual Professional Development Conference for 2007 the best ever – we will, if we do it together.

– CALL FOR PRESENTERS –

Have you heard a vibrant, motivating speaker lately? If so, please inform the 21st Annual Conference Program Committee. We are seeking dynamic speakers who can present information that furthers our mission of leadership development. Interested presenters with these credentials (or those recommending presenters) may download the Call for Presenters form, available at the “Forms and Documents” link on the EWTG website.

The call for presenters at the November EWTG Conference remains open until May 31. But don’t wait! Respond now to help us put together the most informative and exciting conference yet.

For more information, please contact Diana Maldonado (diana.maldonado@cpa.state.tx.us) or Anna Dunn (anna.dunn@tdi.state.tx.us).

Dallas Affiliate News

Chris McDaniel

Six new members joined the Dallas EW TG Affiliate in February, and we would like to introduce them by name and professional affiliation. These new members are:

- Janet Drake, Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services
- Stephanie Johnson, Texas Department of Transportation
- Rakhshanda Mahar, Texas Department of Transportation
- Bhavini Patel, University of Texas Southwestern Medical School
- Rhonda Schmid, Texas Department of Transportation
- Judy Taylor, University of Texas Southwestern Medical School

Please join us at our monthly meeting on March 8 – and help our new members feel welcome at this networking and educational event.

The Dallas Affiliate meets each month at the A.W. Harris Faculty Club, 5323 Harry Hines Blvd, Dallas (214.688.2653). Each meeting begins with an informal social at 6:00 pm, followed by dinner and a business meeting at 6:30 pm. The program begins at 7:00 pm. The cost is \$20 per person. If you would like to receive the Dallas Affiliate monthly email program announcement or RSVP regarding your attendance, please call Chris McDaniel at 817.792.7259 or email chris.mcdaniel@dads.state.tx.us.

2007 Affiliate Officers

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2007 Affiliate Officers

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Kay Smith, Programs Chair

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Houston Affiliate News

Rebecca Rae

The Houston EW TG Affiliate has been busy filling leadership positions for 2007. Rosa Broussard, Chair, and Sherbert Mims, Chair-Elect, welcome the following members to the Houston Affiliate team:

- Communications/Newsletter Chair – Rebecca Rae
- Courtesy Chair – Marlene Boyd
- Public Relations Chair – Carolyn Kirkwood
- Programs Chair – Kay Smith
- Treasurer – Holly Faison

We established these leadership areas at our January planning meeting: some of these are new positions; others have newly organized or redefined duties. Here are the functional descriptions of each one:

Communications/Newsletter Chair (*duties redefined*)– writes the monthly Houston article for the EW TG *Star* and assists the Chair and Co-chair with announcements and other communications

Courtesy (*new*) – works with Membership Chair, serving as liaison to organization support for members undergoing times of special need

Docent (*new*) – selects an inspirational statement, quote or poem to establish the focus for each meeting or other Affiliate event

Membership Chair (*new*) – works with Chair and Chair-Elect to increase Houston EW TG Affiliate membership

Public Relations Chair (*new*) – will work closely with Communications and Membership Chairs to advertise Houston EW TG Affiliate events and other professional development opportunities

Program Chair (*new*) – identifies speakers and arranges their presentations at both the mini-topic sessions and the feature programs

Secretary (*newly distinct position; formerly Secretary/Treasurer*) – records the minutes of each meeting

Treasurer (*newly distinct position; formerly Secretary/Treasurer*) – maintains the budget and bank accounts

The Secretary, Membership and Docent positions remain open, and we plan to fill these soon. Any Houston Affiliate member interested in serving in or learning more about these positions should contact Rosa Broussard – by telephone, 713.748.2816; or by email, rmbroussard@hotmail.com.

The Houston EW TG Affiliate meets on the second Thursday of each month, from Noon to 1:00 pm, at the Elias Ramirez Building (5425 Polk St). The conference room location will vary, but information will be posted each month, directing participants to the proper room. Everyone is welcome to bring lunch to the meeting. The Houston Affiliate will furnish iced tea, for the convenience of its members and guests.

Special Observation for March: Women's History Month

"EWTG Founding Members Where Are They Now?"

Marci Spivey, Communications Director

February is designated as Black History Month, a time marked for special observation and reflection on the importance of African American contributions and their impact on our culture. This statement, from an African-American woman – herself notable for her many professional achievements and personal triumphs – summarizes the reason we celebrate, thusly:

"Black history is American history. It is the history of a people whose energy, talent, and resourcefulness created a backbone for a country. It is the history that exemplifies the power of the human spirit to persevere through the most adverse of conditions, while making an immeasurable contribution to the lives of others."

Iyanla Vanzant – ordained minister, lawyer, and spiritual life counselor
(from the Omega Institute newsletter, February 2007)

Just as we celebrate Black History by honoring the accomplishments, contributions and inspirational words of great African-Americans like Iyanla Vanzant, so do we observe and reflect on Women's History Month by honoring the visionary women who literally made EWTG's history by creating this organization for all of us, 22 years ago: Evelyn Ireland, Karen R. Johnson, Tamra-Shae Oatman, Mary Polk, Nelda Wells Spears and Claudia Stravato – our founding mothers.

The 2006 EWTG Board conferred lifetime membership on our founders, in honor of their vision and mission to support professional development and advancement of women in Texas government. The seed these six women planted has been growing each year. Consider this: The first meeting was announced by word-of-mouth, and more than 100 women attended!

Their vision is flowering in our current membership, promising to blossom each year as we continue to encourage and educate one another in leadership skills. So, where were they when planting the seeds of EWTG and where are they now?

Evelyn Ireland, CAE is Executive Director of the National Association of Dental Plans, located in Dallas. She oversees the largest non-profit trade association that encompasses all dental benefits products, serving 132 million Americans – or 81% of the total dental benefits market. When co-founding EWTG, Evelyn was Director of Research and Information at the State Board of Insurance, then a small commission with three gubernatorial appointees who determined rates, rules and policy with an Insurance Commissioner to handle administrative functions. (In 1992, that small board became the Texas Department of Insurance.) Evelyn was one of the four women that Claudia Stravato called to establish EWTG because Evelyn knew that Texas needed more women appointed to state boards and commissions.

Karen Johnson is President and CEO of United Ways of Texas, located in Austin, where she oversees budgetary support for more than 70 agencies statewide and ensures non-partisan coordination of resources and services for people in Texas. Karen's history includes leadership service in both the public and private sectors. In the 1990's she served as Executive Director of the State Bar of Texas for four years; then she was Vice President for State Governmental Affairs at Entergy Corp/Gulf States. At the time she helped found EWTG, Karen was "in top management" at the Comptroller of Public Accounts. (She said she could not recall whether she was Associate Deputy Comptroller or the Chief Legal Counsel for the agency in 1984.) She does remember that "networking" was a new word in 1984, and she wanted women in similar positions in state government to have a way to help one another. The educational aspect of EWTG is one of Karen's most treasured accomplishments, as she believes that "the person with the knowledge is the person who gets where they need to go."

Tamra-Shae Oatman's last state service was at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, where she served as Manager of the Small Business and Local Government Assistance program. When co-founding EWTG, she was Director of Personnel and Staff Development at the Texas State Treasury. (A constitutional amendment in 1996 abolished the office of State Treasurer and transferred its functions to the Office of Comptroller of Public Accounts.) Also a founding member of the Texas Women's Political Caucus, Tamra-Shae wanted EWTG to provide an immediate forum for women working in different agencies to get to know one another, eventually promoting more women in Texas government and raising the collective consciousness of what women can contribute. Tamra-Shae now lives and works near our nation's capital.

Mary Polk is Vice President of Strategic Planning on the Assistance League of Austin Board and lives in the Austin area. For the past five years she has donated upwards of 500 hours per year to the Assistance League (AL), a philanthropic, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization that raises funds for services in the Austin community. More than 300 volunteers help provide new school clothing, senior citizen outings and care packages for trauma survivors. (Mary was amazed to learn that EWTG has grown to more than 500 members!) Additionally, every Monday morning for the last 10 years or so, Mary has served as a group moderator for LAMP, a UT-Austin organization providing a forum for group discussion of political, societal or other topics. At the time she helped establish EWTG, Mary was the Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of the Texas Department of Human Resources (DHR); she retired from that position in 1991. Mary brought a unique perspective to EWTG: She was the only founding member who served as an elected official – three terms as State Representative from El Paso, in the 66th, 67th and 68th Legislatures.

Nelda Wells Spears currently serves as an elected official. She is the Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector and Voter Registrar. Everyone in this area knows that when making vehicle registration and property tax payments, "checks should be made payable to Nelda Wells Spears." Not everyone knows that Nelda is owed a debt of gratitude for her service to EWTG. At the time she helped to establish EWTG as an organization to nurture women's growth in positions of state service, Nelda was Director of Personnel at the General Land Office. Nelda Wells Spears knew the importance of networking before she began consecutive terms as tax assessor-collector in 1992, and she understood the value of employee development. The vision statement Nelda has adopted at her current agency, which includes nurturing employee growth and well-being while focused on fiscally responsible, superior service, shows that Nelda has carried these beliefs forward in her professional service career.

Claudia Stravato is the CEO of Planned Parenthood of Amarillo and the Texas Panhandle. In this capacity, she serves as a strong voice for women's health and the services we need to maintain good health. Claudia's service to the State of Texas for more than 30 years includes her roles as Director of Professional Education at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, Chief of Staff to Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock, Deputy Comptroller for Comptroller Bob Bullock, in addition to other positions. Like Tamra-Shae Oatman, Claudia was active in the Texas Women's Political Caucus and talked with

(continued on Page 9)

Women's History Month: continued

several women, including then-Secretary of State Myra McDaniel, about the need for a new networking organization; Claudia helped organize EWTG's first meeting. Claudia also wrote the original EWTG constitution and bylaws; and she prepared and distributed the first EWTG newsletter – before our organization had a formal structure. She was honored as EWTG's Woman of the Year in 1994. Claudia is still an active EWTG member.

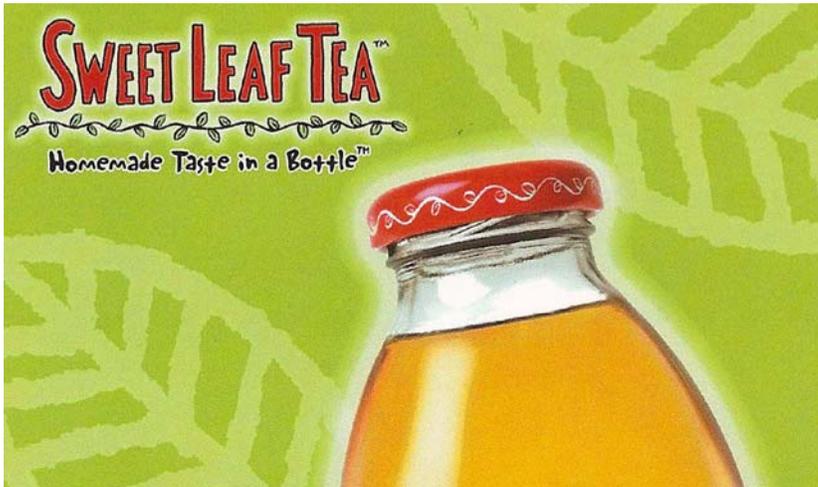
Governor Ann Richards, one of the most notable women in Texas history, described the significance of EWTG in her 1994 proclamation of "Executive Women in Texas Government Week". She wasn't the only Texas governor to issue this proclamation honoring EWTG, but her words stand out because of her unique ability to get to the heart of a matter and her historic appointments of women to positions of power and influence in state government. Governor Richards said, "Women now make up a substantial portion of government executives and leaders. They are the heads of state commissions and agencies, legislative leaders and judges, and they serve at every level of every branch of Texas government. Executive Women in Texas Government is an organization designed to develop, promote and support women in state government. The opportunities it provides for women to meet, exchange ideas and support one another's careers are invaluable."

The six women that founded EWTG ten years earlier, in 1984, understood the need for women to nurture one another and consciously tend to our mutual growth and development as professional women. The best way to honor their foundation is to actively support, mentor, encourage and acknowledge each other for both our potential and our achievements. Governor Richards pointed out that "a diversity of points of view in government is in the best interests of the people of this state. (EWTG) helps guarantee that this diversity will be beneficial and that excellent leadership will always be the primary goal of state government. The people of Texas should be encouraged to recognize the valuable contributions made by this organization."

Governor Richards was right, of course. And it's up to us, now, to honor our founders by tending the garden they created for us: a patch of common ground from which to recognize the value in ourselves and in one another, and taking strength from that recognition to "bloom where we're planted" and grow into our best selves.

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Stars Over Texas

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