



Year 4, Issue 39

Robert Rankin Chapter #62

Texas Society Sons of the American Revolution

The Rankin Register



November, 2009

Our November Meeting

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Planning for the November meeting actually takes place back in the summer. Our regular November meeting is our last meeting chance to accomplish Chapter goals for the year since we are evaluated by the state on a calendar year basis even though terms of the officers run from March to February. This task for the Rankin Chapter is a bit daunting as we strive to maintain the Chapter as the best in the state. Planning for this meeting was also influenced by statements from our TXSSAR President Judge Tom Lawrence when he said, “(O)ne of my goals for my year as president was to encourage our chapters to increase the number of Public Service awards and youth activities. It is through these programs that we touch the lives of our fellow Texans and help to perpetuate the vision of our founding fathers and mothers who established our great country.” I echo Tom’s comments!



In the photo above on the left President David Jones addresses the Chapter while Darin Darby is seated on the right. Mr. Darby is an attorney in the District Attorney’s office.



Past President Ed Raines is shown above presenting a framed copy of the Declaration of Independence to Ms. Penny Rosas. Penny is accepting this on behalf of Mayde Creek High School. This is the first such document ever presented by the Rankin Chapter. The cost of the Declaration and framing was underwritten by our President David Jones.

(Editor’s note: Presentation of a framed copy of a Historical Document to a school satisfies section 10 e of the national report.)

On behalf of the Rankin Chapter, Ed Raines has awarded Penny Rosas the Martha Washington Medal for her support of SAR programs.



In the photo below, Patrick Kerr, on the left, has just presented to Darin Darby the SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Medal and Certificate. Mr. Darby, a graduate of Texas State University and the South Texas College of Law was admitted to the Bar in 1991. He is a former Texas Supreme Court briefing attorney for the Hon. Bob Gammage and staff attorney for the Hon. James A. Baker. Currently, he is the lead prosecutor of child abuse cases in the trial bureau of the Harris County District Attorney's Office. As a prosecutor he has won all of his cases save one.



The national web site notes a chapter may present this medal "... those who have served with distinction and devotion in the field of law enforcement. The medal is intended to recognize exceptional service or accomplishment in the field of law enforcement.... (or) an exceptional act or service beyond that normally expected."

In October, TXSSAR President Tom Lawrence reminded the chapter that recognition is not limited to peace officers but also includes attorneys, judges, and prosecutors. Judge Tom, we listen!



In an unusual action, the Awards and Recognition Committee upgraded Captain Freddy Williams from a Certificate of Appreciation to the SAR Fire Safety Commendation Medal with certificate. The medal is shown at left.

Past President Tom Jackson is flanked on the left by Fire Chief Doyle Veneralla and on the right by Captain Freddy Williams. Both Doyle and Freddy are members of the Cy-Fair Volunteer Fire Department, one of the largest such units in the United States.



Captain Freddy Williams, a thirty year veteran, donated four days of his time to serve in various functions during and after Hurricane Ike. This service was rendered September 12th through September 16th, 2008. The hurricane hit the Greater Houston area in the early morning of September 12th, 2009. Captain Williams and his crew performed neighborhood patrol duties including the checking of residences and offices. Additionally, Captain Williams, assisted by members of his crew, served in support roles for the City of Houston Fire Department giving those firemen the opportunity for much needed rest.



Flag Certificate Chairman Jackson (left) presents Darin Darby of the Harris County D.A.'s Office with a Flag Certificate. Compatriot Jackson reminds the Chapter that President General Elect J. David Sympson noted "The first SAR national program was the observance and general display of the "Stars & Stripes." Our issuance of Flag Certificates in part continues this tradition.

An update on the Fall Board of Managers meeting was made by Allan Henshaw, below left, and Ray Cox, Texas Vice Presidents for Region 7 and 8 respectively.



Highlights included the disappearance of SAR Talk which would be replaced by forums on the national website. DADA was now enhanced to provide useful reporting information to the Chapters as well as being the platform for the emailing of dues notices. TXSSAR President Lawrence noted that the construction of the national library had commenced. The internal audit committee report with no exceptions was presented by Rankin Compatriot Jackson while TXSSAR President-Elect Jim Jones reported that conflict of interest policies were being formulated. A Travel Authorization Letter was included in each Compatriots package. The purpose of the letter is to meet the IRS substantiation requirements for donations to Section 501(c) (3) charitable organizations, which requires a letter or receipt for donations of \$250 or more. The letter must be signed by the State Treasurer. Peter Baron presented a resolution from the Genealogy Committee to delete the Grandfathering provision, which failed. *(Editor's note: For those of you who missed it, this was a very fine Board of Managers' meeting. All Compatriots should try to attend.)*



Compatriot Jackson, on the left, is shown putting himself to sleep as he makes his ancestor presentation entitled "Myth and Legends of Family Tales". Robin Hood, 200 years of masonry, and business partners with our Founding Fathers? Tall tales indeed!

Compatriot Patrick Kerr, in the photo on the right, presents "This Day in History." This historical presentation, which he started while he was President is a historical presentation. Tonight he spoke about the Cherry Valley Massacre which involved British and their Indian allies attacking townspeople and continentals in the Mohawk Valley.



Member Spotlight

Theron D. McLaren

Member, Robert Rankin Chapter



Personal:

About his life, Theron says “I have had a great life. It took a lot of luck and hard work, but we made it. Friends and family helped immeasurably.” He is reminded of a quote by John Ruskin, who wrote “There is no wealth but life.” Theron’s parents were sharecroppers in Louisiana who moved to Liberty, Texas in 1937, where his father became a carpenter. In 1958, Theron married Olga Christopher. They have one son (Christopher), and two grandsons (Lorn and Duncan). Theron says, “We enjoy them very much.”

Theron and Olga also enjoy traveling. They recently took a road-trip across the U.S. to visit North Carolina for the Scottish games. In 2008, they celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary with a trip to Scotland, joining their son and his family for the Clan McLaren games at Lochearnhead. Heart conditions helped speed his decision to retire in 1999. He now spends his time at the Men’s Garden Club, where he is a Master Gardener at Harris County, organizing activities for their subdivision, and researching his family’s Scottish Clan in the U.S. and Scotland. He describes himself as “a not-very active” member of the Masonic Lodge in Liberty, Texas. He is also a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and enjoys the patrols out of the Freeport Harbor.

Educational:

Theron graduated from Liberty High School, ready to attend Texas A & M. While he finished college he earned a commission in the U.S. Air Force, Olga graduated from Baylor and taught at Bryan High School.

Military and Professional:

During college, Theron spent four years in the Corps of Cadets. After graduation he reported to Amarillo AFB in 1959. Theron and Olga lived in Crete, Greece for two years at Iraklion AFB. Their next station was Eglin AFB where their son was born. After discharge in 1962 they lived in Dallas where he worked in the construction industry, and later for M. P. Crum Mortgage Company. In 1965, they moved to Houston where he spent 15 years with the Petreco Division of Petrolite Corporation building oil and gas processing equipment worldwide. While there he patented a fuel treatment system. A project director for ABB Randall for 15 years, he worked in the natural gas processing industry, where he built many successful facilities around the world. Many of these were “fast tracked” to speed development of the producing fields.

Genealogical:

Theron’s patriot ancestor is Baylis Earle. His ancestors can be traced to 1066, when they accompanied William the Conqueror from France. Although originally “de Erleigh”, the surname changed to Earle in central England. Baylis’ forefather was John Earle, a sheriff from England, who brought a contingent of settlers to Virginia in 1654. Theron is glad to have found that the Earles and the Dodds, were worthy members of society in Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia and Louisiana. He is currently following seven potential leads for supplemental applications. Last summer, he and his wife visited the graves of Baylis and his wife Mary near Spartanburg, South Carolina. In this same cemetery, are stones marking the graves of Baylis’ son and grandson named Theron.