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# Texastrends Symposium

## Dr. 'Red' Duke

*'Worst problems facing Americans are preventable ones'*

By Dawn Butz  
Staff Writer

Amid claps and whoops, Dr. James "Red" Duke, Class of '50, was introduced to a crowded Texastrends Symposium audience Friday as a Texan who has made great contributions to the Lone Star state.

Duke, who currently serves as professor of surgery at the University of Texas Medical School in Houston, is also special assistant to the president at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, and professor and medical director of the Emergency Medical Services Program at the School of Allied Health Sciences. He also is featured on many news and medical television programs.

The prominent doctor and former A&M yell leader began with a short review of his life — the part that his introduction had left out — telling of his seminary school experience following his graduation from A&M.

"Now you may ask why I went to seminary, and I can't exactly tell ya for sure," Duke said in his distinctive Texas drawl. "But I've come to the conclusion that the Lord sent me there to clean me up a bit before I went to medical school."

As he introduced his 1950 fellow graduate, the "honorable Mr. Bill Clayton," former speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, who was in the audience, Duke remarked on his years at A&M.

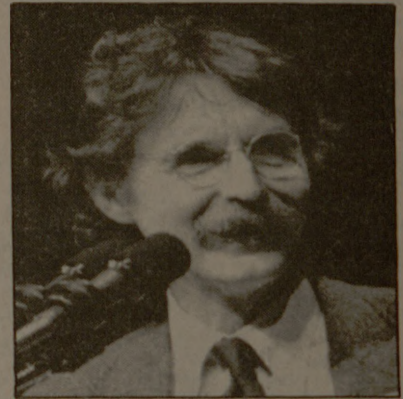
"I guess I learned the word honorable in seminary because it sure doesn't apply to what we were doin' here," Duke said. "Bill and I are of that age that we believed when they admitted women to this University that the place was just gonna go to hell in a handbasket, and again we couldn't have been more wrong. These females today are somethin' else."

Duke hit on many subjects during his presentation, but the predominant theme was that the top problems in America are those that are the most preventable, the ones that result because individuals in society shirk their responsibilities.

"Who is responsible (for these problems)?" Duke asked. "Well, I think it's plain. We all are. We are all responsible for our own actions, our lives and those about us, but mainly for ourselves."

Duke listed alcohol, injury and smoking as America's major health problems.

He said in 1983 it was estimated



Dr. James 'Red' Duke

that the cost of injury to this nation was \$83 billion, and that in the same year in Texas alone, the loss of potential life due to injury was about 353,000.

Duke said this was more than the potential life lost from cancer, heart disease and infection combined.

"For each injury there are two permanent disabilities," Duke said. "That costs society a bunch. More than 50,000 people die each year on highways, and moving vehicular injury is the No. 1 cause of death in all the injuries."

"Half of those people are intoxicated with something like alcohol."

According to the National Institute on Alcoholism, the No. 1 problem is drug abuse, followed by alcohol.

"Note that all of this is something that is totally preventable (injury and alcohol)."

Duke also emphasized the problem of smoking.

He said that since 1953 cancer rates have increased 70 percent in males and 256 percent in females. "The surgeon general has said this issue of smoking is the most preventable problem in our society."

He said the one that is the most preventable, "Duke said."

Duke also spoke out on the problem of seat belt usage.

"It's pretty good that about 50 percent of people would be avoided if people wore seat belts," he said.

Duke said he believes the place to look to when these problems are broken down into patterns is that will afford the greatest strengths that weren't available in the past.

## Lynn Ashby

*'Texas Special Session put a Band-Aid on state finances'*

By Rodney Rather  
Staff Writer

A range of Texas topics as vast as the Lone Star prairie was given an insightful, witty look Friday by Houston Post editor and columnist Lynn Ashby.

Ashby, one of three prominent Texans who spoke Friday at the Texastrends Symposium at Texas A&M, addressed Texas' present economic state and the probable future course of Texas and gave a character sketch of Texans and what makes them unique.

The other two speakers at the symposium were Dr. James "Red" Duke and entrepreneur Clayton Williams.

The Texas economy isn't as rosy as it has been in recent years, Ashby said, but the state hasn't seen the last of its glory days, either.

"Well, we've got some good news — that we used to be in good shape," he said. "The bad news is that that's old news."

"But we still have a good thing going here, and most of the world would give anything for our problems — of how to get three cars in a two-car garage."

Ashby also said many of Texas' attitudes toward government have changed because of the rush of people from northern states in the 1970s.

That migration has subsided, but it hasn't stopped, he said.

The trickle of newcomers contin-



Lynn Ashby

ues, and these modern settlers bring with them demands for city, county and state services and are willing to pay higher taxes for them, he said.

"That is not the way we usually do things in Texas," he said. "We have traditionally been low tax and low spend."

"Texas was created by people to get away from government — and the last thing they wanted to do was start another one."

For many years, the Texas Legislature often didn't attract the best or the most righteous statesmen, Ashby said, but that problem has gotten much better.

He also said that the Legislature put a Band-Aid on state finances in its recent special session and will face a \$1 billion problem when it gathers

again in January.

Another problem with Texans is they don't tolerate ideas different from their own, he said.

"We are violent, given more to shouting than to shouting," he said.

"And many of us care more for money than for minds, or for things we can own, than for thoughts we can think."

Ashby used Texas' outlook on the arts as an example of the state's inability to digest various viewpoints.

"The ugly truth is that we really don't care much for the arts in Texas," he said.

There is plenty of home-grown talent in Texas, Ashby said, but it doesn't stay, because artists are outsiders to Texans.

"In a way, Texas is hypocritical about the arts," he said.

"We will pay for them; we will tell each other how important they are to a well-rounded education and fruitful society."

"But when push comes to shove, the arts lose out."

Although Texas' attitude toward the arts never will change completely, there has been some improvement, Ashby said.

Attendance at museums and orchestra performances is growing, he said, and Houston is one of only four U.S. cities with a full-time professional orchestra, ballet, theater and opera.

Ashby then shifted his topic to the future of Texas.

Texas will continue to grow, he

said, but everyone will have to live by the rules they set now, live in big cities, Dallas, Austin and Houston.

Meanwhile, he said, more counties are becoming incorporated.

By 1995, the seven counties around Houston is expected to have 4.6 million people, he said, at least twice its current population.

"Texas cities will grow and turn into a lot of big cities," he said. "Dallas and Houston will get so big they will be too big and people will leave."

As a result, anyplace with 100 miles of metropolitan area will become bedroom communities, he said.

Universities and colleges also will continue to grow, he said, but that's not all good.

Some universities are overgrown and will require a vast amount of money to improve.

Among 37 public and independent Texas colleges and universities, there are eight law schools, 16 schools of nursing, 64 separate programs and over 200 departments, he said.

Texas isn't capable of supporting such a large number of programs much longer, he said.

"What we're going to do is if you want to be a lawyer, you'll come to Texas A&M."

"If you want to be a doctor, you'll come to the University of Texas."

See Ashby, page 11

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