

The Battalion

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Former Texas Gov. John Connally dies at age 76

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Connally

HOUSTON — Former Gov. John Connally, a legendary Texas politician forever linked to the gunfire that wounded him and killed President Kennedy 30 years ago in Dallas, died Tuesday. He was 76. Connally was admitted to Houston's Methodist Hospital on May 17 with a breathing obstruction and doctors had been treating him for pneumonia complicated by a lung problem known as pulmonary fibrosis, a scarring of the lung tissue. Although initially listed as stable and improving, his condition was downgraded June 3 to critical.

"Former Texas Gov. John B. Connally passed away at 4:15 p.m. at The Methodist Hospital as a result of complications related to pulmonary fibrosis," Dr. William Eschenbacher, medical director of Respiratory Care Services and Dr. Antonio Gotto, chief of Internal Medicine at the hospital, said. "We deeply thank all of those whose thoughts and prayers have been with us throughout this ordeal," said Connally's wife, Nellie, in a statement released by the hospital. "It was those thoughts and prayers that gave John the best possible chance to

recover. We will always be grateful for your kindness."

Connally was seriously wounded by the gunfire that killed President Kennedy as the two rode in the same car in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. Connally, then a Democrat in his first term as Texas governor, held the office from 1963 to 1969.

"I lost a real good friend. I'll miss his phone calls. I'll miss his extraordinary good humor. I'll miss his optimism and his encouragement," Gov. Ann Richards said. "Texas lost one of its favorite sons today."

Richards ordered flags at state buildings to be flown at half-staff beginning Wednesday and continuing through Connally's funeral, set for Thursday in Austin. His body was to lie in state in the Texas House cham-

bers before funeral services.

"He will be remembered fondly by his state and his country for the work that he did and the person that he was," President Clinton said in a statement. He said Connally had dedicated his life to service to his country and "to the principles in which he so passionately believed."

In Los Angeles, former President Ronald Reagan called him an important force in American politics. "Leaders from both parties have always been able to turn to him for his sensible views and sound advice," Reagan said.

Former President George Bush called him "one of the great governors of Texas" who represented his state and nation with distinction.

"John Connally was a man of courage,

great leadership qualities, a powerful personality. He was persuasive in his point of view and my friend," Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, a longtime Connally friend, said.

"Gov. Connally was a giant of Texas politics, a man whose vision was long and who strode across eras with grace, dignity and iron determination," U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm said.

Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock called him a strong leader who was fiercely loyal to his friends.

Connally was a key player in the turbulent career of President Lyndon B. Johnson, serving for years as an aide and confidant as Johnson climbed the political ladder as congressman, senator and finally vice president to Kennedy.



RICHARD DIXON/The Battalion

Two Lone Star Gas employees work to put a cap on a gas line that was broken while Palasota Construction was digging a ditch for a sewer pipe

Tuesday afternoon. No one was injured during the accident, which occurred on Harvey Road across from the Blinn campus.

Construction crew hits gas line on Harvey, causes evacuation

By JANET HOLDER

The Battalion

A leak in a natural gas line shut down traffic on Harvey Road for two hours Tuesday afternoon and caused the evacuation of 16 people from several buildings.

The Palasota Construction Company was installing a sewer line across from Blinn College when workers punctured the low pressure natural gas line with some of the digging equipment, said John Martin, company superintendent.

Lt. Steven Hisaw of the College Station Fire Department said people living in three Woodstock Condominiums buildings near the gas leak were evacuated to insure their safety.

Police cleared the road of traffic and workers of the Lone Star Gas Company came immediately to repair the line.

"The police knocked on my door around 3:20 and told me to turn off my TV and to leave because of a gas leak," said Woodstock resident Clara Lange said. "A person across from me said he smelled gas."

Jason Cassel was stopped by firefighters while trying to enter the complex. He said he didn't think the leak was that serious because he didn't smell gas and lots of people were around the area.

But if the gas had ignited, Hisaw said it would have destroyed anything within 50 feet of the gas line, creating a "fountain of fire."

Although the odor of gas does not necessarily indicate danger, gas in its natural state does not

have a smell.

Hisaw said construction companies often hit gas lines because they are not marked clearly.

"When construction companies dig, usually the utility com-

panies come out and mark where the gas lines are," he said. "Sometimes, though because they are using metal detectors to mark the lines, they may miss the gas line by a foot. The metal detectors are not very accurate."

Hisaw said there are three or four major gas leaks every year in College Station.

Gas leak in Reed McDonald linked to hot water heater

By LISA ELLIOTT

The Battalion

A group of Texas A&M students, faculty and staff had their morning interrupted Tuesday when they were evacuated from the Reed McDonald Building because of a gas leak.

Lt. Steven Hisaw of the College Station Fire Department said the pilot light on the 500-gallon water heater on the first floor went off and a small amount of gas leaked from it.

"Water heaters are equipped with a main line safety control device which switches off automatically, but there is still danger since the gas that leaked is in a confined space and not able to escape to the open air," he said.

However, Hisaw said by the time the fire department arrived all the gas had dissipated and there was no danger to the people in Reed McDonald.

Margaret Hoover, assistant advertising manager for student publications, said she smelled gas and wondered if there was a problem.

"We smelled it down here and then we went up to the second floor and it was even stronger," said Hoover, whose office is in the basement.

Hoover said by the time the smell became very noticeable, the fire department had already arrived.

Mary Jo Powell, associate director of public information at Texas A&M, said something like this is very unusual and there have not been any problems with the Reed McDonald Building in the past 14 years.

"This is a very rare occurrence," Powell said. "There has not been a recurring problem of this sort anywhere on campus."

The hot water heater that caused the leak is in the process of being repaired, she said.

College Republicans attack multicultural requirements

By JASON COX

The Battalion

Voices are continuing to rise in opposition to last Wednesday's decision by the Liberal Arts Council of Texas A&M to require future liberal arts students to complete six hours of coursework in classes emphasizing cultural diversity.

The Texas A&M College Republicans adopted a resolution Tuesday denouncing the requirement and calling on former students to withhold financial contributions to the University until the situation is resolved.

The resolution is similar to one adopted last week by the State Republican Party which calls the requirement "a series of courses in victimology and a clear liberal political agenda."

Dr. Richard Stadelmann, associate professor of philosophy and humanities and chapter adviser, called the issue political, not educational, and said politics also influenced Monday's Faculty Senate's resolution in favor of the University-wide diversity curriculum requirement.

The Faculty Senate will not make a decision on the issue until it can study it further.

State Rep. Steve Ogden, who attended the meeting, said the issue was an attempt to "overdirect" universities.

"We shouldn't tell universities how to run themselves," he said. "The last thing I want to do is involve myself in something that is better left to the University administration and Board of Regents."

Ogden encouraged the chapter to continue working with the issue and said more importance should be placed on how to write, rather than how to think.

Carolyn Hensarling, head of programs for the chapter, said she was disappointed the issue went through with such little student input and felt the former students should know in what direction the University is heading. She said the College Republicans will attempt to inform people through advertising and the use of other media.

Hensarling said the council's resolution was "not in the true spirit of multiculturalism," which she defined as an appreciation of the greatness of all cultures.

"You can't make people care about one another," she said. "It's something that has to be learned through interaction with other people."

Stadelmann, a member of the Republican Party's state executive committee, called a statement by the dean's office that the requirement wouldn't incur extra cost "plain deceptive," and said it was absurd to think it only 19 classes could accommodate over 2,000 students.

Faculty Senate proposes own diversity mandate

By STEPHANIE PATTILLO

The Battalion

The Texas A&M Faculty Senate proposed their version of last week's Liberal Arts diversity curriculum mandate, which would affect all undergraduate students at A&M if it passes.

Although the Faculty Senate's proposal follows closely behind the Liberal Arts requirement, the two are not related, said Dr. Pierce E. Cantrell, outgoing Oversight Committee and associate professor of electrical engineering.

The Liberal Arts Council passed a resolution last Wednesday to require all Liberal Arts students to take six hours of coursework in international and domestic studies, three of which must be concerned with race, ethnicity, or gender issues in the United States.

Dr. John Quarles, former speaker of the Faculty Senate and professor of medical microbiology and immunology, said it was "pure coincidence" the diversity course proposal was outlined by the Senate's Academic Affairs Committee shortly after the Liberal Arts decision was made.

Because many students and faculty are away from A&M in the summer, the Faculty Senate is not making any final decisions at this time, Cantrell said.

"We have no hidden agenda," he said. "We tend to do routine things in the summer."

If implemented, the proposal

will require all undergraduates to complete six hours of coursework in American and international cultures, and will not add any additional hours to the core curriculum.

Cantrell, who proposed the measure to the senate, called the proposal an "overlay model" because he said there is a wide list of courses to meet both requirements.

"We hope that it is not too controversial," he said. "There is such a broad choice of courses that we don't see how anyone can read into it any hidden political agenda."

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Quarles said the proposal is a general approach to ensure students have a broad, diverse educational background.

Cantrell said, "The clear intent of the proposal is that we are trying to require classes that make the connection between majority and minority objectives."

Cantrell said the faculty senate's version of the diversity requirement differs from the Liberal Arts version.

The requirement not only encompasses a greater choice of classes than the Liberal Arts requirement does, but it also re-

quires at least 33 percent of the course to pertain to minorities or international issues.

"The goal is an across-the-board curriculum in some sense," he said. "One-third of the course is not going to have any big effect on anybody, I think."

The other difference between the Liberal Arts plan and the senate plan is that the senate proposal does not include gender issues.

Cantrell said one reason gender is not included in the academic affairs requirement is because the original proposal came out of rec-

Affairs Committee before it goes before the full Academic Affairs Committee. The proposal is then submitted to the Faculty Senate for consideration.

The Academic Affairs Committee made the decision in its May meeting to send the diversity proposal to all Caucus Leaders for input and comments on the diversity coursework issue.

Cantrell said he is aiming for October to put the proposal on the senate agenda for a vote.

"The whole reason for the circulation (of the proposal) is to get student and faculty comments," he said. "Like anything else, input - whether it be pro or con - will have an effect on the way people vote."

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