

# THE TEXAS ROOM DISPATCH

A Publication of the Friends of the Texas Room  
(incorporated December 2, 2002)  
Volume 10, Number 1, January 2012

Monday, January 30 Meeting  
6:30 Reception  
7:00 Program

## PROGRAM:

"Legendary Houston Characters, Landmarks and Politics: Three  
Researchers Using the Houston Metropolitan Research Center,  
A Panel Discussion"

Moderator: Nancy Burch, Friends of the Texas Room Board Member

## Panel Members:

Dr. Wesley G. Phelps, honorable mention recipient of the 2011 Julia Ideson  
Award for his Rice University Ph.D. dissertation "A Grassroots War on Poverty:  
Community Action and Urban Politics in Houston 1964-1976."

Audrey Barrett Cook, author of *Obedience Smith (1771-1847) Pioneer of Three  
American Frontiers: Her Ancestors and Descendants.*

Debra Blacklock Sloan, Rutherford B. H. Yates Museum historical researcher and  
advisory board member; member of the Harris County Historical Commission and  
the Houston Archeological and Historical Commission

## NEW MEETING LOCATION:

The Julia Ideson Building

500 McKinney Avenue

The Friends of the Texas Room will meet in the Harriet Dickson Reynolds Room  
on the first floor of the Julia Ideson Building. The Julia Ideson Building is located  
downtown at 500 McKinney Avenue. The underground parking garage under the  
Jones Library Building, which closes at 8:00 P. M., is accessed from Lamar  
Avenue.

Parking is \$2.00 per hour.

VISIT THE FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS ROOM WEBSITE!

[www.friendsofthetexasroom.org](http://www.friendsofthetexasroom.org)

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### **THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

Dear Friends,

I hope you were able to attend the beautiful reception held on November 17 by the Julia Ideson Library Preservation Partners in the magnificently restored Julia Ideson Library Building. The J.I.L.P.P. invited our membership to be their guests and to present the 2011 Julia Ideson Award as part of their library re-opening festivities. We usually present the award at our annual meeting, but your board elected to make an exception this year because of the wonderful opportunity to make the award known to a larger audience. We substituted our attendance at this event for our 2011 annual meeting, because we had no other business to conduct. We elect board members every other year, and 2011 was an "off" year.

I was honored to be invited by the Houston Public Library to represent the Friends as part of the ribbon-cutting ceremony on December 5 when the restored Ideson Building was re-opened to the public. The building truly is one of Houston's architectural crown jewels and a source of great civic pride. Now that it is re-opened, we are going to hold our quarterly meetings there beginning with our next meeting on January 30, 2012.

January is our membership renewal month. Membership dues are our primary source of operating funds. They enable us to make timely gifts to the Houston Metropolitan Research Center of needed items that are not in their budget. I urge each of you to renew your membership and continue your vital role in preserving Houston's past.

I look forward to seeing you at our 2012 meetings in our new venue, the Julia Ideson Building!

Sincerely,

Dorothy Knox Houghton, President

P. S.

I have been asked to submit for publication the remarks I made at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the restored J. I. B. on December 5, 2011:

### **Remarks at the Opening of the Restored Julia Ideson Building**

**Monday, December 5, 2011**

**Dorothy Knox Houghton**

The Houston Metropolitan Research Center at the Houston Public Library, also known as the HMRC, is the primary repository for original historical materials which document the history of Houston. Since the mid 1970s, when the Central Branch of the Houston Public Library moved from the Ideson Building into the Jones Building across the plaza, the HMRC has been located in the Julia Ideson Building.

Nine years ago, in the winter of 2002/2003, a group of regular HMRC patrons, including me, became alarmed at the deteriorating condition of the Ideson Building which threatened the safety of the historical collections. At the same time, city officials were promoting the idea of turning the Ideson Building into an entertainment and conference venue for the city which would be financially self sustaining through its rental income. The fate of the HMRC was a secondary consideration. City funds were not available to address the HMRC's problems. There was talk of building an entire new Central Branch Library on another site and/or of moving the HMRC to yet another location.

In response to this situation we formed the Friends of the Texas Room, a 501 c 3 non profit organization. It was incorporated on December 2, 2002. We named it for the Texas Room in the Julia Ideson Building where generations of Houstonians, including some of us, have come to research their term papers and school projects. Our purpose is to support and help safe-guard the collections of the entire HMRC which consist of the Library's Special Collections and its Texas and Local History Collections.

On January 28, 2004, I represented the Friends of the Texas Room at the first meeting of city and library officials called to discuss the future of the Ideson Building. The entire focus of the meeting was on turning the building into an events venue. On behalf of the Friends I interjected that equal consideration must be given to the fate of the HMRC and to the conservation of its historical materials. On behalf of our board, I told those in attendance that the original plans for the Ideson Building, which are in the HMRC's architectural archives, include a wing off the back of the building that was never built. This wing could be built, conforming to the original plans on the outside, but housing a state of the art archival center on the inside. With no funds in evidence, this seemed

like pie in the sky, but the Friends thought it was an option which needed to be considered.

Almost a year passed while the preliminary architects considered various plans for restoring the Ideson Building. Finally, on November 17, 2004, a meeting was called where the architects presented three options. Of the three, their first choice included building the wing that was in the original plans to house the archives. We were ecstatic.

Shortly thereafter, Mayor White was elected and was briefed on the situation. He immediately made the plan a priority of his administration and formed the Julia Ideson Library Preservation Partners to raise the money and oversee the project. The rest is the most recent chapter in the history of the Ideson Building and the HMRC. The incomparable team of Phoebe Tudor, Margaret Skidmore, Minnette Boesel, and Margaret Lawler must be unique in America. How lucky we were to have them all in Houston in the right place at the right time.

In addition to advocating on behalf of the HMRC, the Friends of the Texas Room has made many gifts to the HMRC of items which were needed but were not in the Library's budget. We produced an award-winning documentary based on the HMRC collections entitled "In Search of Houston's History" which has aired on Channel 8 and which we have placed in many local schools. We also grant the Julia Ideson Award annually to a person who has published a scholarly work in the past five years using resources in the HMRC to a significant extent. We provide volunteers to the HMRC, and we present substantive historical programs at our quarterly membership meetings.

Nine years ago today's event was beyond our wildest imagination. We hope you will pick up a membership brochure and join us for the next chapter in the history of the HMRC.

#### **MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 2011 GENERAL MEETING**

In lieu of the October Annual Meeting, the Friends of the Texas Room membership was invited by the Julia Ideson Library Preservation Partners to a reception on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011, celebrating the restoration of the Julia Ideson Building. At this reception, the Julia Ideson Award was presented to Steven R. Strom for his book, *Houston Lost and Unbuilt*. An honorable mention was presented to Dr. Wesley G. Phelps for his Rice University Ph.D. dissertation "A Grassroots War on Poverty: Community Action and Urban Politics in Houston 1964-1976." No minutes were taken.

## **NEWS FROM THE TEXAS ROOM**

By Liz Sargent, Manager, HMRC



McKinney Entrance to the Julia Ideson Building

Photo by Joel Draut

### **The Julia Ideson Building re-opened December 5, 2011.**

The official ceremony celebrating the re-opening of the Julia Ideson Building was a huge success. Speakers included the Honorable Mayor Annise Parker, Council Member James Rodriguez, Library Director Dr. Rhea Brown Lawson, Dorothy Knox Houghton, and Phoebe Tudor. *The Mighty Orq* welcomed the crowd with blues music from the 1920s and 1930s. Tours and various history lectures lasted throughout the entire day.



Julia Ideson Building Re-opening Ceremony

Photo by Joel Draut



Official Ribbon-Cutting for the Julia Ideson Building

Photo by Joel Draut

## **Texas Room Hours**

The Texas Room hours are now:

Monday: 10-6

Tuesday: 10-6

Wednesday: 10-8

Thursday: 10-6

Saturday: 10-5

Friday and Sunday: Closed

## **Reading Room and Exhibit Hall Hours**

Please note that currently the second floor Reading Room and the Exhibit Hall of the Julia Ideson Building are open Monday-Thursday and Saturday from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. We hope, with the help of volunteers, these hours can be extended. Please see the information regarding Julia Ideson Building Docents below.

## **Opening Day Exhibition**

Make sure to visit the Opening Day Exhibition entitled Theater of Memory, Cabinet of Curiosities: Treasures from the Houston Metropolitan Research Center.

In the spring of 2010, the state of the art archival wing of the Julia Ideson Building was completed and became the new home to the Houston Metropolitan Research Center's collections. It was the first step in the expansion and restoration of this architectural jewel, which first opened in 1926. With the premier exhibition, *Theater of Memories, Cabinet of Curiosities*, the Houston Metropolitan Research Center (HMRC) brings some of its unique artifacts back into the Julia Ideson's new gallery space, once three floors of the original archives, giving to the term "memory room" a double meaning. The Houston Public Library extends an invitation to view the gifts and accomplishments of those who came before and to celebrate the opportunities awaiting future scholars, collectors, donors and connoisseurs of Houston's history.

This exhibit is free and open to the public.

## **Second Saturdays at the Julia Ideson Building**

Join us for this special series that highlights not only the collections and services of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center and the facilities of the Julia Ideson Building, but also the history of Houston and its preservation. Two of these second Saturdays are Gallery Talk and Twenty-First Century Twain.

## **Gallery Talk**

Saturday, February 11 | 2 PM

Join us for a gallery talk about the newly renovated Julia Ideson opening exhibition, Theater of Memory, Cabinet of Curiosities: Treasures from the Houston Metropolitan Research Center. Questions to be discussed: How was HMRC formed and its collections acquired and expanded? What are some of the rare or unusual items on display? What are some of our favorites? How was the exhibition organized? What are the photographic elements of the show?

## **Twenty-First Century Twain**

Saturday, March 10 | 2 PM

Alan Kitty, star of Mark Twain's Last Stand and Mark Twain impersonator since 1979, will bring Twain to life for a talk, Q & A, and exploration of the phenomenal Mark Twain Collection at the Houston Metropolitan Research Center.

## **Scheduling Julia Ideson Building Tours**

HMRC staff and Julia Ideson Building docents are currently offering tours of the Julia Ideson Building. Through the end of January 2012 we offer tours every Tuesday and Thursday at Noon and 1:00 pm. In February 2012 we will offer tours every Thursday at Noon and 1:00 pm. Reservations are recommended as space is limited.

Reservations for tours may be made through HMRC's new main line number which is 832-393-1662. For large groups or tours outside of the times mentioned above, please feel free to call at least two weeks in advance to see if we can accommodate your request.

## **Julia Ideson Building Docents**

The HMRC is still seeking talented individuals to serve as tour guides and volunteer educators to ensure that all visitors to the HMRC and Julia Ideson Building have an enriched experience. We are looking for docents who are:

- *Passionate and Curious* about Texas and Houston history.
- *Committed* to engaging the visitors to the Houston Metropolitan Research Center and the Julia Ideson Building in a rewarding and educational experience.
- *Well-prepared* for diverse questions and expressions of interest regarding the history of the Julia Ideson Building and HMRC's various collections.



Duties will include but are not limited to:

- Walking tours of the Julia Ideson Building and grounds
- Orientations to the Texas Room, Reading Room, and/or Exhibit Hall
- Instruction on history topics
- Guided informational visits to exhibits and installations

If this sounds like something that interests you, please contact Liz Sargent at [elizabeth.sargent@houstontx.gov](mailto:elizabeth.sargent@houstontx.gov) to discuss further.

## **WHAT OUR FRIENDS ARE DOING**

Please contact Jeff Lindemann, editor of *The Texas Room Dispatch* ([lindemann@SBCglobal.net](mailto:lindemann@SBCglobal.net)), with information about your volunteer service at the HMRC and about projects you are working on that utilize HMRC resources. We like to hear what our Friends are doing!

## **POLICIES**

### **Policies of the Friends of the Texas Room**

Relating to The Houston Metropolitan Research Center which includes the Collections of the Archives and Manuscripts Department, the Texas and Local History Department, and the Special Collections Department of the Houston Public Library

#### **A. Contributions**

From time to time, the Friends of the Texas Room will purchase and contribute to the Houston Metropolitan Research Center of the Houston Public Library items that will enrich and enhance the above-named collections and ensure their preservation.

All such contributions will be purchased by the Friends directly and then given to the Library with specific stipulations as to how such contributions are to be used by the Library to enhance and ensure the preservation of the HMRC collections.

The Friends will give no money directly to the Library.

The Friends will not buy expendable supplies for the Library.

The Friends will not fund Library personnel.

#### **B. Relationship to Administration and Staff**

The Friends of the Texas Room is not to be involved in the administrative or employee actions of the Center, except that the Friends can question policies which, in its opinion, negatively impact the ability of the Center to provide service to the public.

## **CULTURAL MATCHING GIFTS**

Are you or your spouse working for or retired from a corporation which makes cultural matching grants or volunteer involvement awards if you give to or do volunteer work for a cultural institution?

Will your employer match your gifts to cultural institutions that qualify under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code?

The Friends of the Texas Room has such a qualification. Send your corporation's cultural matching funds form with your check for membership in FTR. If you volunteer your time as an officer of FTR or in the Texas Room or HMRC, keep track of your hours and turn them in to your corporation so that the FTR may obtain a grant from your corporation's program. This is "found money" for FTR and can be used towards making a difference to the Texas Room and HMRC.

## **FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS ROOM: WHO WE ARE**

*Mission:* The Friends of the Texas Room seeks to support the collections of the Texas and Local History Department, the Archives and Manuscripts Department, and the Special Collections Department of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center of the Houston Public Library.

### *Board of Directors:*

President: Dorothy Knox Houghton

Vice-President: Nancy Burch

Secretary: Georganna Barnes

Treasurer: Cathy Fitch

Directors: Mary Jo Coselli, Frances Heyne, Charles Maynard, and Susan Teich

## **HOW TO CONTACT THE FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS ROOM**

Membership applications, dues, donations, and mail for Board Members should be sent to the following address:

Friends of the Texas Room

P. O. Box 27827

Houston, Texas 77227-7827

## **HOW TO CONTACT THE TEXAS ROOM DISPATCH**

Submissions and comments for *The Texas Room Dispatch* should be emailed to the editor Jeff Lindemann at [jeff.lindemann@hccs.edu](mailto:jeff.lindemann@hccs.edu) or sent to his home address:

Jeff Lindemann

*The Texas Room Dispatch* Editor

3405 Roseland, Houston, Texas 77006

**FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS ROOM**

**2012 Membership Application**

Membership Year: January 1 – December 31

RETURN TO: P.O. BOX 27827 \* HOUSTON, TEXAS 77227-7827

**FIRST PERSON: SECOND PERSON AT SAME ADDRESS:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*first name middle name last name first name middle name last name*

Mailing Address (include street or P.O.): \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP +4: \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE, FAX, OR EMAIL**

First Person 2nd Person (If Different)

HOME: \_\_\_\_\_ HOME: \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE: \_\_\_\_\_ OFFICE: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY (please check category)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Benefactor \$500 \_\_\_\_\_ Patron \$250

\_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Donor \$50

\_\_\_\_\_ Family \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$20

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ Student \$10

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: (Membership plus contribution): \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**NOTE:** Friends of the Texas Room is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization operating under IRS Code 501(c) (3). Membership and additional contributions over and above membership are tax deductible to the extent of the law. Is your gift eligible as a “matching gift” from an employer or other entity? If so, please give the name and include the appropriate form.

**VOLUNTEER INTERESTS**

Please check below if you would like to volunteer for FTR activities or library services:

\_\_ Collections Volunteer: Be trained and increase your own knowledge about research techniques.

\_\_ Newsletter: Writing articles about materials in the collections or reporting on related activities.

\_\_ Membership: Maintain up-to-date membership list and send out renewal notices.

\_\_ Telephone/E-Mail Committee: Contact for meeting cancellations, unscheduled events, or breaking news.

\_\_ Hospitality: Meeting room preparations, greeting people, refreshments when needed, etc.

\_\_ Programs: Help develop programs or special seminars or workshops.

\_\_ Public Relations: Developing posters, displays, news releases, handouts, etc.

\_\_ Special Projects

\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_