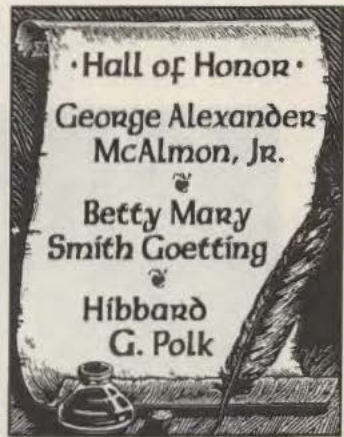


• Hall of Honor •
2009

George Alexander McAlmon, Jr.

By Alicia Chacón

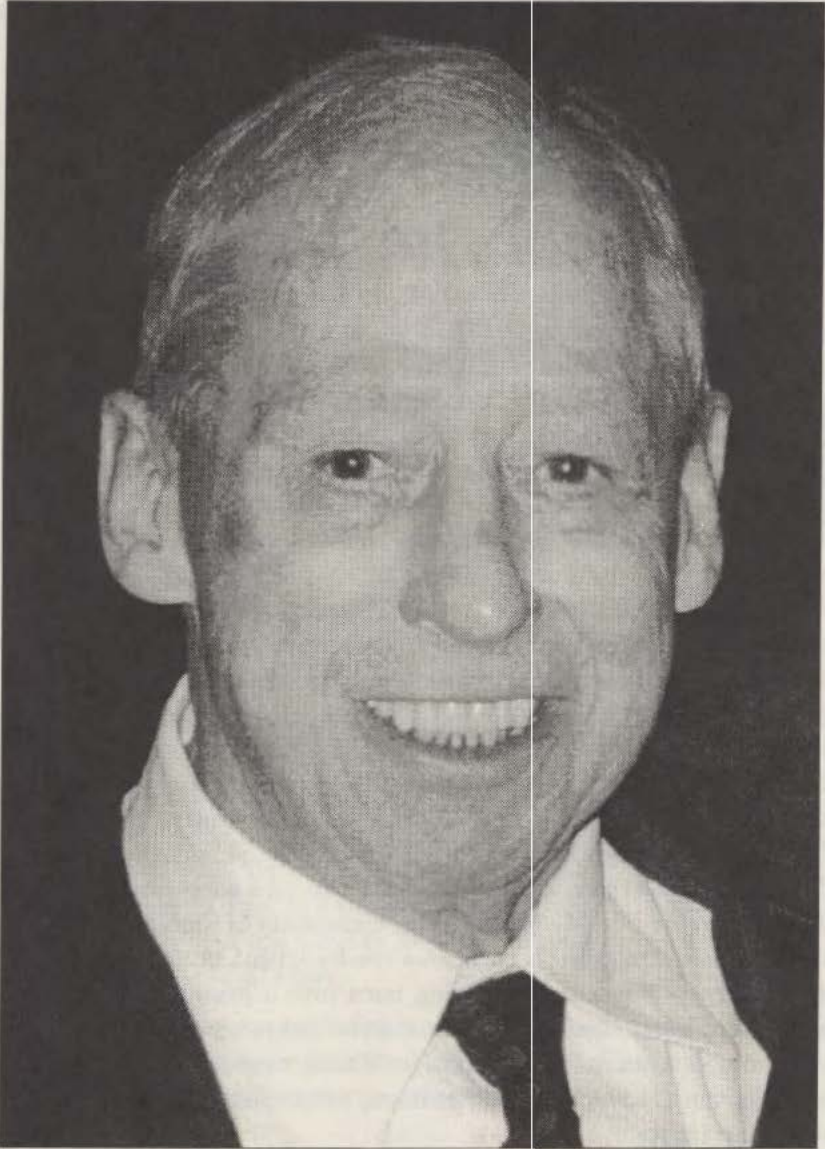


he details of Mr. McAlmon's record clearly demonstrate his outstanding integrity, his vision of a more decent society, and the courage to speak out against injustice. Although his determination to work behind the scenes and avoid the spotlight has been successful, Mr. McAlmon's legacy is profoundly worthy of recognition . . .

When the political history of El Paso is written, the chapter covering the last 50 years of the 20th century should rightfully be named the McAlmon Era. More than any other El Pasoan of his generation, George A. McAlmon, known affectionately as "Mr. Mac," applied his resources, his intellect, and his willpower to build a legacy of social justice whose effects altered the political landscape of the city and made it a more decent, just community.

After his graduation from El Paso High School, he entered Princeton University at the age of sixteen and went on to attend the Universidad de Mexico and the University of Texas, where he earned his law degree. A voracious reader with a blazing intellect, he took every advantage of being born into a prominent El Paso family and unleashed financial and personal resources to serve as a champion against discrimination, abridgement of the rights of wage earners, poverty, anti-Semitism, intolerance, and violations of human rights.

For almost half a century, the law office of George A. McAlmon was the most important stop for every aspiring public servant. He recognized early in his career that the voices of Mexican-Americans and the voices of women were critical to the city's well-being—but were absent in El Paso's political dialogue. He, therefore, lent his support to efforts that increased their representation in elected positions, corporate boards and public agencies.



*George Alexander McAlmon, Jr.
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During his tenure as Democratic County Chairman the landscape of the electoral process changed dramatically, reflecting his personal dedication to recruiting Mexican-Americans to serve as election judges, precinct chairs, and at every level of elected office from the County Courthouse to the State House. He single-handedly nurtured the political career of virtually every Mexican-

American candidate—and the handful of women candidates—who ran for office in El Paso throughout the 1960s and into the '70s.

Mr. McAlmon mentored hundreds of people over the years and never took credit or pulled strings. He advised quietly and often scolded. His office was the meeting place for former and current ambassadors, United States senators, members of congress, governors, mayors, and judges. Yet it was also the meeting place for undocumented workers, displaced tenants, labor union members, priests and other clergy who shared the agenda of social justice.

As an attorney Mr. McAlmon carved out a career of successfully redressing injustice by corporations and other powers whose roads to profits devoured the rights and the health of common people. He was also a strong supporter of the creation of the El Paso Community College as a means of ensuring access to education for all El Pasoans, regardless of economic background.

Today, the influence of the McAlmon Era is evident throughout the city's governing and operational infrastructure. The City Council has a majority of women representatives and virtually every court, commission or board of directors accurately reflects the demographics of the city's population. While Mr. McAlmon always sought to work in the background, he has been recognized by numerous organizations, including the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Mexican American Bar Association, Black Democrats of El Paso, the NAACP, Hispanic Leadership Institute, the El Paso County Bar Association and, most recently, the Texas Civil Rights Project.

George loved all of El Paso, from the Franklin Mountains to the Lower Valley. He believed that we live in a "wonderful place." There are no beaches nor forests, but there is no area like it anywhere in the world. We are a mixture of nationalities, races, languages, religions and cultures, including the world's best and hottest foods. This is a place of its own...one ought to know both languages for full-enjoyment, or otherwise miss out on half the fun. The different customs, habits and celebrations flourish side by side. The contrasts are fascinating. The varied sports, arts, dance, music, theater and festivals are the makings for a lively continual party... *Y entonces si, que adelante la fiesta! Viva El Paso!*"

Editor's Note:

Just months after his induction into the 2009 Hall of Honor, George A. McAlmon, Jr. passed away on March 23, 2010.