

James Waldrop

Crockett Porth Ag Arena, Agriculture and National Guard Leadership

James Waldrop accepted his second professional job, that of Assistant Houston County Extension Agent, and rolled into the Davy Crockett Memorial Park pulling a one-horse trailer and his rope horse, Rocket, following his graduation from Texas A&M University in 1960. Little did he know then that he would spend his lifetime serving citizens of Houston County through professional and voluntary roles beginning at the newly built Crockett Lions Club outdoor arena, and ending after 20 plus years of managing the Crockett Porth Ag Arena on a voluntary basis through the Crockett Lions Club. His first professional job, that as a Texas National Guardsman, also had him rolling through Davy Crockett Memorial Park, to the National Guard Armory. Waldrop's military career began as an 18-year-old, and he advanced through officer training and leadership of the 52-member Crockett Company B, 5th Battalion, 112th Armor of the Texas Army National Guard. He provided leadership to Houston County Guardsmen during a deployment to Ft. Polk during the Berlin Crisis. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from the Texas National Guard in 1983 having served 32 years in various Texas locations teaching armored schools at military bases. Throughout those years, he swore in many Houston County National Guardsmen with Sgt. W.G. Bradshaw.

Helping to organize and volunteer for the successful launch of the inaugural Crockett Lions Club Rodeo in 1960, founding the 2nd 4-H Riding Club in the state, organizing youth horse show and rodeo events, providing leadership for the early years of the Houston County Fair, roping on Rocket, and meeting his wife, Joyce Shroyer, are some of Mr. Waldrop's early memories from the outdoor arena. He provided leadership for many young people, including his own children through the Houston County Fair, calf shows, horse shows, rodeo and riding club activities throughout the 1970s and 80s. With many others in Houston County, Mr. Waldrop helped facilitate the fund-raising and building of the Porth Ag Arena, and was a Lions Club liaison with the city in managing the indoor arena for many years and many voluntary hours of service. He served as Chairman of the Lions Club Rodeo from 1965-66, and 1987-2013.

Waldrop also served Crockett and Houston County in professional and voluntary roles that included the Crockett Economic Development Foundation, Crockett Chamber of Commerce, the Crockett Community Council, Production Credit Association, the Houston County Cattlemen's Association, Houston County Trail Blazers, Houston County Development Foundation Agriculture Committee, Houston County Agricultural Extension Service, 4-H Adult Leader, Youth Sunday School Teacher and other roles with First Baptist Church, Crockett Veterinary Supply owner and a board member of the Houston & Trinity County Soil Conservation District. Mr. Waldrop completed his career in banking having seen the completion of the new Prosperity Bank building on Loop 304.

Mr. Waldrop never strayed from his agricultural roots having grown up with wonderful parents who raised cotton and bought his horse, Rocket in Panola County. Waldrop earned his first money in agriculture roping cattle to treat screwworms in the 1950s. Under the tutelage of a county agent and ag teacher who inspired him to seek a career in agriculture and attend Texas A&M, he left with Rocket in tow, and served as the TAMU Rodeo president for two years. His next stop was Crockett, and at 88, he continues to live here with his wife, Joyce, after raising kids, cattle, horses and hay for many decades, and providing leadership to agricultural causes throughout Houston County.