

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



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Abstract: **Leslie Armin “Buddy” Wheeler III**

Buddy Wheeler was born and raised in Sugar Land, Texas, when it was still a “company town,” owned and controlled by Imperial Sugar Company. In that era, Buddy’s life revolved around the outdoors, fishing and hunting, and exploring the Gulf Coast; which led to his role as a founding member of Coastal Conservation Association in 1977, an influential ecological organization.

Buddy comes from a long line of dentists in the family. His father L. A. Wheeler II graduated from the University of Texas Dental School and was hired by Dr. Slaughter to be the dentist for the Imperial Sugar Company. His mother, Maxine, was a nurse at Laura Eldridge Memorial Hospital and was known for her sewing and creating wedding dresses.

Buddy reminisces about growing up in the small company town and attending the local schools. He was the last senior to graduate from Sugar Land High School in 1959. Buddy shares many stories about fishing along the Gulf Coast including night fishing.

Buddy married and then graduated from dental school in 1965. He partnered with his dad in their dental practice in Sugar Land. He also received 8 years of advanced training in rehabilitation dentistry.

30 Pages

⇓ *Scroll down for Key Words from the Interview.* ⇓

Interview Summary

People (in alphabetical order)

Teresa Bailey – office manager
 Bob Brister – writer for *Houston Chronicle*
 C. D. Courts – local business owner
 Joe Doggett – writer for *Houston Chronicle*
 Walter Fondren – started GCCA
 Greenwald Family
 Rudy Grigar – owner Pro Tackle Shop
 Curtis Hall
 Kenneth Hall – All American football player
 Henry Hejl – friend
 Robert Hill – owner local telephone company
 Jimmy Keller – best friend
 Mr. Keller – Boy Scout Leader
 Dr. Kuykendall – Sugar Land Physician
 Bill Little – friend
 Sam McCullough – fishing friend
 Howard Raska – friend
 Dr. Carlos Slaughter – Sugar Land physician
 Talasek Family – friends
 Marvin, Marion, and Melvin Talasek – triplets
 Janie Wheeler – sister
 Jerry Wheeler – brother
 John Wheeler – uncle
 Jonellen Wheeler – sister
 Leslie Armin Wheeler Sr. – grandfather
 Leslie Armin Wheeler Jr. – father
 Maxine Wheeler – mother
 Toni Wheeler – spouse
 William Wheeler – uncle

Peggy Wright – employee

Patsy Yarborough – high school classmate

Places / Businesses

Alice, Texas
 Chandeleur Islands, LA
 Chinquapin, Texas
 Coastal Conservation Association (CCA)
 Cuero, Texas
 Emory Univeristy, Georgia
 Flatonia, Texas
 Galveston, Texas
 Houston, Texas
 Imperial Sugar Company
 Kaplan’s Restaurant
 Kingsville, Texas
 Laura Eldridge Memorial Hospital
 Matagorda, Texas
 Missouri City, Texas
 Port O’Conner, Texas
 Pro Tackle Shop
 San Bernard & Brazos Rivers
 Sargent, Texas
 Stafford, Texas
 Sugar Land, Texas
 Sugar Land High School
 Texas A&I University
 University of Houston
 University of Texas Dental School
 Wharton Junior College

Events

Buddy Wheeler was born in 1941 and followed in the footsteps of the men in his family by becoming a dentist. His grandfather, father and uncle were all dentists in Texas. After graduation from dental school in 1965, he joined his father in the dental practice in Sugar Land after much research.

Buddy and his family enjoyed camping and fishing in Chinquapin before it was destroyed by Hurricane Carla in 1961. He also was active in Boy Scouts and liked to hunt and eat rabbit and squirrel.

Buddy and his wife Toni married in 1964 and raised their 2 daughters in Sugar Land. He was active in the startup of the Gulf Coast Conservation Association to save the redfish and other aquatic animals from over-fishing.

Retired, he still likes to fish and enjoys his 7 grandchildren.