

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



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Abstract: Maxine Cegelski Phelan

05/013/2021

Maxine Cegelski Phelan is well-known in Lamar Consolidated ISD as a dedicated, effective, and remarkable educator. A local school was named in her honor in 2019. Rosenberg's city council declared April 30, 2020 as Maxine Phelan Day. She has left an indelible legacy in local education.

Her interview covers her family background beginning with her grandparents, who originally settled near Brenham and Chappell Hill before relocating to Fort Bend County. Maxine recounts how difficult life was for her family during the Great Depression, and how community support and her father's hard work helped them persevere.

She describes growing up in the 1940s and '50s (she was born in 1942) and attending school at Holy Rosary and Lamar Consolidated High School, and continuing at Wharton County Junior College and the University of Houston. She even talks about a memorable family trip to Norwalk, CT and New York City.

Much of her interview covers her long career and the changes she has seen teaching multiple generations of Lamar Consolidated High School students.

47 Pages

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Interview Summary

People

Nelson Bass, Sr., Maxine's father part of crew that built home on Carlisle St. in Rosenberg

J. W. Booher, principal of Lamar Consolidated High School and later Lamar Consolidated ISD assistant superintendent

Bess Campbell, admired teacher at Lamar Consolidated High School

Children

Herb Phelan, III. (Amy and children Erica & TJ)

Michael (Rhonda)

Harold Devine, admired teacher at Lamar Consolidated High School

Dominican nuns as teachers at Holy Rosary School

Mamie George, took Maxine's mother (teenager) on trips to Houston

Mary Gubbels, founder of Holy Rosary School

Irma Drew Hutchison, admired teacher at Lamar Consolidated High School

Parents

Max Cegelski

Genevieve Kopycinski

Herb Phelan, Jr., husband

Jake Rogers, superintendent of Lamar Consolidated ISD

Siblings

Daniel (second child)

Ed (fourth and youngest child)

Thad (oldest child)

Mrs. Goldsmith, notable teacher at Wharton County Junior College

Grandparents

Helen Sopchak, maternal grandmother

Frank Kopycinski, maternal grandfather

Jacob Cegelski, paternal grandfather

Constancia Nowak, paternal grandmother

Franklin Herndon, Lamar Consolidated ISD's superintendent

Betty McCroran, president of Wharton County Junior College

Tom McNutt

Alan Melancon, Sr. and Jr., father and son Maxine taught

Caroline Mensik, the "sister Betty didn't have"

Raymond Rude

Franklin Schodek

Herman and Olla Schultz, neighbors and family friends

Michael Shook, WCJC bus driver

Guy Traylor, Lamar Consolidated High School's first principal

The Triumphs

Don Drachenberg

Doug Griffith

Tim and Tom Griffith

Gary Koeppen

Teddy Mensik

Ron Peterson

B. J. Thomas

the Wendtland brothers

Denver Zatyka

Places / Businesses / Schools

A. W. Jackson School (pre-integration) in Rosenberg, Texas

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Brenham, Texas

Chappell Hill, Texas

Dulles High School

Holy Rosary Church and School in Rosenberg, Texas

Horace Mann Drive, or "Teachers Row" in Rosenberg

George Ranch near Richmond, Texas, home of Maxine's maternal grandparents

Lamar Consolidated High School

Mustang Corral, hangout for Lamar High students New York City

Norwalk, Connecticut

Riverside Hall, East Bernard, Texas

The Rose in Rosenberg, Texas

University of Houston

Wharton County Junior College

Notable Events / Activities

The Great Depression

Changes in schools over the years, particularly
Lamar Consolidated High School

Credit purchases of a refrigerator from Rude & Sons
and a Philco television set from Cyril Humpola in
the 1950s

IGA grocery store, shopping in Rosenberg during
the '40s and '50s

Integration at local schools, including Wharton
County Junior College in 1961

Maxine Phelan Day in Rosenberg, Texas

Purchase of farm, Maxine's father buys land and
house near today's Louise St. in Rosenberg with
help from Herman Schultz

Sharecropping in Fort Bend County

Student teaching at Dulles High School in 1965

Teaching English literature at Lamar Consolidated
High School

Television, watching wrestling matches in the early
days of television

Trip to Connecticut and New York in 1959