

# THE DALLAS COUNTY CHRONICLE

## Commissioner Profiles

### Priscilla Escobedo

Priscilla Escobedo has served on the Dallas County Historical Commission since the spring of 2021. Her service on the commission is a continuation of her lifelong passion for history and historical preservation. She is a graduate of Baylor University, where she received her BA in International Studies with a minor in History, and UNT, where she received her Library Science Master's.



She works at the University of Texas at Arlington in the Special Collections Archives and serves as president of the Dallas Mexican American Historical League. In her free time, she continues to read about a multitude of historical topics, writes Wikipedia articles and blogs on historical figures, and researches her family's genealogy.

The Dallas County Historical Commission is a vital asset to the county and provides much-needed resources and information on how we as a community can continue to preserve and celebrate our history, and as a commission member, Priscilla is honored to help ensure that the stories of Dallas and the city's historical locations are retold and honored for generations to come.

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## DALLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEMBERS

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- Coy L. Poitier, *Dallas*
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- Yasir Arafat, *Irving*
- Deah Berry Mitchell, *Dallas*

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### Deah Berry Mitchell

Deah Berry Mitchell is a dedicated public historian and food writer born and raised in Sherman, Texas and currently residing in Dallas. Currently Immersed in the pursuit of knowledge, Deah is a full-time doctoral student in the history program at the University of North Texas (UNT). Complementing this academic endeavor and her previous accomplishments, holding both a bachelor's and master's degree from Southern Methodist University.

Outside the academic realm, Deah is the founder and proprietor of Nostalgia Black, a business committed to community education on local black history. Under this venture, she successfully manages the “Soul of DFW Bus Tours,” offering insightful journeys through historical landscapes and visiting Black-owned restaurants. An engaging public speaker on Texas history passionately imparts her knowledge to diverse audiences. As a food writer she has been published in D Magazine, Texas Monthly, New York Times, Local Profile Magazine, Dallas Morning News and Fort Worth Report. She is currently the historian-in-residence for the City of Dallas and has developed a mobile app, Freedom Trail Origins, the centers on Black History in Dallas.



Prior to her appointment to the Dallas County Historical Commission, Deah's commitment to preserving and disseminating history extends to her role as a board member of the National Juneteenth Museum. Demonstrating her leadership, she serves as the immediate past chair of the content and exhibition committee, contributing significantly to the museum's mission. Other volunteer work includes her current appointment to the Visit Fort Worth Black Tourism Advisory Committee, and the chair of student committee for UNT Food Studies Lecture Series. Mitchell's recent awards consist of her two fellowships: Gulia Child Gastronomy Foundation for her scholarly work researching Southern foodways and Kingsford Preserve the Pit Fellow for her advocating for barbecue history through African American lens.

The Dallas County Historical Commission sent eight applications for historical markers to the Texas Historical Commission which were approved in the 2024 cycle.

They include the Gulf Oil Distributing Facility, Lou Huff Park in Garland, Five Mile Community, Big Tex, Full Gospel Holy Temple Church, Hilliard Memorial Golf Course and Munger Place---all subject markers. A cemetery marker went to Fields Cemetery.

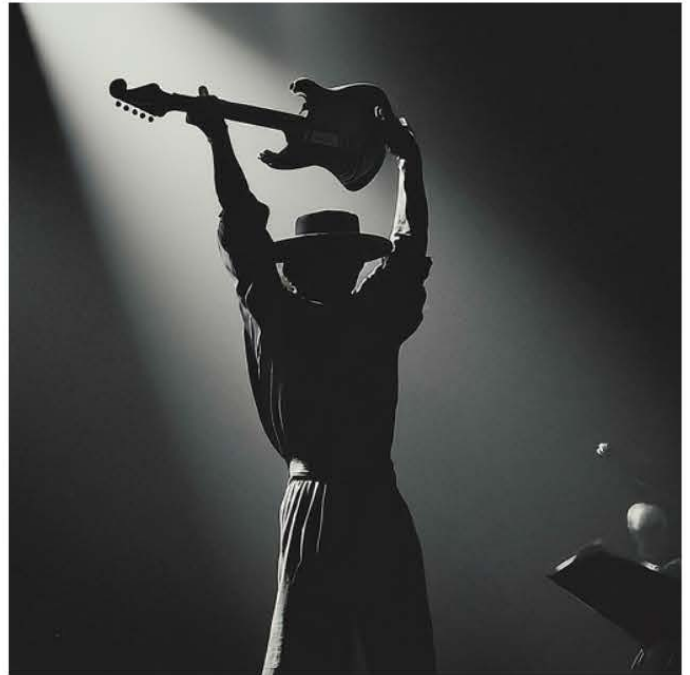
“We are grateful to the eight applicants for submitting such worthy subjects which our Marker Committee and the Dallas County Historical Commission overwhelming approved,” stated John Roppolo, Marker Chair. The Marker Committee is composed of Roppolo, Jearlene Miller, Roosevelt Nichols and Christopher Cornell.

### Stevie Ray Vaughan

Dallas, TX - Stevie Ray Vaughan, a name synonymous with blues-rock guitar mastery, left an indelible mark on the music world. Born and raised in Dallas, Vaughan's electrifying performances and soulful playing captivated audiences worldwide.

His journey began in the local Dallas music scene, where he honed his skills alongside his brother Jimmie Vaughan. Vaughan's fiery guitar solos and passionate vocals quickly earned him a dedicated following. His breakthrough came with the release of his debut album, "Texas Flood," in 1983, which showcased his raw talent and deep connection to the blues.

Throughout his career, Vaughan released several critically acclaimed albums, including "Couldn't Stand the Weather," "Soul to Soul," and "In Step." He collaborated with legendary musicians like B.B. King and Eric Clapton and influenced countless aspiring guitarists. Tragically, Vaughan's life was cut short in a helicopter crash in 1990, leaving a void in the music world.



Today, Vaughan's legacy lives on through his music, which continues to inspire and influence musicians across genres. His statue stands proudly in Kiest Park, a testament to his enduring impact on Dallas and the world of music. Vaughan's spirit and passion for the blues continue to resonate, reminding us of the power of music to connect and move us. - Coy LeBron Poitier

**Written and Submitted By: Retired Dallas ISD Educators and TMAMT Volunteers Cynthia Salinas Dooley and Mary Rodriguez Roberts**

Since about 1850, the majority inhabitants of Texas have been Anglo; however, the 2020 census revealed a shift in the majority population to Hispanic. Today Hispanics make up over 40% of the state's population, and ethnic Mexican Americans comprise 83% of that majority.

From the beginning, Mexican Americans have played major roles in shaping Texas, yet their contributions, cultural and beyond, have not been widely recognized or shared. Although Texas history has been a regular part of the public education curriculum in grades four and seven for many years, the history of its Mexican Americans has been missing from their perspectives, research, and experiences.



THE MEXICAN AMERICAN  
MUSEUM OF TEXAS

Given that a central place in Texas dedicated to the history of Mexican Americans does not exist, eight community leaders in Dallas joined forces to create such a space. This led to the founding in June 2022 of The Mexican American Museum of Texas (TMAMT), a not-for-profit organization based in Dallas. As stated by its president, Gus Hinojosa, "To fully understand the history of Texas, one must include the stories and contributions of its diverse cultural groups."

While the organization is avidly working on identifying resources for establishing a building site for the Museum, it began its operations immediately upon its founding. By partnering with various organizations around Texas, TMAMT has presented three pop-up exhibits in Dallas and other regions of Texas. TMAMT has built strong partnerships with educators, historians, and academic institutions in Texas and is drawing statewide support.

Its first exhibit, "Texas Tamaladas: A Family Tradition," a collection of family memories from around Texas, was displayed at Dallas City Hall. The second exhibit, "Tejanas at The Alamo: Conduits of Remembrance," was exhibited at the Hall of State at Fair Park. TMAMT partnered with Tejana members of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas for this exhibit.

TMAMT is more than just a museum; it is a community journey to honor and preserve the rich heritage of Mexican Americans in Texas. We invite you to join us by visiting our exhibits, volunteering, and donating. Your support will help ensure that these stories are told and celebrated for generations to come.

Visit us at: [www.tmamt.org](http://www.tmamt.org)



Board of Directors

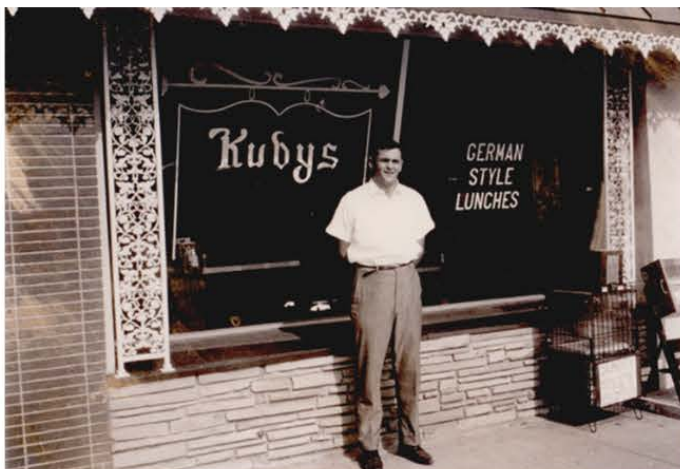
From left to right: Ruben Arellano, Albert Gonzalez, Alex Martinez - Treasurer, Juanita Nanez - Vice President, Linda Ramirez - Secretary, David Trevino, Gus Hinojosa - President, and Robert Ramirez.

**“Life and Death on the Border 1910-1920”** was originally produced by the Bullock Texas State History Museum in partnership with the Refusing to Forget Project. TMAMT, in collaboration with the University of Dallas Latin American Studies, has brought this exhibit to North Texas for the first time. It explores the problematic legacy of the 1910-1920 decade along the borderlands, and is on display at the Beatrice M. Haggerty Gallery at UD on weekends (except for holiday weekends) through October 15, 2024. Visitor feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing gratitude for shedding light on a complex and often overlooked period of history.

## How German Food Found a Home in North Texas

**Kuby's Sausage House** has served German fare in Dallas since 1961, but Dallas' love for German food dates back more than a century.

By Deah Berry Mitchell Used with permission of D Magazine August 8, 2023



**Karl Kuby Sr. in front of his shop in 1961.**  
Courtesy of the Kuby family

The year was 1959. German immigrants Karl and Ria Kuby had relocated 500 miles north to Dallas from San Juan, Texas, where Karl had taken a job at Carl's European Sausage Co. For two years, he honed his skills making sausages, a tradition in his family that dated back to 1728.

Karl opened a tiny market and restaurant in 1961 in the heart of Dallas County's burgeoning enclave, University Park, across the street from Southern Methodist University. The store, called Kuby's Sausage House, had one lunch counter that Karl insisted on adding; he suspected North Texans would fall in love with the foods from his homeland, and they did. But the state's love and history of German foods preceded Kuby's Dallas arrival for more than 100 years.

Frederick Olmsted rode into Texas on Christmas Day in 1853 on the back of his four-legged companion, Mr. Brown. He was on the final leg of his tour to study the economic impact of slavery on southern states. Olmsted, a landscape architect, journalist, and social critic, lamented the abundant European food culture that Germans in Texas had created after fleeing their own country's authoritarian government and crippling taxes. Olmsted later published a series of journal entries highlighting his opinions of the places he had visited.

"An excellent soup is set before us, and in succession there follow two courses of meat, neither of them pork, and neither of them fried, two dishes of vegetables, salad, compote of peaches, coffee with milk, wheat bread from the loaf, and beautiful and sweet butter .... not only such butter as I have never tasted south of the Potomac before, but such as I have been told a hundred times it was impossible to make in a southern climate.

What is the secret? I suppose it is extreme cleanliness, beginning far back of where cleanliness usually begins at in the South, and careful and thorough. We then spent an hour in conversation with the gentlemen who were in the room. They were all educated, cultivated, well-bred, respectful, kind, and affable men. All were natives of Germany, and had been living several years in Texas."

– Frederick Olmsted



Inside Kuby's, where customers can find a selection of meats in its market space.

Photography by Kevin Marple

Olmsted noticed Texas Germans were handling food in different ways than in other parts of the country. While there are regional differences in the foods found throughout Germany, there are simple methods that can be used to replicate those complex flavors. Producing sweet and salty churned butter, for example, happens by extending churn times. Because of this extra effort, the milkfats are often higher in content, creating a mouthwatering spread of fatty creams.

German communities held centuries-old culinary secrets like these for almost every dish they crafted, such as freshly baked wheat bread, smoked meats, crispy schnitzels, decadent pastries, potato salads, beers, and sausages bursting with bold flavors. These foods were not only reminders of home, but they eventually helped shape the landscape of Texas cities and their food.

Olmsted contemplated staying to live among the thriving German community, but he was given the opportunity to return to New York and begin designing public parks. This first project was Manhattan's Central Park, which would lead to many other ambitious landscape architectural plans later.

In Texas, cities like Fredericksburg and Pflugerville remain rooted in German influence, and that influence also made its way to North Texas. German food and markets today are at Jörg's Café Vienna, Henk's European Deli, and Bavarian Grill.

Today, the 8,000-s.f. Kuby's market and restaurant is still family-owned. Karl Kuby II, son of the immigrant who arrived in Dallas in the late '50s, says the oldest recipe on their menu is for landjaeger—a popular sausage snack food made with pork, beef, and other spices—that was passed down from his great-grandfather.

Tradition shapes much of Kuby's menu and market shelves, but the younger Karl does believe in incorporating some modern influences every now and then. He says a conversation with a customer in the 1980s led to one of their most popular items.

"[The customer] shared how they loved eating our traditional sausages by pairing them with cheddar cheese and spicy jalapeño," he says. "I spoke to my dad about it, and although he was hesitant, he gave me an opportunity to create our first "new" sausage that paired our German heritage with bold Texas flavors."

You'll also find other specialty items like smoked ribs, chicken, imported European cheeses, pickled sauerkraut, and a host of other specialty foods at Kuby's. The plan for Kuby's is to remain family-owned and operated, Karl says. He hopes to bring his three children into the business and honor their lineage.



The Kuby family inside the shop

“In middle and high school, I knew that Kuby’s was popular, and my parents always instilled in us a sense of pride and strong work ethics,” Karl says. “But it wasn’t until I started working that I understood the gravity of what my father started in the 1960s. Now I know the complexities of operating a business firsthand, I know that it’s more than providing a service to customers. It’s a remarkable responsibility and a privilege to share my family’s food traditions and preserve German cultural history and that’s what’s important to me.”

### Dallas County Historical Commission’s Coy LeBron Poitier Tapped for TPWD’s Buffalo Soldiers Program Coordinator

Dallas County Historical Commissioner Coy LeBron Poitier has been selected to fill the role of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) Buffalo Soldiers Program Coordinator.

Poitier, a respected figure in Dallas County, will bring his passion for history and community engagement to this statewide position.

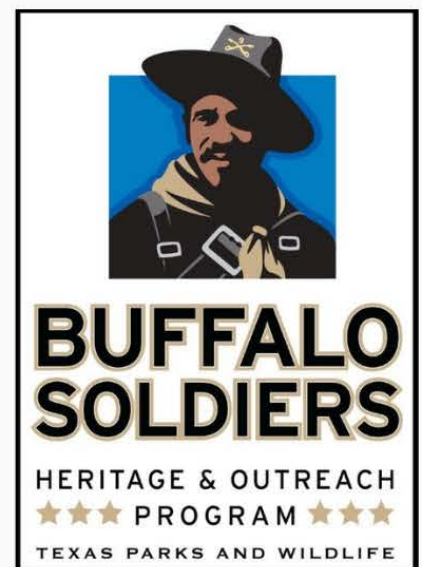
The TPWD's Buffalo Soldiers Heritage and Outreach Program aims to educate the public about the significant contributions of African American soldiers, known as Buffalo Soldiers, who served on the Texas frontier following the Civil War.

As the Buffalo Soldiers Program Coordinator, Poitier will be responsible for developing and implementing educational programs, organizing events and exhibits, and collaborating with communities across Texas to share the rich history of these brave soldiers. His role will involve extensive research, outreach, and public speaking, ensuring that the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers is preserved and celebrated throughout the state.

Mr. Poitier’s office will be based at the Cedar Hill State Park in Cedar Hill, Texas.

More information about the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) Buffalo Soldiers Heritage and Outreach Program can be found at

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/programs/buffalo-soldiers/>  
[coy.poitier@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:coy.poitier@tpwd.texas.gov)  
512-389-8568 ofc.





## How Dallas became home to one of the nation's first all-Black state fairs

By Deah Berry Mitchell

used with permission of The Dallas Morning News Oct. 19th, 2022

As the great State Fair of Texas draws to a close this year, we once again bid farewell to a welcoming cacophony of bright lights from the Midway that dot the Dallas skyline and the hodgepodge of deep-fried specialties prepared by local food concessionaires.

Among those vendors was the award-winning family behind legendary Texas barbecue restaurant Smokey John's Bar-B-Que and Home Cooking. Brent and Juan Reaves are among the 41 out of 90 vendors at the fair who identify as a minority race and among 20 who identify as Black, according to the latest statistics from the State Fair of Texas.

Yes, Dallas is home to the "longest running state fair in the nation" (which itself was once two completely separate fairs), but over 120 years ago the city was also home to the North Texas Colored Fair & Tri-Centennial Exposition, one of the first-ever "all negro" state fairs. It was part of a much larger groundbreaking development — a majority Black-owned cotton mill founded by Dallas' Joseph E. Wiley, a local attorney and real estate mogul, and Fort Worth investor H.W. Scott. They were two of D-FW's most elite businessmen of the early 20th century, and also happened to be African-American. In the years immediately following Emancipation, some Black communities began producing their own fairs as an alternative to the segregated spaces they were not welcome in.



Members of the Prairie View Marching Storm band enter the stadium before the State Fair Classic NCAA football game Grambling at the Cotton Bowl on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2022, in Dallas. (Smiley N. Pool / Staff Photographer)

### The role of Booker T. Washington

Over a century ago, on the brisk Sunday afternoon of Oct. 7, 1900, the State Fair of Texas welcomed Booker T. Washington. He was the first president and driving force behind Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, a then-new school that would eventually become Tuskegee University. Washington also gave comforting words to the thousands of guests who packed into the new fairgrounds on the heels of the tragic 1900 Galveston hurricane. Washington was not only a charismatic educator and orator, but also a frequent visitor of Dallas. On this particular sunny day, the president of Tuskegee stood on a raised platform and addressed a massive crowd of about 10,000 mostly Black faces. Many archived Dallas Morning News articles referenced how exciting it was to see Washington in person and witness his much-talked-about oratory skills.

Women (both Black and white) were captivated by his presence. The enormous gathering included a large welcoming party for Washington that was composed of North Texas' most affluent black businessmen, including Wiley and Scott.

At some point after Washington concluded his rousing speech of social uplift, Wiley and Scott shared with him their revolutionary idea of developing an "all negro cotton mill" — the New Century Cotton Mill. Also, equally as significant, the duo had plans to open one of the first large all-Black "Negro State Fairs." This was significant because The State Fair of Texas notably barred admittance to all African-Americans when it originally opened in the fall of 1886.

It wasn't until 1889 that one day of the fair, traditionally the second Monday of October, was formally called "Colored People's Day" or sometimes "Negro Day," and allowed admittance to African-American fairgoers. The fair would also host large Juneteenth celebrations that would often serve as reunion-like celebrations for those who had only recently been emancipated. In fact, the State Fair Classic, a popular annual football rivalry now played between Prairie View A&M University and Grambling State University, also has roots dating back to this one-day affair that began for Black teams in 1925.

Washington, impressed by the idea pitched to him to help usher in a business that would solidify wealth for African-Americans, went on to encourage the board of Tuskegee Institute to invest bonds and also helped recruit additional funds from wealthy investors, both Black and white. Although the cotton mill was marketed as "All Negro Owned and Operated," investments from white individuals from Boston continued to roll in, with Wiley as the face of the operation.

When the mill finally opened in January 1902, Wiley employed a workforce of majority Black women and offered a considerable amount of job opportunities locally. This was trailblazing, not only given the Jim Crow time period, but even by today's standards would still be quite a feat considering the lack of female representation in blue collar skilled work.

The "All Black State Fair" was rare in that it offered a welcome opportunity to create buzz for the anticipated cotton mill, but also it did not segregate (it welcomed all races), and still provided a safe space for African-Americans to enjoy a pleasure many took for granted. Although the all-Black state fair would not last long, it did enjoy two great years of operation.

### **The Smokey John's fair legacy**

Today, the fair typically receives more than 100 submissions for food concessionaires, and the lucky finalists chosen will have the opportunity to create an outdoor restaurant that will only be open for 24 days. Though incredibly difficult, the payout can be huge and generates substantial income for those who are up for the challenge.

Smokey John's is not the first Black vendor at the fair (that recognition goes to Huey P. Nash, who in 1964 opened Little Bob's Bar-B-Q), but they are the longest-standing Black-owned vendor at the State Fair of Texas. The Reaves' parents opened their first booth in 1978.

“We’ve grown up here, so we didn’t realize the magnitude of the event until we got older,” says Brent Reaves, who worked at his parents booth when he was in high school. “It was just something we did to help our parents out. We would come to work and see our friends and other regulars and had a good time.”

The second-gen owners also spoke about their father’s legacy of advocating for many other minority-owned businesses to have an opportunity at the fair.



“He was incredible and did so much to help others, whether it was gaining a spot at the fair, which can be difficult to get your foot through the door,” Juan says of his father and restaurant namesake John “Smokey John” Reaves.

In addition to their famous staple — the prized turkey leg — Smokey John’s is offering the Ultimate Brookie Monster this year, which is chocolate chip cookies, Oreos and marshmallows mixed with triple chocolate brownie batter. It’s then deep-fried and combined with some creamy cheesecake, strawberry sauce, and of course, Blue Bell ice cream. It was a Big Tex Choice Awards finalist.

A lot goes into the process of deciding what will ultimately be entered into the annual food competitions at the fair. Both Juan and Brent have equal roles that involve a somewhat “rolling” brainstorming process, they say. Once they begin narrowing down their mental whiteboard of various inspirations and concepts, usually Brent will find a way to streamline the idea to make it “fair”-friendly

The Reaves’ are no stranger to the spotlight. The pair have recently found themselves embracing a string of extraordinary media appearances on Deep Fried Dynasty, Kelly Clarkson’s talk show and Good Morning America. In addition to television, they also “smoked” their competitors and tied for third place in the H-E-B Quest for Texas Best competition, which earned them the opportunity to sell their family’s special barbecue rub in H-E-B stores.

Much like their father, John Reaves, other Texans who would likely be very proud of the Reaves’ barbecue dynasty today are Joseph E. Wiley and H.W. Scott. Although these enterprising business partners never attained longstanding fair success, they would be elated to see Black vendors achieving victories side-by-side with all vendors at the State Fair of Texas.

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