

COL. GEORGE A. HILL, JR.

Any record of the development of the University of Texas units in the Texas Medical Center must include the name of Col. George A. Hill, Jr., who worked tirelessly in their behalf as member and later chairman of the University's Development Board.

Through the long and often frustrating struggle to gain appropriations in the Legislature for the University's units in the Medical Center, Colonel Hill never wavered in his determination to crown these efforts with success. He kept the Development Board fully advised through detailed reports to its members, and appeared numerous times before the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to report and to plan strategy.

The failure of the Legislature in 1949 to include appropriations for construction of the cancer hospital and the dental college was a particularly bitter blow to Colonel Hill, but, nonetheless, the groundwork had been laid for success in 1950 and in 1951. It should be remembered, too, that Colonel Hill's leadership during the 1947 session of the Legislature had resulted in statutory approval of the School of Public Health and the Preceptorial Training Center for the Medical Center.

Colonel Hill did not live to taste the fruits of victory. He died on Nov. 2, 1949, just as plans were being laid to request approval of the Medical Center units' construction appropriations

at the 1950 special session of the Legislature. Among other unfinished projects with which Colonel Hill was identified at the time was a proposal of the Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee, of which he was long-time chairman, to create an Armed Forces Center in Houston to be used as training centers for reserve units. This proposal, submitted to the Board of Directors in the early Fall of 1949, resulted finally in the creation of the training centers on Old Spanish Trail.

Colonel Hill's death was a shock to the community. The Magazine HOUSTON, in its November, 1949, issue, and a resolution of the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors paid eloquent tribute to this dedicated civic leader. Strangely, neither the magazine article nor the resolution mentioned his services in connection with development of the Texas Medical Center. The record, however, as herein reported, is replete with references to these services.

The magazine article and the resolution are reproduced here in full in tribute to one who contributed immeasurably to the development of the Texas Medical Center.

The magazine article:

NATION LOSES GREAT LEADER

On November 2, 1949, at Greenville, South Carolina, where he was taken when stricken while en route to Washington, Col. George A. Hill, Jr., president of the Houston Oil Co., died after an illness of a few days.

Although having been advised of the attack which proved fatal, Colonel Hill's great host of friends here and throughout the nation were shocked at the news of the death of this distinguished Texan.

While only in his fifty-seventh year, George Hill had become one of the most prominent oil men of this nation and had crowded into his short span of years accomplishments and civic attainments that, while bringing him warranted acclaim, undoubtedly brought to a premature end the exceptional career of this outstanding American and devoted follower of all things Texan.

Born in Corsicana on January 12, 1892, he spent part of his teen years in Austin where he later graduated in law from the University of Texas. However much of his youth was spent in Houston and in high school where he was valedictorian and winner of a scholarship. In his senior year at the University of Texas, he was editor of the Daily Texan.

Colonel Hill began his career as a railroad attorney but switched to oil when he joined the firm of Kennerly, Williams, Lee and Hill in 1917, general attorneys for the Houston Oil Co. In 1930 he became general counsel for that company, and a year later was named its executive vice president. In 1932 Col. Hill was named president of the Houston Oil Company and president of the Houston Pipe Line Company, positions which he still held at the time of his death.

Colonel and Mrs. Hill, the former Mary Edythe Van Den Berge of Victoria, were married June 24, 1916. He was a veteran of World War I, where he served as captain of Troop C of the Seventh Cavalry.

Colonel Hill was the founder of the Texas Petroleum Council. He was a member of the Petroleum Industry's National Emergency Council during the depression of 1933. He was a member and former director of the Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association, vice chairman of the oil policy committee of the Independent Petroleum Association of America, a member of the National Petroleum Council, vice president of the Oil World Exposition and a member of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers.

During World War II he served as a member of the executive, production and historical committees and as chairman of the facility security committee of the Petroleum Industry War Council in addition to being a member of the Petroleum Administrator for War's general committee of District 3 and chairman of the production committee of the same district. He was petroleum adviser on the Anglo-American Oil Treaty for the secretary of the interior from 1944 to 1945.

Long a Chamber of Commerce Leader

In 1933, he was elected a member of the board of the Houston Chamber of Commerce. The following year, 1934, he became chairman of the Military Affairs Committee and held both of these important posts at his death.

Few men have served this city through the Chamber of Commerce longer or rendered it more valuable service. Throughout the last war he gave unstintingly of the great ability that was his to aid those who were serving in the armed forces. This ceaseless work and that of his committee earned national recognition and the acclaim of those who were sent to this area.

A director of the Dallas Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank and a member of the economic policy committee of the United States Chamber of Commerce, Colonel Hill had been a member of the Business Advisory Council for the Secretary of Commerce for ten years.

He was president of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts from 1934 to 1938. A principal founder of the San Jacinto Museum of History, to which he had given several thousand items of rare historical material such as manuscripts, decrees and maps, in addition to a library of Texiana and Mexicana, he was president at the time of his death.

Colonel Hill was a fellow and former vice president of the Texas State Historical Association; a fellow of the Texas Folklore Society; a former president of the Texas Philosophical Society; a member of the Houston Philosophical Society; a member of the American Archivists Society, Sociedad Bibliographic of Mexico, the

Yanaguana Society, the Newcomen Society of England, the Sons of the Republic of Texas, and the Houston Symphony Society.

His wife and two sons, Raymond and George Hill III, who were at his side as he passed away, survive him.

Mrs. Peter Crambus, a daughter, also resides in Houston.

Interment was in Forest Park Cemetery November 4.

The resolution:

RESOLUTION
HOUSTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Board of Directors records with sorrow the passing of Lieutenant Colonel George A. Hill, Jr., one of the foremost citizens of Texas, and a beloved and esteemed leader of the people of Houston. He died "in harness", having denied to himself the comfort and ease which he so assiduously sought for others. The roster of his public services would fill a volume. He was an individualist of the old school, broad-gauged in his sympathies and uncompromising in his principles. His loss is a grievous one, not alone to his family and friends, to whom we extend our heartfelt sympathy, but to the nation at large.

It is well to recall the extent of Colonel Hill's interests and responsibilities. They ranged from the petroleum industry, keystone of the economy of the Southwest, to the field of fine arts, which he regarded as no less essential to the health and progress of the Commonwealth. For a generation, he headed the Military Affairs Committee of the Houston Chamber of Commerce, rightly regarding the survival of the State as a first concern of civic leadership.

A Texan both by parentage and by preference, Colonel Hill enriched the legacy of his compatriots by generous gifts to the Lone Star shrine at San Jacinto. A captain of the famed Seventh Cavalry in World War I, he served with equal faithfulness in World War II as an adviser to the United States Government on petroleum matters.

His specialized knowledge proved of immeasurable value in treaty negotiations with our ally, Great Britain. Colonel Hill was convivial and affectionate in private life, and conscientious and unsparing of self where the public interest was involved. Now that he is gone, all of us have come to realize, with a sense of shock, how much we have depended on him for many years.

It is the purpose of this Resolution to register for posterity our high regard for a gallant gentleman, one who will stand unsurpassed in the annals of history as a patriot and citizen. But the true measure of our esteem cannot, we realize, be put on paper, for it will be seen in the effort each of us puts forth, as an individual, to emulate his stirring example.

November 16, 1949

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W. S. Bellows, President