Hays County Democrats LBJ Day History

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When I served as the Hays County Democratic Chair in 1986, our party leadership wanted to create a signature event and fundraiser that reflected the values and history of our Democratic Party. The first issue to resolve was to select a theme and location for this event.

I met with Texas Democratic Party Chair Bob Slagle and Executive Director Ed Martin at the Austin headquarters to talk about our plans. During the discussion, I discovered that no county party in Texas had an event named for Lyndon Barnes Johnson. We all agreed to select LBJ Day to be held on his birthday - August 27.

Congressman J.J. "Jake Pickle," a longtime friend and colleague of LBJ, enthusiastically agreed to be our featured speaker for the inaugural event. We selected the historic Fish Hatchery in San Marcos for LBJ Day. The site on the San Marcos River was the first federal fish hatchery west of the Mississippi River and became a designated Texas Historical landmark. On a visit to San Marcos in 1964, President Johnson recommended the Fish Hatchery be given to Southwest Texas State Teachers College, his Alma Mater. In 1981 the structure was transferred to the City of San Marcos.

At the August 17, 1986 event, Congressman Pickle spoke to an enthusiastic crowd of LBJ's legacy and the values of the Democratic Party: civil rights, protection of the environment, affordable housing, education and job opportunities, health care and a government that respects all individuals.

The 1986 LBJ Day for the Hays County Democratic Party was a rousing success and became a landmark event. We are indeed fortunate that this honored tradition continues as we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of LBJ Day.