

also plan to enter a rural and/ or food animal practice in Texas after graduation.

TFB also has made scholarship funds available to first-year and enrolled students attending Texas State Technical College (TSTC). Twenty-five \$1,000 scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis through the Texan Success Scholarship. Another \$10,000 is available through the "helping hands" scholarship, which is meant to help students with unexpected costs that are not usually covered by traditional scholarships. TSTC scholarships are available at <https://www.tstc.edu/admissions/financial-aid/scholarships/>.

"These scholarships and awards are another way county Farm Bureaus and Texas Farm Bureau invest in the future of our community, state and Texas agriculture," John Ross said.

TFB scholarship applications are due online by March 1, 2022, and County Farm Bureau scholarships are due to the county office by April 1, 2022.

Applications and

requirements for state awards are available at <https://texasfarmbureau.org/youth/youth-opportunities>.

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1) re-establish an independent Treasury; 2) reduce tariffs; 3) acquire some or all the Oregon region of the Pacific Northwest; and 3) acquire California and its valuable harbors. Polk accomplished all four goals in four years. Rather than ride high on success, he declined to seek re-election in 1848 and fulfilled his pledge to serve only one term.

On this Presidents' Day, let us look to the examples of bold leaders who did what they said they would do. May we seek and demand leaders with those same qualities at every level of government - local, state, and national - whether they look the part or not.

James Decker is the Mayor of Stamford, Texas and the creator of the West of 98 website and podcast. Contact James and subscribe to these essays at westof98.substack.com and subscribe to West of 98 wherever podcasts are found.

Courthouse Proceedings

Most nights pass quietly in Mason, a Hill Country community of about 2,300 residents. So when sirens wailed after 10 p.m. last February 4, Misty Martin texted a friend and learned a house had caught fire. Then more sirens blared. Curious, Martin stepped outside in her pajamas. What she saw from her front yard made her gasp.

"Flames were coming out of our courthouse," she recalls. In a flash Martin jumped into her car and picked up her friend. On the square the women joined other distressed onlookers, many dressed in pajamas and robes, as massive flames engulfed their historic courthouse.

"We knew that county records and some furnishings had been moved out around Christmas for renovations," says Martin, a fourth-generation Mason native. "We wondered if maybe it was an electrical fire."

Within minutes the roof and its octagonal dome with a bell and four clock faces collapsed. Firefighters from nearby communities also responded to the scene, but the inferno was too intense. Once the smoke cleared, only the building's charred outer sandstone walls, concrete second floor, concrete columns and seven chimneys remained.

Heartbroken but resilient, residents that night vowed they'd rebuild their grand centerpiece. Built in 1909, the Classical Revival-style edifice designed by architect Edward C. Hosford was the third Mason County courthouse (fire destroyed the first one in 1877).

For generations it housed the comings and goings of residents. Within its walls, attorneys argued court cases,

couples signed marriage licenses (and divorce decrees), parents celebrated adoptions and properties exchanged hands. Children played on its grassy lawn beneath towering pecan trees, and families lined up along the low stone fence that encircles the courthouse to watch parades pass.

(Continued on next page)

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