



Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TOM BASS, LEADER IN COUNTY AND STATE, DIED AT 92

Tom Bass, former chairman of Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network (GHC 9-1-1), former Harris County Commissioner and former Texas Legislature Representative passed away Sunday, March 3, 2019 at his Houston home, surrounded by his family. Mr. Bass was 92 years old and was an instrumental figure in local, county and state public service for nearly 50 years. His life of service includes:

- Texas State Representative, 1963 - 1972
- Harris County Commissioner, 1973 - 1985
- Colonel in the Army and Reserves, 1944 - 1980
- Professor of political science at St. Thomas University, Texas Southern University and Dominican College
- Taught high school with the Houston Independent School District for 8 years
- Chairman of the GHC 9-1-1 Board of Managers, 1983 - 2009

GHC 9-1-1, one of the largest 9-1-1 systems in the United States, was created through the hard work of Tom Bass and his staff while he was Harris County Commissioner in the late 1970s. The team was able to get the legislation passed at the Texas legislature (May 1983) in order to hold the necessary election in November 1983 on the proposition of establishing a 9-1-1 emergency communications district and establishing the 9-1-1 emergency service fee. The election was a success and Tom Bass was named the first chairman of the Board of Managers, a position he held for the next 26 years. The 9-1-1 Headquarters Building was named the Tom Bass Building in 2008 to honor Bass' contributions. Tom's vision of a state-of-the-art 9-1-1 emergency communications district became a reality and continues to serve its community as one of the most advanced 9-1-1 systems with one of the lowest service fees in the nation.

"His leadership in 9-1-1 was effective and will always be appreciated," said Executive Director Lavergne Schwender.

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As Harris County Commissioner from 1973 to 1985, Bass worked hard for strong financial disclosure and ethics rules for all county officials and a redistricting of the commissioners' precincts. He led the County in the acquisition of park lands and green belts. The current Braes Heights hike and bike trail was one result of Tom's efforts during that time. In 1984, in recognition of his flood control efforts while County Commissioner, 115 acres of parkland on 288 South was named the *Tom Bass Regional Park*.

Bass' political career began in 1962, when he ran for a newly created State Representative seat. Mr. Bass served in the Texas House of Representatives for 10 years, serving as a committee chairman for three sessions and the Harris County Delegation Chairman for two sessions. As a member of the "Dirty Thirty" during the Sharpstown Scandal he worked on legislation for reform laws to prevent government wrongdoing. He worked tirelessly for the promulgation of Civil Rights, leaving the State legislature only after ensuring that the state's re-districting was done to give a voice to all voters—particularly the previously disenfranchised Black and Latino voters.

He joined the U.S. Army in 1944 and served on active duty and then in the Army Reserve for 36 years, retiring as a Colonel in 1980. Following active duty, Mr. Bass earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Texas in 1950 and earned a master's in education from the University of Houston in 1954. Mr. Bass was born and raised in Houston, Texas. During his spare time, he became a competitive runner and embraced marathon running. He won hundreds of age awards and completed 40 marathons, including three Boston Marathons. Mr. Bass and his lovely wife, Mary Ann (King), were married 68 years. They had ten children, 23 grandchildren and two great-granddaughters.

The funeral mass will be held on March 7, 2019 at Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Houston at 10:30 a.m., with a reception to follow in the parish hall. A viewing and rosary will be held on March 6, 2019 at Earthman Funeral Home on Bissonnet from 6-8 p.m.

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